CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

Between Acknowledgement and Ignorance:

How white South Africans have Dealt with the Apartheid Past.

A research report based on a CSVR-public opinion survey conducted in March 1996

by Gunnar Theissen

Editors:
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Centre for the Study of Violence an Reconciliation, Johannesburg
Department for Political Science, Free University of Berlin

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Gunnar Theissen holds a Diploma in Political Science of the Free University of Berlin and is member of a joint research project on dealing with the past in Germany and South Africa run by the Faculties of Law at the University of Western Cape and the Humboldt University of Berlin. He is currently working on a dissertation about the „Public perception of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the South African past".

Gunnar Theissen
Liebgistr. 25
D - 10247 Berlin
e-mail: theissen@zedat.fu-berlin.de
web: http://userpage.zedat.fu-berlin.de/~theissen

Content

Introduction

In his show "Truth Commissions" well-known South African review artist Pieter-Dirk Uys wonders how apartheid could ever have happened, as hardly any white South Africans today admit to having ever supported it. It is as if the discriminatory legislation which characterised South Africa's past was enacted by a mysterious invisible hand and as if the illegitimate order was enforced by courts which had no magistrates, judges or public prosecutors. One wonders how a handful of security officers could have detained, tortured or killed some ten thousand South Africans; how 3.5 million people could have been uprooted by forced removals, with hardly anybody now willing to accept responsibility for the deed. Is it being forgotten or conveniently denied that the regime which implemented and entrenched apartheid, and ruled the country from 1948 to 1994, could only exist by virtue of the support of a majority of white South Africans since the general elections of 1958?

There is perhaps a positive aspect to this denial of support for the apartheid regime, namely that the majority of white South Africans no longer like to identify with the past order. However, the question remains to be answered whether they have really changed and deeply disassociated themselves from all aspects of apartheid practice and ideology.

This report examines the way ordinary people (Germans after 1945 and South Africans after 1994) deal with an authoritarian past. Not every white South African actively supported the apartheid regime - some were extremely critical of it, while a few actively opposed it. The same applies to the West German population. However, both these nations are confronted with the fact that some members of their society were allowed to participate in extreme violations of human rights while others passively looked on.

The report considers how the past is perceived by ordinary South African and German citizens; to what extent they accept the new political order and its democratic values; and how they react to institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which try to deal with and uncover the legacies of the past. Previously published survey data from Germany and South Africa is reviewed and new empirical findings are presented from a nation-wide telephone survey of 124 white South Africans. This survey was conducted in March 1996 by the author in cooperation with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg.

In CHAPTER 1 of the report, the importance of democratic attitudes for the consolidation of a fledgling democracy is discussed. It is suggested that a particularly important political task in dealing with the past is the building of a human rights culture and the delegitimisation of the past authoritarian order. The chapter goes on to discuss how institutions like the Truth Commission affect the public's awareness of human rights and its perception of past human rights abuses.

CHAPTER 2 presents a review of the German experience. The way West Germans have reacted to the National Socialist (NS) past, the Nuremberg trials, and the issue of reparations illustrates that the transition to a new democratic order is a lengthy process and that a glib condemnation of white South Africans should be avoided. The fact that responsibility for past atrocities is often denied is not unsurprising. However, the German experience does show that how the past is remembered is of importance for a society. Forgetting past atrocities is not a solution, as it can sustain undemocratic traditions and attitudes as well as impede and slow down the democratisation of the political culture. West Germany has helped to generate some hypotheses about social and psychological factors which contribute to the way people deal with the past authoritarian order. These can, to an extent, be tested in the survey conducted in the South African context.

CHAPTER 3 examines the issue of collective responsibility. It shows that the apartheid regime was able to rely heavily on the support of the majority of white South Africans. Without this public support, it is unlikely that as many repressive acts would have taken place. This chapter also aims to dispel the myth that only a few white South Africans had been politically responsible for the continuity of authoritarian rule, racial discrimination and political repression. In addition, it provides a backdrop to the human rights attitudes of white citizens during the 1980s.

CHAPTER 4 details the methodology used for the CSVR survey. This is necessary for assessing the quality of the work as well as for drawing conclusions other than those presented in CHAPTER 5. It also integrates the outcomes of previously-conducted public opinion surveys which covered the Truth Commission. The sample sizes of these surveys were larger and they contained information on the views of Coloured, Indian and Black[1] South Africans. They did not, however, include information on how attitudes about the past and the Truth Commission are related to other important opinions and beliefs.

The final three chapters stress two important findings of the survey which could stimulate further research. Firstly, young white South Africans show a markedly more positive attitude towards the new democracy (and are a more negative attitude towards the apartheid period) than do older white South Africans. There is therefore a distinct possibility that a new white political culture may emerge from this generation. Secondly, it is possible to detect among both young and old white South Africans a certain "white post-apartheid syndrome". The syndrome involves a desire to forget about the past, low human rights awareness, racist views, a denial of the right to compensation for apartheid victims, an unwillingness to undo the legacy of socio-economic injustice and a residual desire to glorify apartheid. How long it will take for a possible new white political culture to supersede the white post-apartheid syndrome remains to be seen.

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[1] As has become common practice in post-apartheid South Africa, these terms are used without quotation marks. This should not be construed as support for the idea of racial categories as anything more than social constructions.

Chapter 1:

Dealing with the past -

a political culture perspective

With the general elections of 1994 and the passing of the new Constitution on 6 May 1996, South Africa made the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. The period of instability between the announcement of the political reforms of 1990 and the first general election has passed and democratic institutions have been elected not only on the national but also on the local level.

Transition theorists would argue that in South Africa the period of "democratisation" is over as the institutions typical of a democracy have been established and are operating. For these theorists the country is in a state of democratic consolidation.[1]

1.1 The Impact of Political Culture on the Consolidation of Democracy

One of this report's core arguments is that the transformation of political institutions is only the first step in the consolidation of democracy. While political institutions can be changed relatively quickly through negotiations by the political elite, as happened in South Africa, the transformation of the broader political culture is a much slower process, and requires the support of citizens from all strata of the population. However, the values and attitudes shared by various sectors of the population do not change overnight. Stephan Welch (1993:31) speaks of a "cultural lag", which can remain or even deepen after the transformation process if the new order is not seen as positive or legitimate. This is evident in the way many socialist states failed to transform their political culture, even through extensive indoctrination. It can be argued that these states only managed in part to integrate their political norms and values into the political culture of their countries.[2]

Therefore, although the political system of apartheid is dead, it is unrealistic to imagine that the system's demise will be accompanied by the instantaneous creation of new political culture. The cultural lag of apartheid is perhaps most evident in the sphere of human rights. Much of the success of the apartheid system in perpetuating its atrocities was due to a certain confidence that its violence would be

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[1] O'Donnell & Schmitter (1986: 6) define transition as an "interval between one political system and another". The necessary conditions for a political democracy are described by them as "Secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular elections, partisan competition, associational recognition and access, and executive accountability" (Ibid.: 8). The term 'democratic consolidation' has been used by transition theorists to describe a stage after the founding of democratic institutions, which is characterised by a situation in which democratic continuity is still uncertain, and some major political actors are still opposed to democratic rule (Mainwaring, Scott, O'Donnell & Samuel, 1992: 3).

[2] This is not only supported by the breakdown of these regimes but also through survey research done in Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the Prague Spring of 1968. At that time the first republic of the between-war period was still seen as the 'most glorious period' by the Czechs (Brown & Wightman 1977).

tolerated by the majority of white voters, because of this group's low human rights awareness, racism and other forms of justification of repressive acts.

The degree of acceptance of basic civil liberties is also important beyond the white community. Human rights awareness is not necessarily higher in black communities simply because they have been more victimised by the state. In fact, a survey conducted in June 1990 found slightly higher acceptance among white respondents of four of the five civil liberties statements (Gouws 1993:21). Another survey conducted in the same year similarly showed slightly more support by black South Africans than white South Africans for items indicative of political intolerance, such as "Other political parties should stay out of local areas where one political party has a strong majority" (Schlemmer 1993: 6-7). This is perhaps not that surprising given that political culture research has found that the endorsement of democratic values and civil liberties correlates strongly with standard of education (Almond & Verba 1963: 173; Kaase 1971: 144; Reichel 1981 126-140). The apartheid system ensured that the majority of black South Africans were under-educated.

Despite the difficulties in instituting a human rights culture, this remains the best guarantee against atrocities recurring. If the abuse of basic human rights is not tolerated, abusers will have difficulty in committing any such deeds without a public outcry, and one of the chief objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is therefore the rebuilding of a moral order, through raising human rights awareness that transcends political party affiliations. To this end it is important for the TRC to be aware of current levels of human rights awareness in the white community.

1.2 The Function of Memory in Political Legitimacy

A society's political culture depends in part on the perceptions and moral judgements it has with regard to its past. Thus historiography is a reflection of present social agendas as much as of past realities. Some forms of South African historiography - particularly those forms which found expression in the history syllabus taught in state schools - was used to legitimise apartheid and its political, social and economic structures. This kind of history also served to define strong identities for separate social groupings, such as Afrikaners, Coloureds and Indians.

Not only does the past function to construct identities, it also mirrors a range of political values. People choose to remember the past either by identifying with certain political movements or individuals who stood for values they want to represent, or by using the past and individuals as examples not to follow or repeat. Thus many sites of NS crimes in Germany and elsewhere have been converted into memorials to remind the public about the criminal nature of the NS dictatorship. The NS past also continues to have an important function in legitimating the new political order. Many West German political institutions after 1945 were formed expressly to prevent a recurrence of fascism, and the NS past is frequently used as a reference point in political debates to make judgements about 'good' and 'evil' (Lepsius 1988). Similarly in South Africa the apartheid past can be used as a negative reference point for the legitimisation of the new democratic order. Remembering the past can serve to undermine and discourage undemocratic and discriminatory practices, and be used as a yardstick for political and social morality.

Authoritarian regimes can also use the past for their own ends, and will typically ensure that their existence is legitimised through a specific public interpretation of the present and its history. It is therefore not unusual that after a process of moving away from authoritarianism, the historical interpretations and justifications of the old order may persist among those who supported it.

The new democracy in South Africa was born out of a negotiated settlement. The nature of the transition has important implications for the political culture of the new order. The old regime did not collapse, as it did in Germany after 1945 through the Allied military occupation. This suggests that

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there would probably be more continuity in its political culture, as the old political elite was not replaced, and continued to play a leading role in the new government for some time after the transition.

This does not mean that no change has taken place in the dominant white political culture. Representatives of the old guard have had to adapt their political values and historical interpretation of the past to the new circumstances. It is also in their interests not to dwell on the past, and they have therefore tried to focus public opinion on their indispensable role in bringing about the transition process and with it peace and democracy. This change in their own political culture and the emphasis on their recent positive role, however, may be seen as an attempt to whitewash the past.

The implications of the transition for the white community in South Africa are different from what would have emerged if there had not been a negotiated settlement, but rather a revolutionary take-over of power. The old order actually helped to bring about the new democracy, and has thus not been entirely discredited. However, if white South Africans, distort the past through selective remembering, there exists the danger that an undemocratic political culture will be sustained within their own community, which could have an insidiously undermining effect on the promotion of democracy in society as a whole.

The first democratic republic in Germany, the Weimar Republic*,* demonstrates how a common interpretation of a nation's history can affect its democracy. At the time of the Republic, the treaty of Versailles was seen as scandalous across the German political spectrum. The commonly held view that the reparations Germany had to pay were unfair and unjustified continued right up until the 1960s. There was relative consensus among the German public and its intellectuals that Germany was not guilty for the outbreak of the First World War[3]. The provisions of the treaty of Versailles were therefore seen as unduly harsh on Germany, a perception which helped Hitler to gain support for his enormous rearmament programme as well as for his open contravention of international treaties.

1.3 Dealing with the Past: A Magic Hexagon[4]

Newly-formed democratic governments are confronted with various tasks and demands, voiced by different sectors of the population. Victims and their relatives want the truth about the fate of those murdered, tortured or missing to be publicly known and acknowledged. They also expect some form of institutional retribution against the perpetrators, and often there is pressure to punish those who had been responsible for gross human rights violations and repression during the previous regime. Indeed, international human rights conventions oblige the successor regime to investigate gross human rights violations, such as torture, 'disappearances', or extra-legal executions and even to compensate the victims for the previous regime's activities (Orentlicher 1991; Van Boven 1993; Traßl 1994).

However, new governments are frequently faced with the problem of not being able to bring certain atrocities before the court. The principle of no punishment without a law *(nulla poene sine lege)* very often reduces the prospects of bringing criminal charges against perpetrators. Furthermore, if the transition was reached through a negotiated settlement, as was the case in South Africa, amnesty and indemnity often become issues in the negotiations. It is likely that without guaranteeing some form of amnesty it would not have been possible to reach a compromise on the interim constitution, and democratic elections would not have taken place. A further limitation is that it is often not possible to simply substitute the state bureaucracy and legal system with new personnel and legislation. The new

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[3] Only in 1961, nearly 50 years after the outbreak of World War I, was this illusion destroyed. A book published by the young historian Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Grab for World Power) clearly documented that Germany had not just unwittingly slid into the war like the other countries, as it was claimed.
[4] This is a rather short sketch of the problem. For a more detailed analysis see the collection of the relevant literature to this topic by Neil J. Kritz (1995): *Transitional justice. How emerging democracies reckon with former regimes. Vol 1: General considerations.* Washington, D.C.: United State Institute of Peace Press, especially the reflections of José Zalquett first published in (1989).

government often has to rely on the old apparatus to continue the day-to-day running of the country. The state security establishment in particular has to be integrated into the new political system to prevent coups d'état and to stabilise the democratisation process.

However, the new democratic government also has to make it clear that human rights violations will not be tolerated in the future. It has to prepare against powerful structures from the past destabilising the democratic process very early on. A climate of accountability has to be created for a culture of human rights to successfully evolve. If it fails, its own legitimacy could be seriously undermined as it will have compromised on basic democratic human rights values.

Thus a new government faces contradictory demands, which have to be very carefully balanced. For example, if it concentrates exclusively on achieving a maximum "integration of the former elite", it will fail to achieve "punishment", "truth" or the "establishment of a human rights culture" (see Figure 1.1). Nor can a human rights culture be optimally achieved by a strategy emphasising "punishment", as it might provoke violent and destabilising resistance which could lead to new human rights violations. The dilemma of backward-looking justice can be described as a "magic hexagon", and it is magical, or perhaps illusionary, because it is not possible to realise an optimum of all six of the tasks at once.

Figure 1.1: The dilemma of backward-looking justice (magic hexagon)
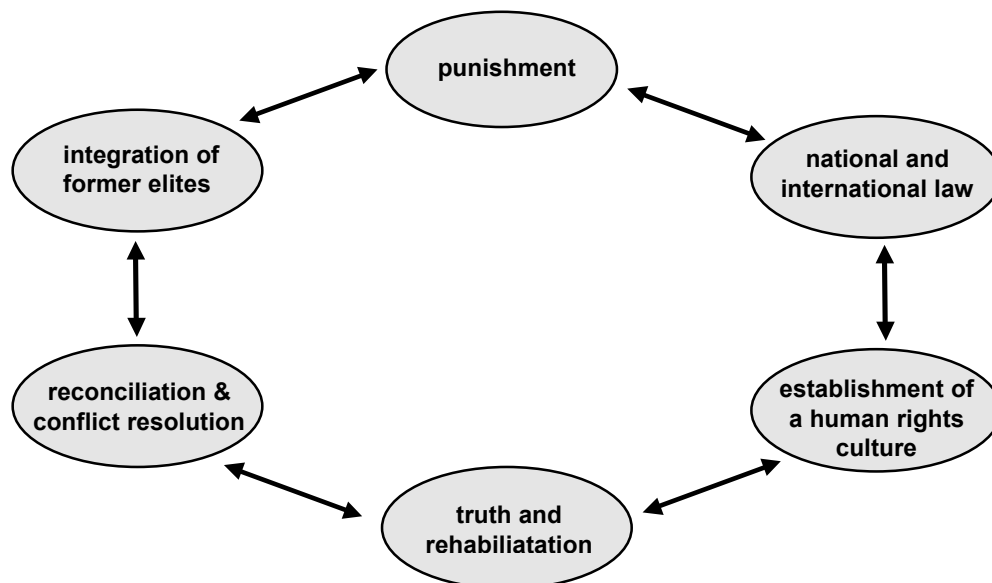
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a creative response to the dilemma of the magic hexagon. One of its functions is to promote a new political culture based on a fundamental respect for human rights while acknowledging the evil deeds of the past.

1.4 Possible Impact of the Truth Commission on White Political Culture

The Truth Commission's objective of promoting a democratic political culture not only involves heightening human rights awareness by bringing to light atrocities of the apartheid regime and liberation movements, but also entails rewriting the official history of the past decades.

The extensive process of the TRC has begun to bring the issue of human rights to public attention. However, it would be simplistic to expect that broadcasts and coverage about the Truth Commission could directly change deeply embedded attitudes towards the apartheid past. Individuals pay attention selectively to information. For example, information consonant with one's own world view is better

remembered than information that would be regarded as dissonant. This could lead to a situation where the atrocities of the ANC or other liberation movements brought before the Truth Commission are comparatively better remembered in the white community than the "dirty tricks" of the apartheid regime reported by predominantly black witnesses, and vice versa.

The effect of the Truth Commission's work on the white population also depends on the degree of acceptance of the institution itself. Obviously, those who support the Truth Commission or perceive it as a fair attempt to deal with the past, will be more receptive to its messages.

It is also important to acknowledge that political culture is not exclusively shaped through the aggregation of individual attitudes towards public institutions such as the TRC. Political culture is a product of a specific historical context, and is influenced by divergent social contexts, media, political pressure groups, parties, their leaders and their interpretations of the past.

In the following chapter these factors will be considered in more detail as they operated in Germany after World War II.

Chapter 2

Survey research on

dealing with the past in West Germany

Before considering the historical development of political culture in West Germany, it is necessary to outline differences and similarities with the South African situation.

The way people and governments deal with the past is highly dependent on their particular context. This is evident in the case of Germany in that the two post-war German states approached the NS past in very different ways. In East Germany denazification resulted in a broad exchange of personnel in the public sphere, including the educational and industrial sector. This process was partly used to put supporters of the socialist unity party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands - SED) into strategic positions in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In West Germany, by contrast, many of the old guard continued to hold official positions, especially in the economic and judicial sector, fuelling a continuing series of controversies. The GDR frequently tried to expose the 'brown' past of West German politicians, high-ranking administration officers and judges and thus to demonstrate the fascist continuity in the capitalist Federal Republic. In the GDR itself, it was claimed, the establishment of an anti-fascist and socialist society ensured that the problem of the NS past had been dealt with and that fascist views and perceptions no longer existed. The new state refused to acknowledge any responsibilities arising from the heritage of the Third Reich, as the GDR government argued that the Reich had stopped existing after the establishment of the two new German states. The GDR government also argued that many members of the GDR leadership had been prosecuted as communists during the NS regime and that it was therefore unjust that the victims should pay compensation for something they had not been responsible for at all.

West Germany, on the other hand, claimed to be the only legitimate successor state of the German Reich, based on its borders of 1937. The government therefore had to accept responsibility for the compensation of victims of its predecessor state. This helped to ensure that the past continued to be an issue for political debate and thus also for public opinion research.

2.1. Limits of the Comparison: South Africa - West Germany

It should be acknowledged at the outset that the NS and apartheid regimes were different. The NS state was a totalitarian dictatorship, controlling nearly every sector of German society, including the media and press. The white South African minority regime was an authoritarian regime which excluded the black majority, but within which a limited degree of freedom for independent media and opposition forces existed.

Second, the way the transition from totalitarian or authoritarian rule to democracy took place was different. Germany was liberated from the NS regime by the Allied forces, and the former German territory was taken over by a military administration. The apartheid regime in South Africa was

negotiated out of power during the multi-party negotiations dominated by the National Party and the ANC. Past atrocities became a point of negotiation, and amnesty was agreed upon as a means to bring about a peaceful settlement. In Germany the victors, rather than German society, controlled the prosecution of war criminals at Nuremberg. The responsibility for prosecutions changed only four years later, after the foundation of the Federal Republic in 1949[1].

Third, most of the victims of the German NS regime had been murdered and those who survived lived mainly outside the borders of the Federal Republic. In South Africa the internal pressure to promote justice and reconciliation is therefore much stronger than it was in West Germany. In Germany, reconciliation was more focused on its relationship with foreign countries, rather than on internal relationships.

Finally, it is not possible to equate the extent of the crimes committed by the NS regime with the gross human rights violations that took place in South Africa. It would be inappropriate to compare the systematic genocide of more than six million Jews by the NS regime with apartheid.

There are nonetheless some similarities between the white population in South Africa and West German society after World War II. Germans and white South Africans had largely supported regimes which shared a deeply racist ideology and few resisted. Large majorities actively ignored the brutal oppression of opponents and alleged enemies. Many even supported obvious criminal actions on the part of government. Though the extent of the criminal activity in the two regimes was very different, both societies confronted human rights violations when their respective democracies came into being.

The West German experience is a relatively well-documented example of how attitudes towards the victims, resistance movement, and the past regimes changed during this ongoing process after 1945. It also shows that the establishment of a democratic political culture is a lengthy process. Institutions such as courts, which highlight past atrocities, have an important but limited impact on the establishment of a new moral order. The case of West Germany also shows that working through the past does not guarantee that racist attacks or Neo-Nazism will disappear. It has only changed the perception and awareness of the majority of the population and established a democratic political culture which is at least less tolerant of such activities.

2.2 Sources of Public Opinion Research in West Germany

Information about the values, beliefs and attitudes of the German population in the years directly after the Second World War is mainly provided by the American Office of Military Government (OMGUS) in Germany. Very early in their occupation the American officials in Germany had understood the usefulness of public opinion surveys. Social psychologists and sociologists in the Psychological Warfare Division of the U.S. Army entered towns to survey the population's attitudes towards Nazism and their expectations about the pending military occupation. A primary concern of the Americans was to get feedback about their re-education programme which was aimed at establishing a democratic political culture in Germany. The Allies wished to expose the atrocities of Nazi Germany to the world and the German people and thus prevent such violations from ever occurring again. They believed that until Germans themselves acknowledged the essential evil of National Socialism, they would be tempted to recreate it. In order to convince the German population of the evils of National Socialism the Americans initiated extensive information campaigns, rewrote textbooks and started a year-long trial of the major war criminals at Nuremberg.

After the official end of military occupation, the U.S. High Commission for Germany (HICOG) continued to conduct polls up to May 1955. Several newly-founded West German survey institutions

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[1] From this time onwards criminal prosecutions were handled by the German judicial system, which was itself penetrated by former NS judges.

also started conducting public opinion research. The early American research in Germany has been published by Anna and Richard Merritt (1970; 1980). From 1957 onwards the *Institut für Demoskopie* in Allensbach has continuously published its *Jahrbuch für öffentliche Meinung,* the last one covering the period up to 1992.

The SED and its leadership showed no interest in public opinion research about the attitudes of east Germans towards the NS period and denazification. Public opinion research was only conducted secretly to inform the party leadership about the current mood of its "supporters". For this reason this discussion is limited to the West German experience.

2.3 Nuremberg in the Public View

During the early days of military occupation few people had sympathy for Hitler and his closest associates. Only one in eight (12%) claimed recalling that they trusted him as a leader up to the end of the war. Large majorities thought that the Nazi leaders prosecuted in Nuremberg were guilty of the charges levelled against them (Merritt & Merritt 1980: 7). In an opinion poll conducted at the beginning of the Nuremberg trial in autumn 1945, 93% responded that they were aware of the trial. Seventy eight percent of residents in the US zone of Germany said in October 1946 that they regarded the Nuremberg trials as fair. Only about 4% felt that the trials were unfair (Merritt & Merritt 1970: 93). The percentage of those who said they had learnt something about the concentration camps and about the mass murder of the Jews increased from 65% to 87% during the trials. In November 1945, when the Nuremberg trials began, 53% agreed with the statement "National Socialism was in principle a good idea which was badly carried out". In December 1946, as the nature of the crimes became known, agreement with this statement dropped to an average 40%. About 59% acknowledged that Germany had tortured and murdered millions of people in Europe (Merritt & Merritt 1970: 149). Interestingly, the acceptance of the Nuremberg trials started to change several years later as revisionist perceptions began to be fostered in response to the unpopular denazification campaign. The sentiment that the trials had been unfair rose from 4% in October 1946 to 30% four years later. The percentage of those who felt that the verdicts had been too severe increased from 9% to 40%, as did the feeling that justice was aborted by the failure to prosecute Allied officers. By mid-1952 over half (59%) of the West German population disapproved of the way in which the western powers were handling the problem of war criminals. Only 10% were content with their approach (Merritt & Merritt 1980:11).

2.4 Denazification

Unlike the Nuremberg war criminal trials, which focused on a handful of very prominent Nazis, the denazification proceedings directly affected the whole population. The aim of this programme was to remove all Germans who had been "active supporters of Nazism or militarism" from public office and positions of importance in quasi-public and private enterprises. In the American Zone of Occupation alone, American authorities removed 292 089 persons from such positions and excluded an additional 81 673 (Merritt & Merritt 1970: 36).

Even though 66% of all residents of the American Zone thought it important to hold to account "such people as furthered National Socialism in any way", most of the respondents were dissatisfied with the way the programme was carried out. Support declined from about roughly half in winter 1945-46 to about one-third in October 1946 and about one-sixth in January 1949. The main argument against the denazification campaign was that it dealt with minor members of the party, who were too harshly treated compared to party leaders. Judgements were also considered to be too arbitrary. The programme turned out to be quite unpopular, despite Germans being part of the boards which had to make the decisions.

Figure 2-1: Attitude towards denazification

The denazification...

- ... was necessary and has served its purpose
- ... has had its shortcomings, but generally served its purpose
- ... was necessary, but was wrongly implemented
- Don't know
- ... wasn't necessary and was wrongly implemented
- ... was only a nasty trick of the occupation forces
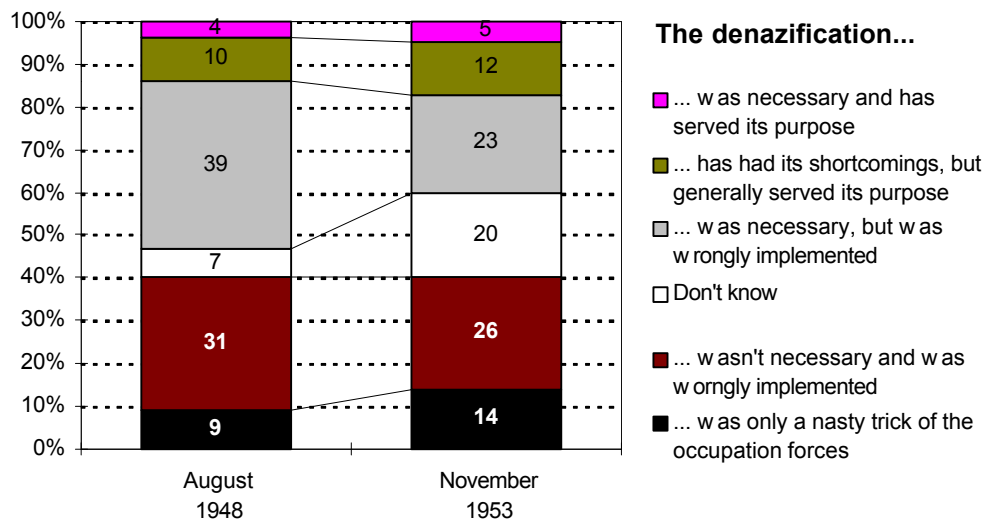
Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1956:142)

2.5 The Position of Former NS Office Bearers

By the early 1950s the entire denazification programme had fallen into disrepute. Few West Germans believed that the continuing employment of former Nazis in positions of power was a threat to the new democratic state. Two out of three respondents thought that former members of the Nazi party should have the same opportunities for advancement in business and politics as other Germans. A high percentage (42%) even felt that German generals who had been convicted by the Allies for war crimes had skills and experience entitling them to hold high positions in a new German army. Over one third (36%) were willing to give equal opportunities to those who had held high positions in the Third Reich (Merritt & Merrit 1980: 11).

The political climate during the early Fifties might explain why one of the first laws adopted in parliament was an amnesty law granting amnesty for many minor offences during the Third Reich and the transition period after 1945. The government led by Konrad Adenauer did its best to undo the Allied denazification campaign and successfully lobbied with the support of the german churches for a release of several war criminals held in prisons of the American and British military administration. Most civil servants excluded from holding a public office were reinstated during that time and a new law regulating the civil service entitled all former German servants to full pensions and other benefits. NS criminals profited as well from these regulations. This resulted in the unacceptable situation that many former NS criminals have been comparatively better of in the second German democracy than their victims (Frei 1996).

Thirty five years later a public opinion poll conducted in September 1988 showed a more ambivalent view (see Table 2.1); 37% thought that individuals who had held high office during the Third Reich had been so incriminated that they should not have been allowed to make a career in the Federal Republic. Forty two percent had no objection, believing that the people concerned had helped to reconstruct the country, and had often proven to be good democrats. As Table 2.1 indicates, this view was mainly held by the older generation, who were adults during the NS period.

Tab. 2-1: Dealing with the past - West Germany (1988)

In the post-war period many people regained important positions, who held high offices during the Third Reich. Here two persons are talking about that. Whom would you rather support?

	under 30	older than 60	*total population*
"It is a scandal that those people received important offices after 1945. Because of their past these people are so incriminated that they should not have been allowed to make a career again."	**44 %**	**31 %**	*37 %*
"You can't say that so generally. It totally depends on how the individual acted during the Third Reich. And many of these people have helped in the reconstruction and have proven to be good democrats."	**31 %**	**51 %**	*42 %*
undecided	**25 %**	**18 %**	*21 %*

After 1945 there have been various claims against German politicians that they had been Nazis during the Third Reich. In general: If it appeared during the post-war period that a politician had been previously somehow active in the Third Reich, should he than have resigned or would it have been inappropriate to demand that?

	under 30	older than 60	*total population*
The person should have resigned	**66 %**	**42 %**	*53 %*
It would have been inappropriate to demand that	**20 %**	**29 %**	*26 %*
undecided	**14 %**	**29 %**	*21 %*

Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1993: 379).

2.6 Responsibility for the Outbreak of the Second World War

Even though, as time passed, an increasing percentage of the German population came to view their country as mainly responsible for the war (26% in 1947, 37% in 1949) the majority still believed that the responsibility lay elsewhere (Merritt & Merritt 1980: 54). Few West Germans accepted collective responsibility for the outbreak of World War II. Several surveys conducted during the occupation years produced steadily solid majorities, averaging more than 70%, who denied that "the entire German people are responsible for the war because they let a government come to power which plunged the whole world into war." Less than 20% accepted this statement.

Consensus about Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of the war emerged very slowly, with 32% (May 1951) and 47% (April 1956) naming Germany as responsible, and far smaller numbers blaming other countries (24% and 12% respectively) or both sides (18% and 11% respectively). More than twenty years had to pass before there was a clear majority of 62% who acknowledged that Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War.

Figure 2-2: Who was guilty for the outbreak of the war in 1939?

	1951	1955	1956	1959	1962	1964	1967
Other states	24	14	12	11	9	9	8
Both sides	18	15	11	10	10	7	8
Other circumstances	11	9	10	11	9	6	6
Don't know	15	19	20	19	20	28	16
Germany	32	43	47	50	53	51	62
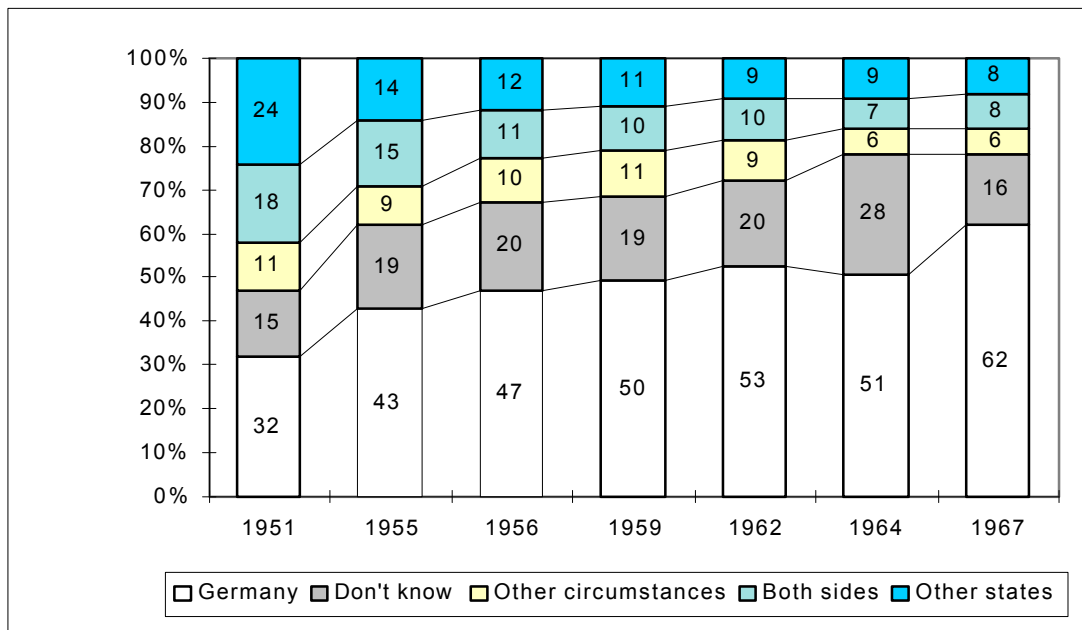
Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1993:408).

2.7 Change of Democratic Attitudes

The degree of acceptance of democratic norms and values in Germany increased over time, as did an interest in politics. In the 1950s and early 1960s only one out of three respondents said that they were interested in politics and over 30% claimed not to be interested at all (Institut für Demoskopie 1993: 617). This apathy changed after 1968 when a new generation challenged the undemocratic values that had partly dominated the early years of the Federal Republic. The student movement of 1968 contributed to this. In the 1980s only about 10% claimed to be not interested in politics at all. When pollsters asked the German population in 1991 if they supported police officers using their batons against demonstrators 57% disagreed (old Federal States). Only 19 of the West Germans interviewed supported the use of batons against protesters compared to 10% in the GDR. Sixty six percent said they would disagree if the government banned a public demonstration. Over 70% would disagree if the government deployed the federal police or military in order to stop a strike (Institut für Demoskopie 1993: 607). In 1991 only 5% disapproved of the statement "every citizen has the right to hold a public demonstration for his beliefs" and 79% thought that "every person has the right to voice his opinions even if the majority is against him". Eighty one percent agreed that "every democratic party should be given the chance to become a ruling party" (Institut für Demoskopie 1993: 626-627). A point of particular interest is support for the death penalty in West Germany. The fact that the death penalty was largely misused during the NS regime to murder political opponents and punish petty crimes - some people were even executed for the theft of goods from social welfare collections - contributed to the decision to outlaw the death penalty in the West German basic law of 1949 (the constitution). However, these experiences did not have much impact on public opinion after 1945. It took thirty years to reverse the support for the death penalty (see Figure 2.3). Nevertheless, this development demonstrates a growing concern for human rights in German society after 1960.

Figure 2-3: Support for the death penalty - West Germany 1950-1992
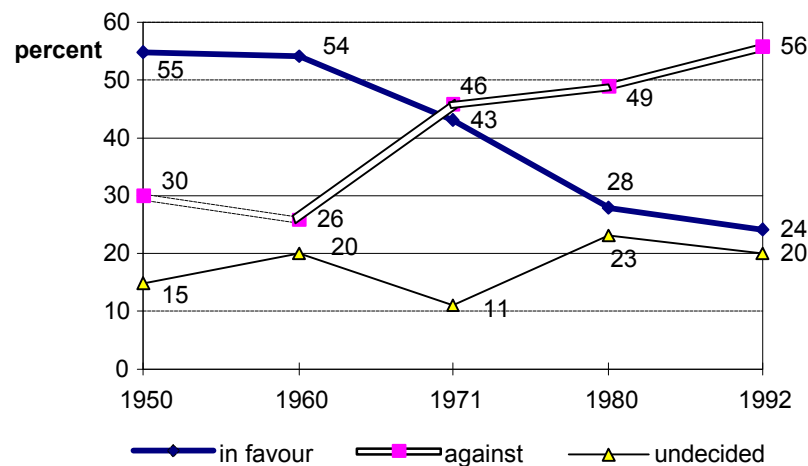
Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1993: 607).

The growing support for human rights is partly linked to the changing perception of the NS past in West German society. People reject the NS system because they are aware of its innate inhumanity. The memory and acknowledgement of past atrocities, injustice and racial discrimination promoted a greater awareness of racial discrimination and human rights. People support non-racial and democratic values because they still have the atrocities of the past in mind. The strength of the pacifist movement in West Germany during the 1980s, can only be explained by the impact Germany's role in the two world wars had on German political culture. 'Never again!' was the slogan of many demonstrators who went into the streets, protesting against the outbreak of the Second Gulf War. This slogan returned in 1992 when hundreds of thousands demonstrated against racist attacks against foreigners. Even the participation of the German army in peace missions is very controversial in Germany as many Germans are very sceptical about the benefits of military operations. More than one-third of all young men now choose to be conscientious objectors and endure a protracted period of civil service rather than serve in the German army.

2.8 Perceptions of the NS Regime

While the economic and political success of the Federal Republic boosted the positive attitude towards the new pluralistic and democratic order, support for the NS dictatorship and the NS ideology declined relatively slowly. When asked in 1951 when Germans had been best off, 42% said during the first years of the NS regime and some 45% claimed it was during the authoritarian German Kaiserreich before the first World War. Only 7% thought it was during the period of the Weimar Republic, the first crisis-ridden German democracy (see Figure 2.4). However, with the German *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of the 1950s the positive perception of the current political order increased relatively quickly. Only a small group hold the view today that Germany was better off during the NS dictatorship.

Figure 2.4: When have Germans been best off this century?
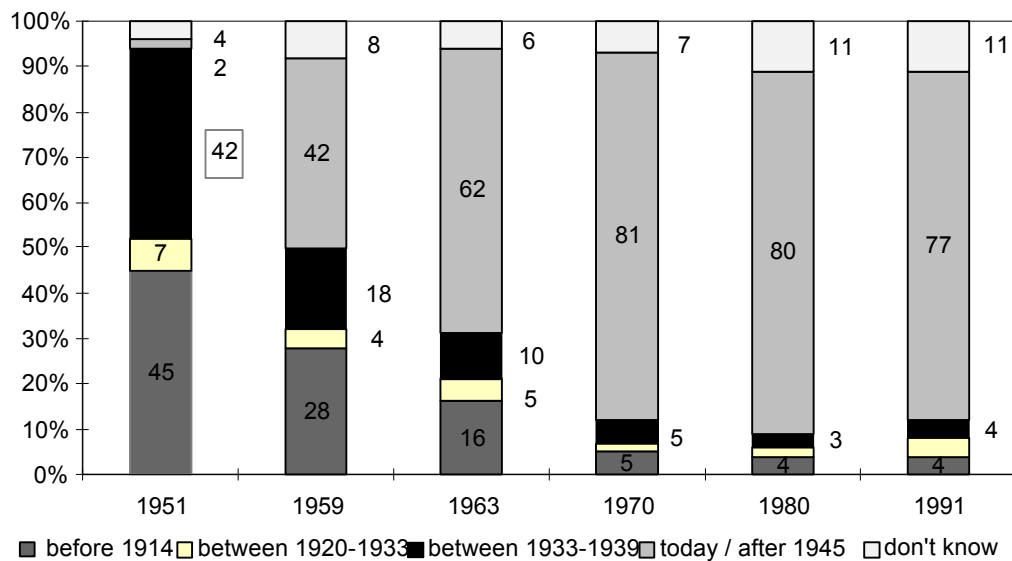
| | before 1914 | between 1920-1933 | between 1933-1939 | today / after 1945 | don't know |

The positive perception of the new order was rather a product of the unexpectedly fast-growing wealth in West-Germany after 1945 than a break with old authoritarian and undemocratic attitudes. In 1968 still 55% said that "National Socialism was good idea badly carried out", despite its racist, antidemocratic and aggressive character and ideology. The perception that Nazi ideas were basically evil only started to prevail in 1977, when a broad majority of 72% opposed the myth that National Socialism was a good idea. Nevertheless, 24% still hold the opinion that it was a good idea (see Table 2-2).

Table. 2-2: Was National Socialism a good idea badly carried out?

	1945/46	**1947/48**	**1948**	**1968**	**1977**	**1994***
yes	47 %	55 %	57 %	55 %	26 %	24 %
no	41 %	30 %	28 %	n.a.	72 %	64 %
undecided	n.a.	n.a.	15 %	n.a.	2 %	n.a.

The belief that Hitler was one of the greatest German statesmen if one disregarded the war, was widespread in the first thirty years of the Federal Republic (see Figure 2.5). In 1990 one out of four West Germans still thought that Hitler would have been a great politician were it not for the war. And the percentage of people who believed that the NS-regime was an unjust and criminal state only started to increase slowly (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.5: If you disregard the war, would you say that Hitler would have been one of the greatest German statesmen?
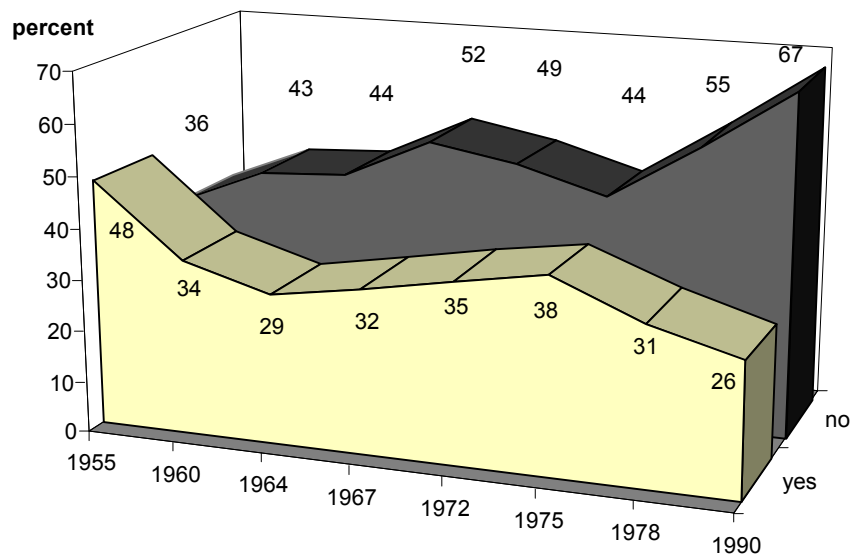
Figure 2.6: Would you say that the nazi-state was an unjust state, a criminal regime, or won't you say that?
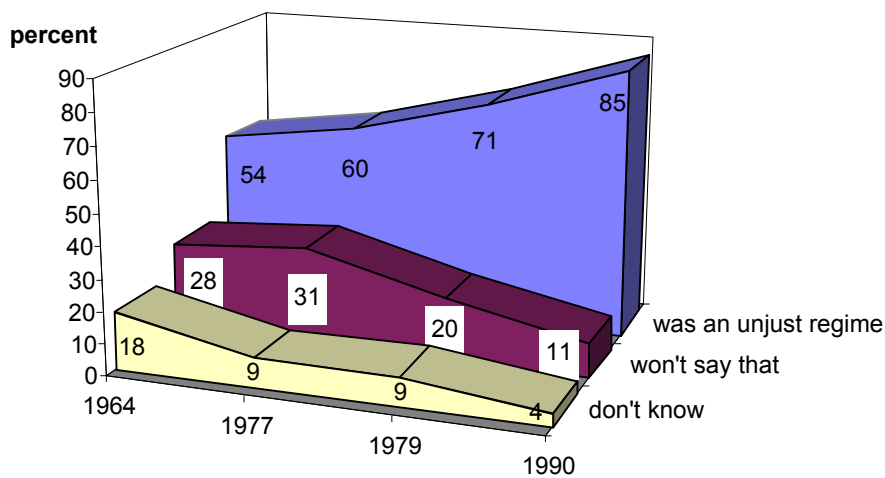
Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1993: 381, 408, 375).

2.9 Views About Resistance Against the NS Regime

The legitimacy of resistance against the Nazi regime was not accepted in German political culture for some time. In December 1951 only 38% of West Germans approved of the attempt on Hitler's life on the 20th of July 1944. The same percentage was undecided, and about 24% opposed it (Merritt & Merritt 1980: 147). Participation in a resistance movement against the Nazi regime was still viewed more negatively than positively during the 1960s (Institut für Demoskopie 1965: 235). Only in the following two decades did this perception change dramatically (Köcher 1993: 401). The relatively small number of Germans who had been involved in various resistance groups now became the idols of the

Federal Republic, as this was the only group of German people during the Third Reich which had not compromised or collaborated with the dictatorship and with whom people could positively identify. It is not surprising therefore, that more and more people came to believe that it had been possible to do something against the unjust NS regime (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Resistance to the Third Reich

Sometimes one hears that the German population in the Third Reich participated in everything and offered too little resistance against Hitler. What is your view? Were there or were there not opportunities for resistance during the Third Reich?
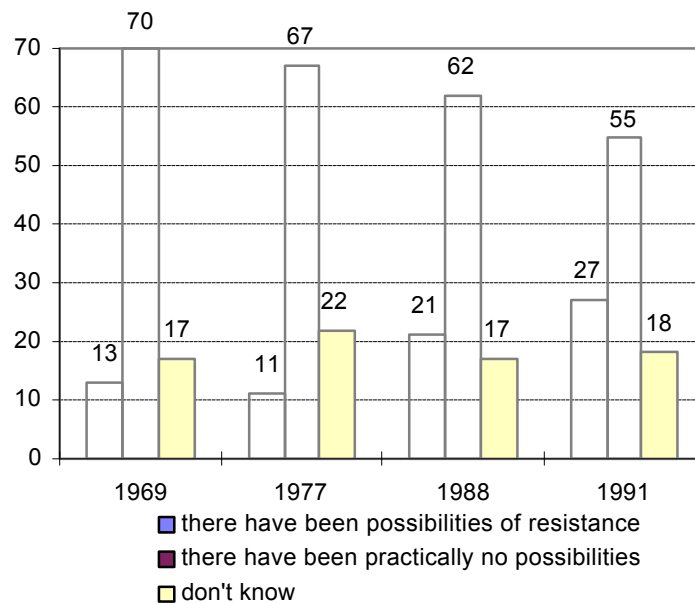
Source: Institut für Demoskopie (1993: 381).

2.10 Perceptions with regard to Victims and Attitudes towards Compensation

Many West Germans still hold to a problematic hierarchy in their perception of victims. At the top are those who died as soldiers in the Second World War, even though the German army had been responsible for many war crimes, especially against the Russian population. At nearly the same level are Germans who were expelled from eastern Europe after 1945. German soldiers were rather seen as victims than as perpetrators by the German public. In 1953 55% believed that one should not make any reproaches to German soldiers for their behaviour during World War II (Institut für Demoskopie 1956). Furthermore up to recently most Germans believed that only members of the notorious „Schutzstaffel" (SS) had been involved in the war crimes, ignoring the active partisanship of ordinary civil servants, police battalions and the army in the genocide.

One rung below are the German civil victims of the war and members of the resistance groups. This excludes the Communist resistance fighters, who are still seen as anti-democratic by a large section of West German society. This perception is also expressed in West German compensation laws, which denied money to the families of these victims because they allegedly did not fight for a democratic order.

The six million German and European Jews murdered by the NS regime often comes only as the third group of victims in terms of this hierarchy. Right up until the 1980s various other victims like the Sinti, Roma and homosexuals were practically excluded from public consciousness as also having been victims of the NS regime, despite being murdered alongside Jews in concentration camps. Deserters are probably the least accepted group of victims. They were executed in large numbers by German military

courts and there has been strong resistance against the erection of a memorial in their honour. The liberal-Christian coalition is still blocking any official recognition of them in parliament.

As early as the 1950s demographic research reflected this hierarchy in public perception. While a full 96% of West Germans felt that the West German government should support war widows and orphans, only 73% thought it should give aid to the relatives of the conspirators who had been executed. The percentage of those who felt that the government should provide aid to Jews who had suffered during the Third Reich was even lower. Only 68% supported some form of assistance for them. Comments by those opposed to giving aid to Jews revealed that most of them thought that they were already getting enough help from various sources or that they could "help each other." In order to limit their own accountability, 21% used the anti-Semitic counter-claim that the Jews had been responsible for their own persecution. Those who shared this view claimed that their alleged dishonest business practices, appetite for power and agitation against the Third Reich had been the main reasons for the Jews' prosecution. A high percentage (27%) felt that it would be best for the remaining Jews to emigrate (Merritt & Merritt 1980: 9). In 1949 only 39% held the opinion that Jews had the right to buy back their own businesses under the same conditions as when they had to hand them over to the NS-regime (Bergmann & Erb 1991: 257). Furthermore, only a minority (25%) of the German population felt some kind of guilt or collective responsibility for all that happened during Nazi rule (see Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: Responsibility for events during the Third Reich and the Second World War

Three persons are talking about the events during the Third Reich and the Second World War:

Mr. Müller says:	"Every German is to a certain degree guilty for that, what was caused by Germany during the Third Reich."
Mr. Schmidt says:	" Not every German must feel guilty. Nevertheless he should feel responsible and try to 'make things good again'."
Mr. Schulze says:	" The Germans have no reason to feel guilty nor to feel responsible for compensations. Only those who have really been actively involved are guilty and should also feel responsible for what they have done."

With whom do you agree?
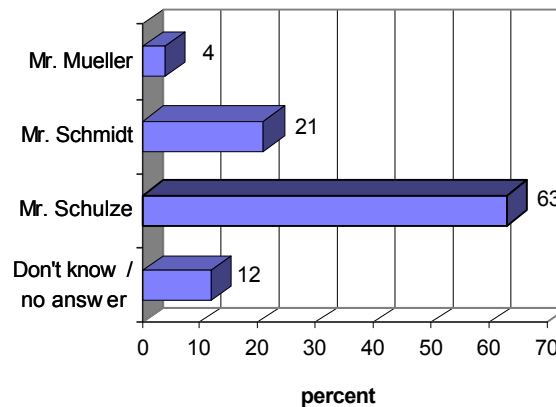
N = 1201   Source: HICOG-Report No. 113 (Series 2) 5.12.1951

It is not surprising that in this political climate, two out of three West Germans rejected an agreement in August 1952 between the Federal Republic and Israel for the payment of US-$715 million as restitution for what had happened to the Jews during the Third Reich. In December 1952, 54% of all Germans claimed that they did not feel guilty for the persecution of the Jews, claiming they were under no obligation to undo the injustices Jews had had to suffer (Merritt & Merritt 1980: 9; Report No. 167). After 1952 the issue disappeared from public opinion surveys, although disagreements about reparations appeared to continue. In 1966, 46% of all respondents supported the statement "We should stop restitution now; the Jews have already received too much" (Bergmann & Erb 1991: 258).

2.11 Forgetting the past

Political discussion about compensation for the victims of the holocaust and the prosecution of Nazi criminals was always accompanied by a call to forget the past and by defensive counter-claims. With the founding of the Federal Republic, economic reconstruction and the emergence of the Cold War, the issues of re-education and German war criminals vanished from public debate. Only occasionally was there any challenge to the prevailing political and social consensus to let NS atrocities rest. This situation continued up to 1958, when a new series of NS trials began in Germany and abroad (e.g. Ulmer Einsatzgruppen-trial, Eichman-trial, Auschwitz-trial; see Werle & Wandres 1995).

Figure 2.9: Prosecution of NS criminals, West Germany
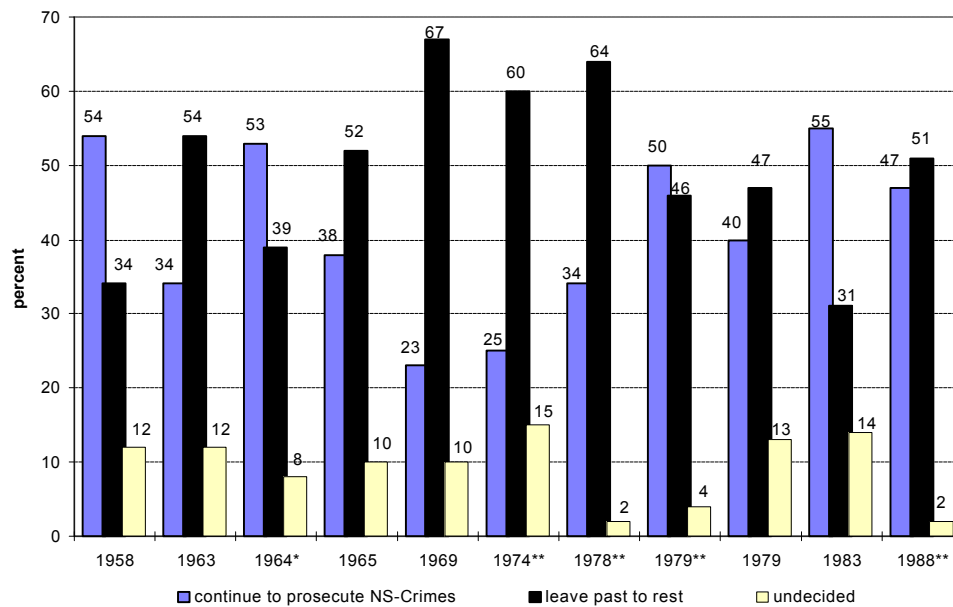
Source: Bergmann & Erb (1991:236).[2]

A new judicial institution was founded in Ludwigsburg and staffed with young lawyers and attorneys, whose only responsibility was to inquire and prosecute NS crimes (Steinbach 1981). The foundation of the "Zentralstelle für Nationalsozialistische Gewaltverbrechen" in Ludwigsburg in 1958 was a very necessary step as the judicial system itself had not been cleansed of former NS supporters. Many judges and state prosecutors had rather tried to cover up former crimes than to implement prosecutions. Despite these positive developments, the former NS-judicial system remained completely unchallenged. No German judge was ever sentenced by a German court after 1945 for his participation in racial and political discrimination or for handing down arbitrary death sentences during the NS regime.

NS-trails had nevertheless at least a short term effect on public opinion. A opinion poll conducted during the Auschwitz trial in 1964 showed that most people preferred the prosecutions. During the trail of Klaus Barbie in France public opinion was again strongly for the continuation of prosecutions (see Figure 2.9).

However, generally the desire to stop worrying about the past increased as the Third Reich became relegated to history. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, debates about the limitation periods for NS

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[2]   Bergmann & Erb compiled the data from different sources: Institute for Demoskopie, Jahrbücher, Vol. 3-8, *DIVO-Pressedienst Juli 1964, **Emnid Informationan 1/2 1974; 2/1979; 4/1988. The formulation of questions differed slightly. The question in the DIVO-survey was posed in the context of the Auschwitz-trial and stated "we should better not stir up those things after so may years." The higher percentage in support of prosecutions is probably linked to the fact that few Germans were willing to voice their rejection against the prosecution in the light of the horrific deeds people had been accused of.

crimes in the West German parliament drew fresh attention to the issue. Demographic research showed that large majorities did not support parliament's decision repeatedly to extend the periods for which NS criminals could be tried in court (see Figure 2.9). The greater support for the continuation of NS trials after the late 1970s was a feature of differing opinions among different generations of Germans. In 1979 nearly half of all younger people (16-29 years of age) were in favour of continuing prosecutions, while less than a third of adults over 45 supported the idea. It is possible that the television series "Holocaust", which was broadcast on German television in 1979, contributed to reversing the trend.

Figure 2.10. Today, forty years after the end of the war, we should not talk so much about the prosecution of Jews and rather forget about these things. (West Germany - 1989)
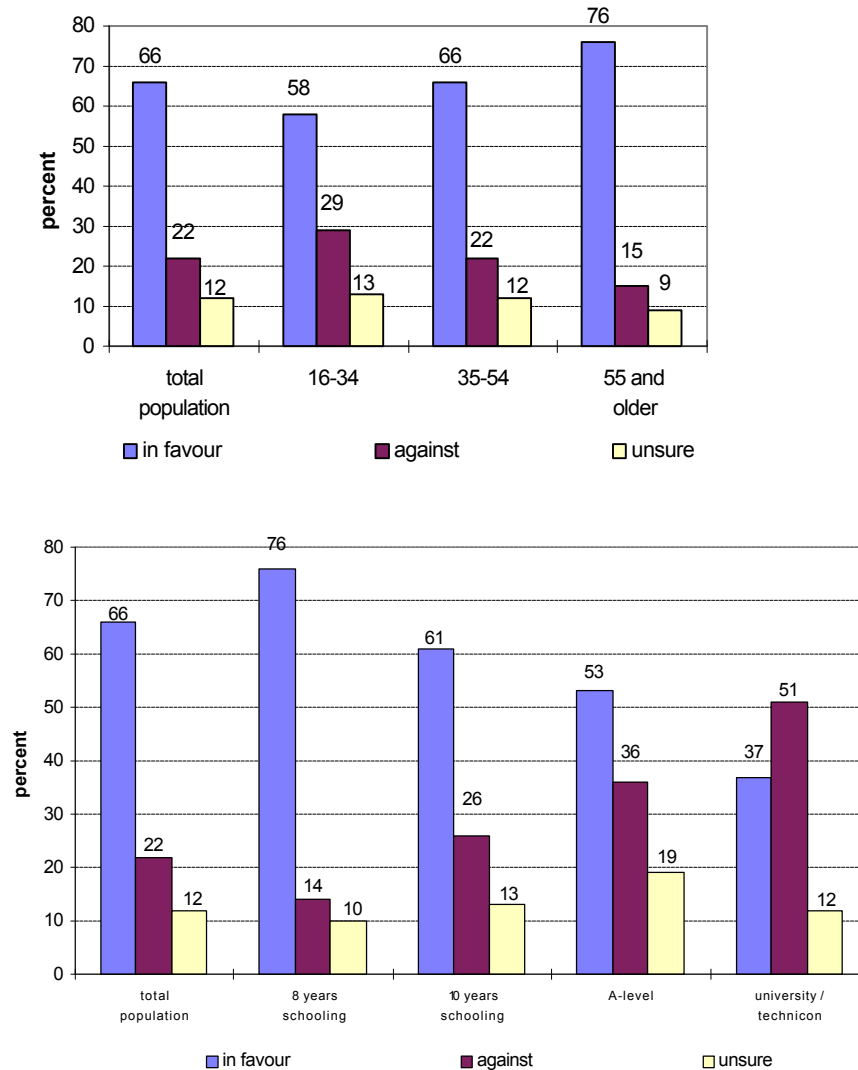
Source: Bergmann & Erb (1991:241)

The desire to forget about the past is greater among the older generation, who personally experienced the NS dictatorship. A number of reasons can be given for this. First, feelings of guilt may cause a desire to forget. One way of avoiding being seriously morally challenged about their role in the past, as they have been, is to try and deny it. In this way personal integrity and self-esteem appear to remain intact. Second, these older people's personal experiences are often dissonant with the public view of that period. Many of them remember the period before the Second World War as a carefree and prosperous time. Very few of them had been directly exposed to repressive acts of the NS regime. They feel that the continued interest in the persecution of Jews and other crimes of the NS past is in effect robbing them of the "youth" that they want to remember positively. This dissonant information can only be absorbed by

actively ignoring the "dark" side of Germany's history. Third, the desire among older Germans to forget the past reflects well-documented evidence of a greater degree of anti-Semitic attitudes, right-wing authoritarianism and support for right-wing parties that probably has its roots in their own political socialisation during the NS dictatorship. This may also have been entrenched due to the increasing conservatism that is linked with the life cycle and ageing (Glenn 1974).

The young generation, in comparison, shows a striking lower desire to forget about the holocaust. It may be expected that being born several years after the Second World War may prompt young people to want to forget the past. Interestingly, however, this is not the case. A number of factors explain this. First, they have fewer problems with the NS past, as they are able to personally distance themselves from the NS dictatorship because most of them were born after 1945. Second, their political socialisation took place mainly in the 1970s or 80s, when the schools' curricula had changed radically to include the history of racial discrimination and persecution, as well as the holocaust. Third, education had developed dramatically as a result of the new educational policy implemented by the social-liberal government in the 1970s. As more young people attended A-level schools, technicons and universities, they were exposed to more information about the holocaust (see Figure 2.10).

The generation factor also comes into play when Germans are asked whether they think that the reports over the prosecution of Jews are exaggerated or not (see Figure 2.11). Probably only a minority (less than 10%) of the population under 45 is still remotely receptive to this view - a number which is of course still high.

Figure 2.11: Do you think that most of the reports about the prosecution of Jews are true, or do you think that many of them are exaggerated?
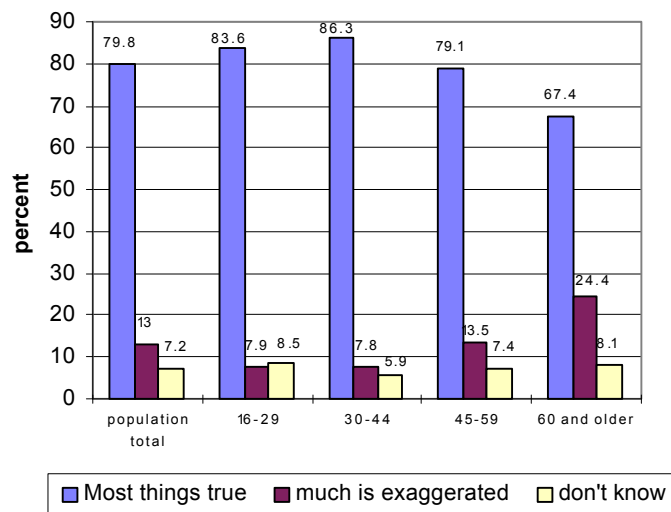
Source: Bergmann & Erb (1991: 240).

The desire to forget about the past is closely linked with contemporary prejudices. The discrepancy between the desire to forget and not to be reminded anymore, and the confrontation with German atrocities and NS history provides a new motive for prejudice. Bergmann & Erb (1991) have showed that the degree of support for anti-Semitic survey items correlates closely with views of the past and how it should be dealt with. People who endorsed more survey items against compensation and rejected the notion of any responsibility, scored significantly higher on a social-distance scale regarding Jews. A certain section of the German population perceive Jews as a threat to their own freedom, claiming that they will always threaten Germans with their "Auschwitz-club" (Auschwitzkeule). This new form of anti-Semitism argues that the past is being used by Jews in a 'new conspiracy' against 'decent' Germans in order to insult them morally and damage Germany's international image. 'The Jews' are seen as preventing the Germans from feeling proud of their own history and workmanship, and denying them their due respect.

2.12 Attitude change through media broadcasts

What role can the media play in changing attitudes towards the past and the perception of collective responsibility? Research conducted during the broadcasting of the TV series "Holocaust" in 1979 not only showed that the broad resistance against restitution had decreased during the 1970s, but also gave an idea of the limitations of and potential for attitude change through media broadcasts.

Figure 2.8 demonstrates that confrontation on an emotional level with the holocaust and the devastating stories of individuals through a TV series can lead to greater acceptance of moral responsibility. Any attitude change coming from this learning experience is nevertheless limited. This is borne out by the high percentage of people who were undecided or who denied any moral responsibility. Survey research conducted by Bergmann & Erb eight years later, in 1987, showed further increased rejection of compensations for Jews. This suggests that the effects of broadcasts are possibly short term, especially when there is still a dominant social environment opposed to the idea of moral responsibility for past atrocities. Yet the research around the "Holocaust" broadcast does demonstrate that television can have a major impact and could be one of the most powerful tools in encouraging attitude change. Real change is also more likely if it is combined with other activities to establish a broader social climate for these "new" views.

Figure 2.8: Is Germany morally obliged to pay compensation?
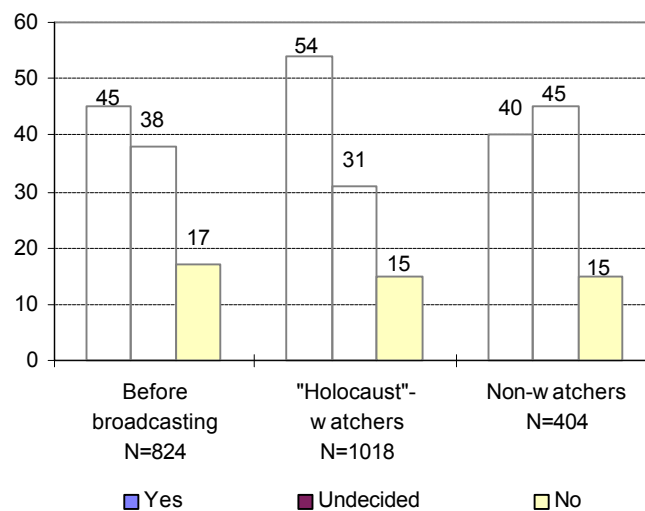
Source: Ernst (1979:237).

2.13 The German Experience - What can be Learnt?

Even under quite favourable conditions, such as those obtaining in West Germany since the Second World War, the adjustment of the political culture to democratic values and a critical understanding of an authoritarian past takes time. The American dream of re-educating Germany was only partly successful. The Nuremberg trial changed the perception of the NS past, but attitudes which glorified the NS past continued to dominate during the first decade of the Federal Republic. This "cultural lag" lasted at least twenty years before, West Germans adjusted to the new democratic order. The German experience demonstrates that major changes in political culture often only really take effect with the emergence of new political generations. These younger generations have fewer emotional or psychological ties with the past and feel more strongly committed to the values of the new order. Media broadcasts, political trials or institutions like the Nuremberg Trails and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have an important role to play, but they can fail to catalyse real change if their work is not followed up and reinforced through broader changes in other fields such as new curricula in schools.

Political responsibility for past atrocities might not be denied only because people reject compensation. The desire to lay the past to rest is often also linked to the glorification of the past authoritarian order and to deep racial prejudice. The need to forget about the past in Germany is not only an expression of undemocratic attitudes and anti-Semitic beliefs, but can also strongly reinforce them. In order to protect the self from feelings of guilt the past is white-washed, political responsibility denied and new forms of racial prejudice and anti-Semitic counter-claims emerge. Feelings of guilt are compensated for by blaming the victims for their fate. Jews are hated because they remind those who want to forget about the past about the holocaust. Post-war anti-Semitism in West-Germany is very strongly motivated by this type of "secondary anti-Semitism". In South Africa one might encounter similar forms of racial prejudice in the future.

The West German economic miracle strongly boosted the acceptance of the new political order and its values. The end of apartheid has contributed to an end of the economic crisis of the 1980s, but it is unlikely that South Africa will experience economic growth and overall prosperity on the same scale. Instead, many white people might perceive that they are worse off, because the privileges they enjoyed in the past will have been greatly diluted and the scrapping of racist job reservation policies has made the job market more competitive for some white South Africans. Given all of this there is therefore reason to be sceptical about the extent to which the political culture of South Africa's white population will move towards democratic and non-racial values in the foreseeable future.

Chapter 3

White post-apartheid myths:

"We have always been against apartheid"

This chapter provides historical information about the degree of support by the white electorate for apartheid, thus providing further evidence by which to judge the extent of collective responsibility for the previous regime and its human rights violations. The chapter also describes white attitude change during the last 10 years, and considers its implications for the establishment of a culture of human rights.

3.1 Reasons for the Denial of Support for Apartheid

The fact that nobody today wants to admit to having supported apartheid is in some ways a positive sign, demonstrating that the majority of white South Africans no longer wish to identify with apartheid. However, while the rejection of apartheid *could* be an indicator of a growing disapproval of the previous political system among white South Africans, it also contains a dangerous component, namely a denial of responsibility for the past, because it is no longer socially acceptable to be seen to have supported the system. "I have never supported apartheid" is a statement which reflects the understandable desire to deny individual and collective responsibility for apartheid, to forget about the past, and to be in touch with the 'new' South Africa. Admitting responsibility could result in feelings of guilt and a need to question the economic and cultural privileges white South Africans still enjoy. It could also result in social contempt by the majority and by those now positions of power. The fact that denying responsibility is easier than admitting it creates the danger that prejudices are maintained, undemocratic and unjust structures from the past are implicitly justified and there is no empathy for fellow citizens who suffered.

Another form of response to apartheid is to alleviate a sense of responsibility about the past by comparing one's apparent lack of involvement in abuse or repression to those who actively abused - in other words to see it as a question of degree. One way of understanding this is through what Miller and Ross (1975) refer to as the fundamental attribution error. They argue that if people are successful in any way, they attribute the success to their own efforts and personality, whereas if people fail or do something wrong, they are more likely to blame external factors, minimising their own responsibility for the failure. Although this may save one temporarily from feelings of personal failure, the political and social dimensions are far more complex. Despite socialisation, learned prejudices and very effective indoctrination, white South Africans still had the freedom to make decisions about their political beliefs and actions.

A crucial question arises at this point: How common is the perception that white South Africans were *not* responsible for apartheid? To answer this, we present some of the findings of the CSVR survey among white South Africans, which is described in more detail in the next chapter. One of the survey statements covered the myth that "the majority of white South Africans have always been in opposition to apartheid". The statement was deliberately formulated to ask about white South Africans in general,

as people can be expected to be more willing to admit that "others", rather than they themselves, supported apartheid. In addition, respondents would probably have felt threatened had they been asked about their personal support for apartheid. The results are presented in Figure 3.1.

About 30% of all respondents believed that "the majority of white South Africans have always been in opposition to apartheid." Another 15% were unsure or did not know if the assertion was correct. Slightly more than 50% of all respondents did not accept it, seeing it as a misrepresentation of the past. Thus barely half of white South Africans are willing to concede that most whites used to support apartheid. In the following sections we review historical data with regard to actual levels of support for apartheid and its institutions.

Figure 3.1 White South Africans' perceptions about support for apartheid

The majority of white South Africans has always been in opposition to apartheid

strongly disagree
7,4%

strongly agree
3,3%

largely agree
26,4%

disagree
47,1%

don't know
15,7%

May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N = 121
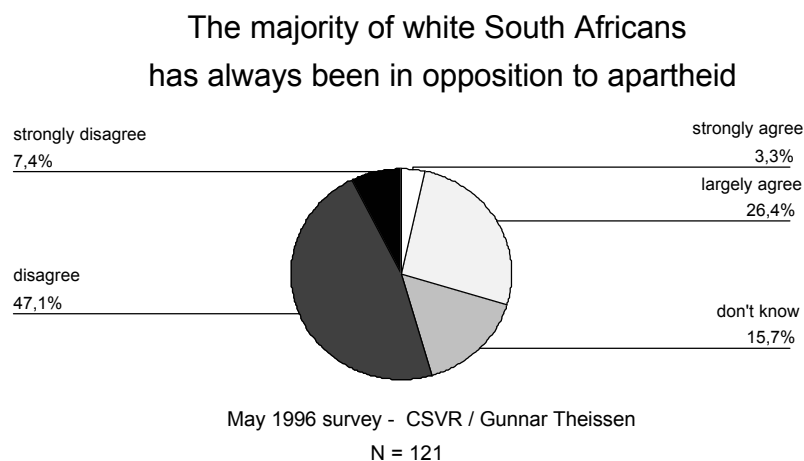
3.2 Support for Apartheid in General Elections

An examination of the election results during the apartheid era debunks the myth that a significant number of white South Africans have always been in opposition to apartheid. There is an argument to be made that whites always had the opportunity to get rid of the undemocratic apartheid regime by voting for a party opposing the National Party (NP). However, it was only in the 1992 referendum that a white majority supported a non-racial negotiation process.

In 1948 the NP/Afrikaner Party coalition managed to obtain a narrow majority in parliament with 79 seats. This was despite the fact that they accounted for only 41,2% of all votes cast, while the opposing United Party and Labour Party together, received 50,9% of all votes. However, the implementation of apartheid and the intensification of racial segregation and discrimination did not result in a withdrawal of support for the National Party. In fact, more and more white South Africans supported the NP in general elections during the 1950s. With 55,5% of all votes cast, the NP outperformed the United Party (UP) for the first time in the general election of 1958. In 1966 the NP gained as many as 126 seats out of 166 in parliament, with 59,2% of all votes cast for the NP (Heard 1974).

The situation is complicated by the fact that voting for the United Party (UP), the former ruling party and biggest opposition party during the 1950s and 1960s, was not necessarily a sign of disagreement with apartheid policies. The UP had been responsible for a range of discriminatory legislation before 1948, which was then used by the NP as the foundation on which to entrench its own apartheid philosophies and legislation. The UP did not fundamentally oppose the apartheid policy of the NP after 1948, even if it did occasionally disagree with certain measures. It was only the small Liberal Party that rejected the racial policies of the NP government unequivocally. In fact, open resistance to apartheid by white South Africans was always confined to very small, left-wing groups and parties.

The Soweto uprising in 1976, which demonstrated the large-scale dissatisfaction with the political system by the deprived and oppressed black majority, putting apartheid again at the top of national and international political agendas, did not lead to political dissatisfaction among NP supporters. In fact, one year after 1976, white support for the National Party was at its peak: 67% of all votes went to the NP. Support for pro-apartheid parties did not decline afterwards; instead ultra-right-wing parties, such as the *Herstigte Nasionale Party* (HNP) and Conservative Party (CP), grew in stature (see Figure 3.2).

Even in the 1980s the NP could continually rely on a comfortable majority of all white votes. There was no broad rejection of the party responsible for the implementation and the so-called reform of apartheid, which took the form of an ostensible expansion of democracy through a highly undemocratic tri-cameral system for whites, coloureds and indians, while outright political discrimination against black South Africans continued. As the NP increasingly targeted the English-speaking white community with its programme of 'reform', Afrikaans-speaking white voters turned increasingly to right-wing parties (Van Rooyen 1994: 117-138). The HNP, a right-wing offshoot of the NP, gained 14% of all votes in 1981. The South African electoral system, however, prevented the HNP from gaining any seats in parliament, despite its success at the polls. Six years later, the CP, under the leadership of former NP minister Andries Treurnicht, accounted for 27% of all votes becoming the second biggest opposition party in parliament. In 1989, it repeated its success with 31% of the votes, mobilising the same percentage of white voters in the 1992 referendum with its "No" campaign against a negotiated settlement with the ANC. Those parties opposing apartheid and its so-called 'reform', the liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and its successor, the Democratic Party (DP), enjoyed a maximum support of only 20% of the white South African electorate during the 1980s.

Figure 3.2: Voting patterns of white South Africans in 1981, 1987, 1989 and 1992
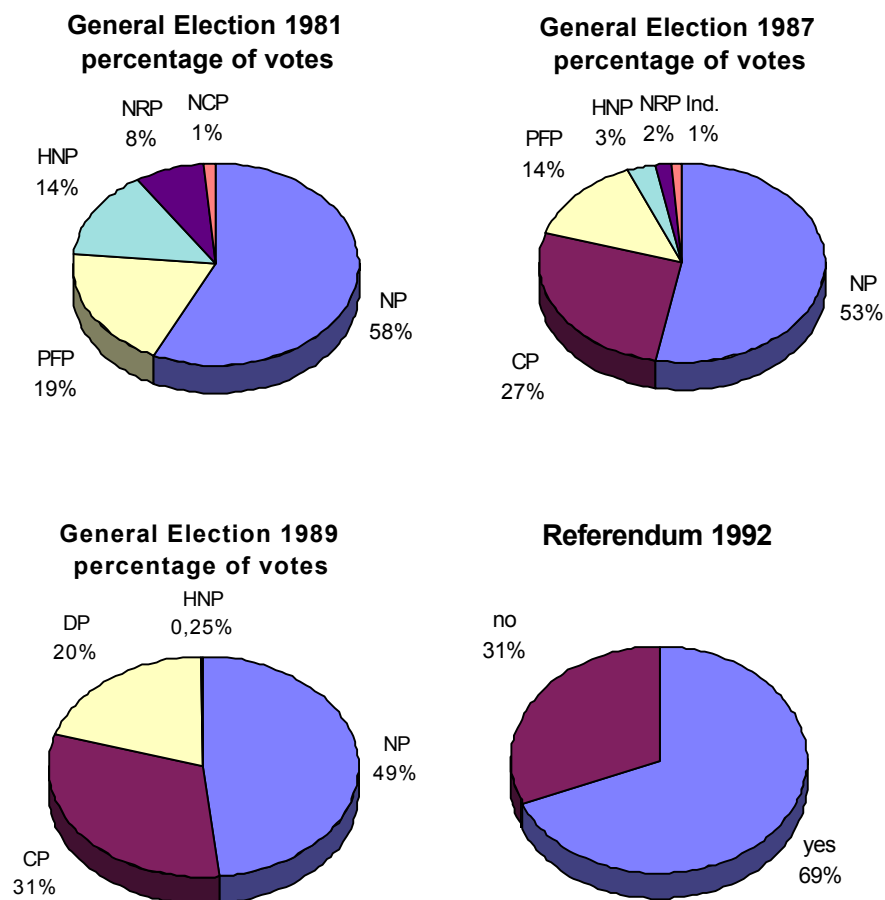
Source: Van Rooyen (1994: 119, 128, 137, 152).

It could be argued that not every white South African who voted for the NP did so only because of its apartheid policies. Nor does support for the PFP or DP necessarily prove that their voters were solely motivated by the parties' opposition to apartheid. The survey research which immediately follows nevertheless confirms that in 1984 there was overwhelming support for apartheid by people with NP-voting inclinations compared to those orientated towards the more liberal parties in 1984.

3.3 Support for Apartheid Legislation in Public Opinion Surveys

Extensive survey research was conducted about the behaviour of the white electorate during the apartheid period. The government-funded Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), for example, conducted many public-opinion surveys which monitored the official 'reform' programme, which implicitly tried to justify the tri-cameral system (Rhoodie, de Kock & Couper 1985). In February and March 1984 the HSRC asked a national probability sample of 1024 white urban South Africans over the age of 18 years about their perception of national problems and their support or rejection of specific apartheid measures. The purpose of this survey could be seen as an attempt to find justification for the tri-cameral system, and to ascertain which petty apartheid measures could be scrapped without alienating too many NP supporters (see Figure 3.3).

Fig. 3.3: Attitudes of urban white South Africans towards seven fundamental apartheid structures (1984)
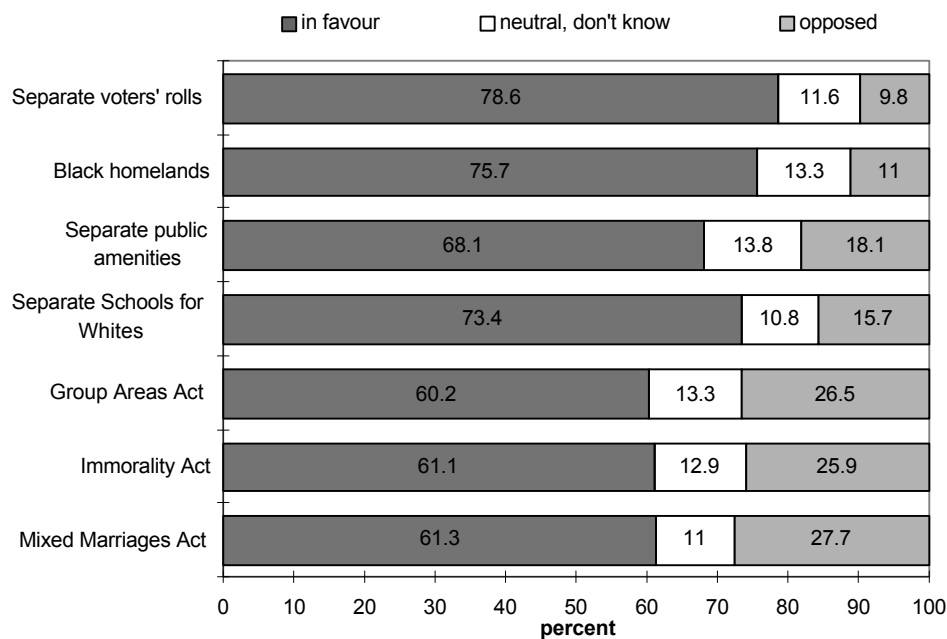
N = 1024   Source: Rhoodie, De Kock & Couper (1985: 314).

The results show that every basic apartheid structure was supported by at least 60% of urban white South Africans in 1984, with an average of 20% of all urban white South Africans opposing those regulations which formed the basis of apartheid. This reflects roughly the percentage of support for political parties to the left of the NP during the 1980s, and as can be expected, support for various apartheid measures varied significantly in terms of the party orientation of the respondents. Only eleven percent of all urban white South Africans supporting the PFP were in favour of all seven apartheid measures, while 43,5 per cent of those of NP party orientation and 59,8% of CP orientation totally supported all seven apartheid measures (Rhoodie, de Kock & Couper 1985: 311). As the survey excluded white South Africans living in rural areas, which are traditionally more conservative and right-wing oriented, the support for apartheid was probably even higher than suggested by the results of the HSRC survey.

Figure 3.4: Attitudes towards seven fundamental apartheid structures among urban Afrikaans-speaking whites (1984)
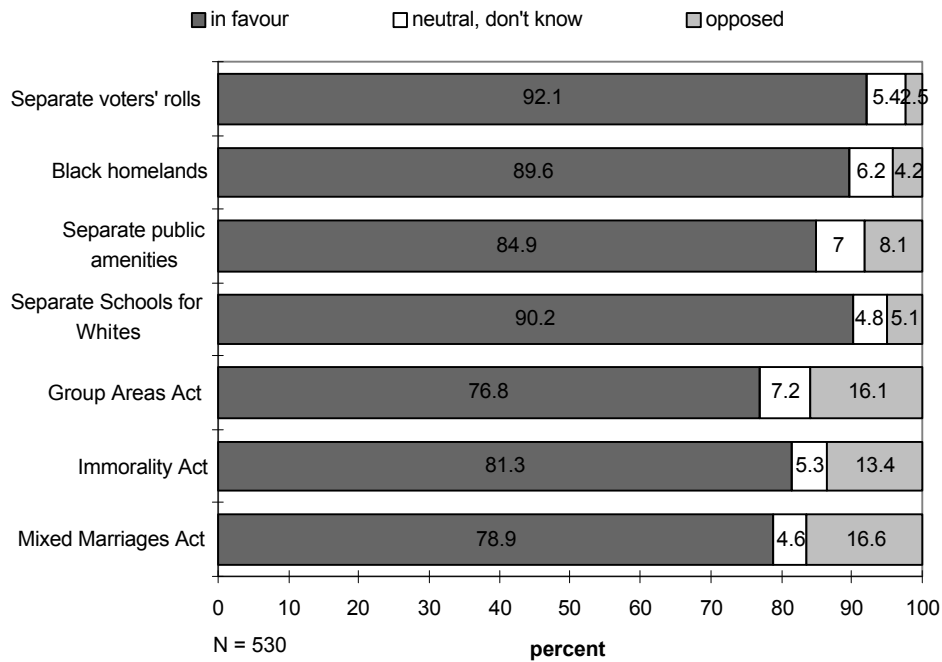
Figure 3.5: Attitudes towards seven fundamental apartheid structures among urban English-speaking whites (1984)
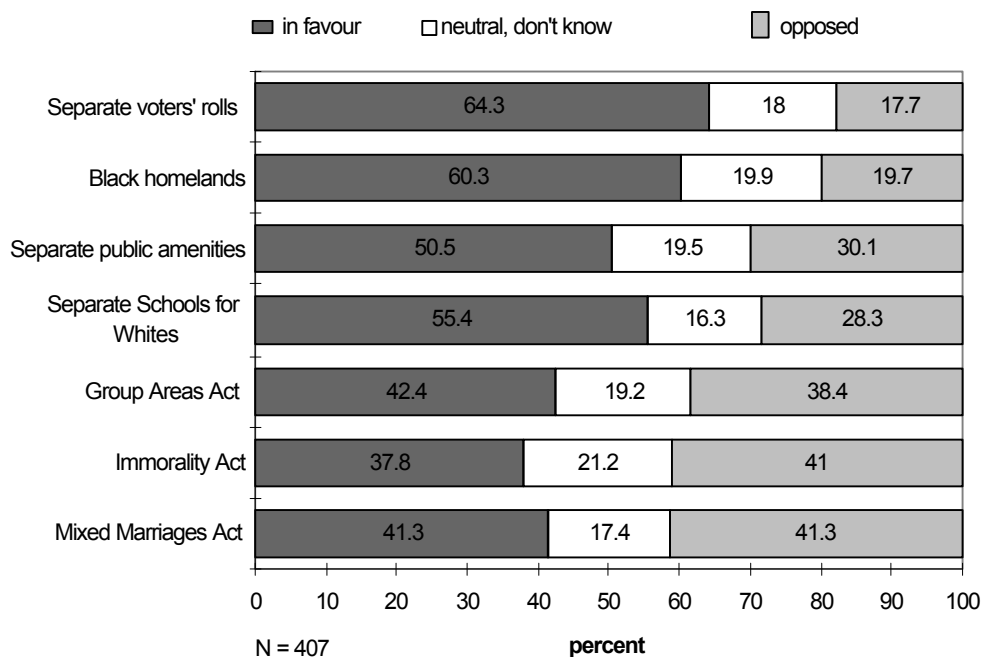
Source: Rhoodie, De Kock & Couper (1985: 314).

It is commonly believed that English-speaking white South Africans have always been opposed to apartheid. This is also a myth. The following graphs (Figures 3.4 and 3.5) illustrate two factors: While it is true that support for apartheid and its fundamental structures was significantly stronger among Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, it is untrue that the majority of English-speaking white South Africans opposed apartheid and its discriminatory laws. Only a minority of English-speaking white

South Africans showed a willingness to give up their privileges which were based on the legalised system of injustice.

3.3 Attitudes of White South Africans Towards Repressive Acts

Figure 3.6: In October the Government banned a number of newspapers and organisations and detained a number of people. Do you approve or disapprove? - White South Africans (November 1977)

don't know
12%

disapprove
20%

approve
68%
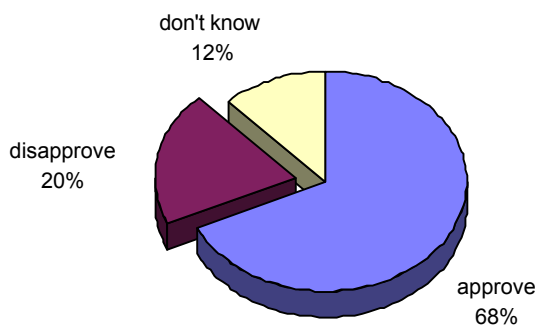
N = 2200   M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38).

Figure 3.7: What is your personal opinion regarding the SADF's recent attack on ANC bases in the suburbs of Maputo in Mocambique? - White South Africans (July 1983)

against
9%

don't know
2%
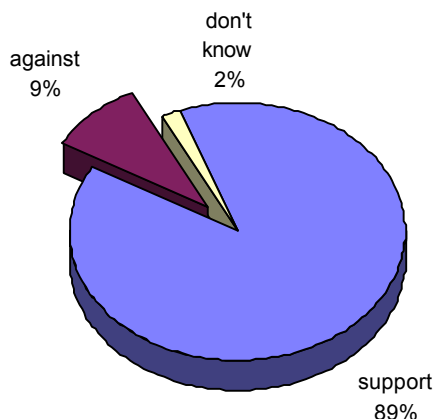
support
89%

N = 1980   M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38).

Public opinion research conducted by the HSRC and Market & Opinion Ltd. (M&O) for the daily newspaper *Rapport* between 1977 and 1989 (see Hofmeyer, 1990) confirms that there was also a high degree of support for repressive acts by the former government against its opponents. One example concerns the government's banning of a range of newspapers and anti-apartheid organisations in October 1977, including nearly all black-consciousness organisations and the Christian Institute of Rev. Beyers Naude. Shortly after, when white South Africans were asked if they approved or disapproved of these repressive measures, only 20% disapproved (Figure 3.6).

Cross-border raids by the South African Defence Force (SADF) into neighbouring states against alleged ANC-bases also received overwhelming public support from white South Africans (Figure 3.7). The May 1983 raid, one of more than a dozen direct military operations in Mozambique contravening international law, was an act of revenge in response to the deadly ANC-bomb blast in front of the South African Air Force Headquarters, Military Intelligence and Naval Offices in downtown Pretoria. On 29 May 1983 a dozen South African jets attacked the Matola and Liberdade suburbs of Maputo. The SADF claimed it had destroyed ANC bases and killed what it called 41 'ANC terrorists'. In fact, it killed three workers at a jam factory as they arrived for work, a soldier guarding a bridge, a child playing and an ANC man washing a car. At least 40 other people were injured, mostly women and children (Hanlon 1986:138). Public criticism of the attack was very limited despite the fact that it hit mainly civilian Mozambicans, although today most white South Africans would probably argue that they did not know the real facts anyway.

Figure 3.8 confirms that there was extensive support for the security policy of the Botha regime among white urban South Africans irrespective of their home language. In 1984 only about 3% were critical of the government's handling of combating terrorism. In the same survey 80% of all respondents felt that the government was either underspending on defence or spending sufficiently.

Figure 3.8: Government's handling of combating terrorism (1984)
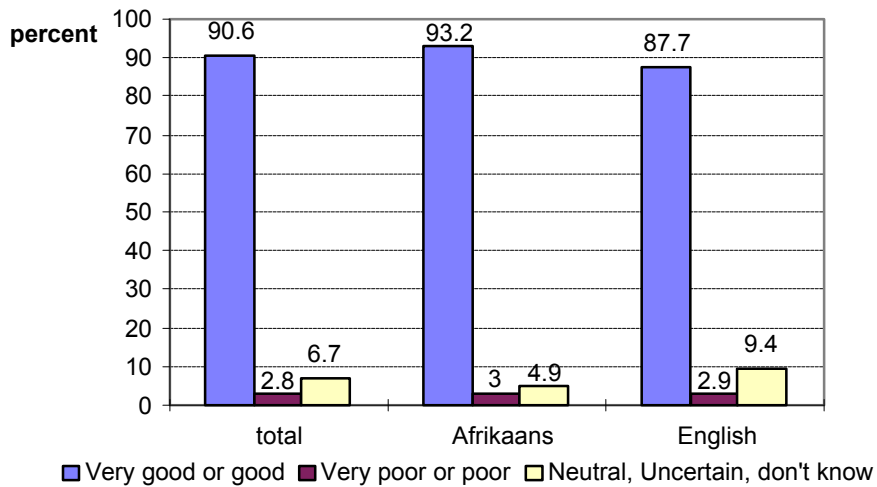
N = 1024   Source: HSRC - Rhoodie, De Kock & Couper (1985: 308).

It was also not only measures against members of the armed wing of the ANC that were portrayed as 'combating terrorism'. The following question in an M&O-Survey reflects this particular type of rhetoric (Figure 3.9):

The high rate of positive response to these questions was undoubtedly secured by the use of the words 'terrorism' or 'terror', known to guarantee an emotive response across the globe. The euphemistic "stronger action" and very broad "fellow travellers" are classic examples of the then government's manipulative techniques for legitimating its activities. "Fellow travellers" obviously included many non-violent anti-apartheid-organisations and activists who were affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Even when white South Africans were asked about the practice of detention without trial after nearly four years of national states of emergency, a comfortable majority of respondents still had no objection to this blatant form of human rights violation (Figure 3.10). This is indeed surprising, as some of the South African press did report critically and

Figure 3.9: What should be done to prevent or reduce terror attacks: Stronger action against the ANC and fellow travellers? - White South Africans (November 1988)

N = 1630   M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38).

responsibly about the mass detention of black people under emergency regulations. An estimated 25 000 people had been detained in the first year of the state of emergency in 1986/1987 alone, including many children of school-going age. Reports about severe ill-treatment and torture in detention were widespread (Foster et al. 1987; Webster & Friedman 1989:22; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1986; Human Rights Commission *et al.* 1989). Afrikaans- and English-speaking white South Africans showed a large difference in their attitudes towards detention without trial. A three-quarter majority of Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans were still supporting detention without trial in 1989, while the support among English-speaking white South Africans was down to 30%.

Figure 3.10: Please indicate your personal preference regarding the following statement: Detention without trial for suspected violators of security laws? White South Africans (May 1989)
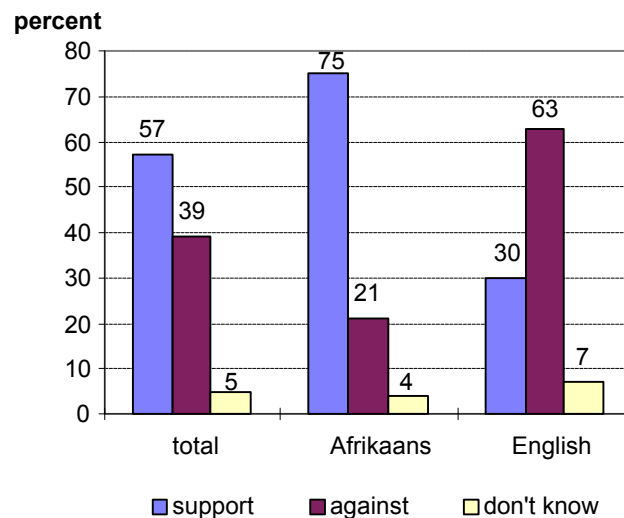
N = 1638   M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38).

Even young people with high education supported the repressive acts of the apartheid government. A survey conducted among 638 white students at Stellenbosch University in 1986 revealed that every second student supported the detention of demonstrators. Sixty-nine percent were in favour to deploy military to end a strike and 72% held the opinion that the police should fire on demonstrators who threw stones at them (Gagiano 1986: 19-21). In an other survey 85% of all Afrikaans-speaking students believed that the SADF would protect the interests of ordinary township dwellers and nearly every third student supported the statement that white South Africans should defend their political dominance with force (Booysen 1989: 18-21).

Opinion poll research provides a fairly negative image of the human rights awareness of the white population of South Africa before 1990. It shows a high degree of tolerance for the repressive acts which were often justified by government propaganda as a legitimate defence against communism and terrorism. As attitude change is a complex and lengthy process, these figures suggest that the state of human rights awareness among white South Africans is probably still low, indicating that institutions such as the Truth Commission will not find it easy to promote a human rights culture in South Africa.

3.4 White Attitude Change in the 1980s

There are, however, some indicators of a softening of white racial attitudes during the 1980s, for example an increasing readiness to do away with petty discriminatory legislation such as the Separate Amenities Act (Figure 3.11). There is evidence to support the hypothesis that these changes in attitude were in many cases more a result of shifts in government policy than a reflection of increasing criticism from the white electorate. White support for the Immorality Act dropped from 61,1% in March 1984 (see Figure 3.3) to 38% in June 1985 (Rhoodie *et al.* 1985b). In the interim, the Act had been scrapped and the government had launched a major media campaign to justify this move. The same happened after F. W. de Klerk announced the unconditional unbanning of the liberation movements, and the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990. After Mandela's unconditional release a clear majority of white South Africans supported that decision for the first time (Figure 3.12). Similarly, while only one out of five white South Africans had supported the meeting in Dakar of leading South African businessmen and the ANC in October 1987 (and with Dr Craven in Harare in November 1988), 44% supported the unbanning of all organisations, including the ANC, after the government decision in February 1990 (see Table 3.1).

Figure 3.11: Attitudes of white South Africans towards the separate amenities act: 1978-1990
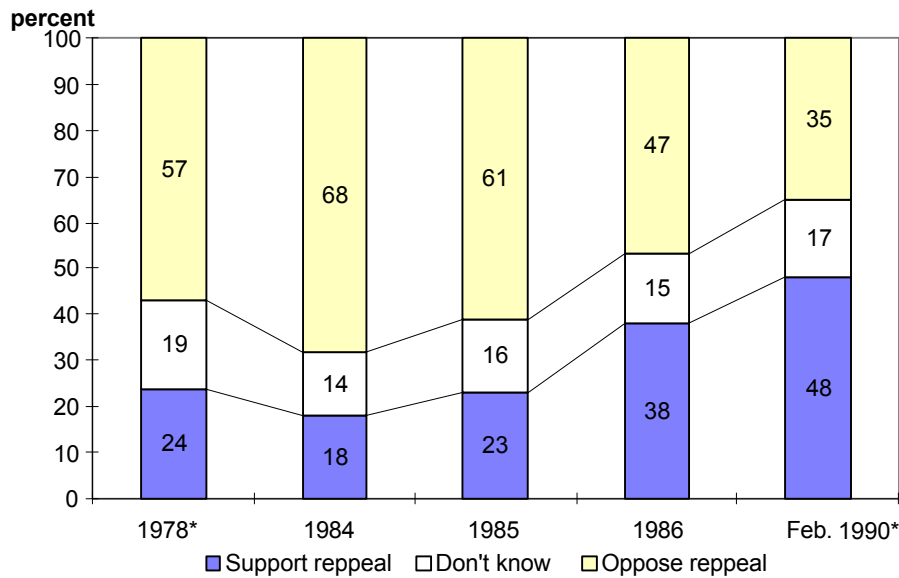
Sources: HSRC, Rhoodie & Couper (1987: 202); *M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38)

Table 3.1: Attitude towards the ANC (1987-1990)

	Dakar meeting with ANC, Oct. 1987	Harare meeting with ANC, Nov. 1988	Unbanning of all organisations incl. the ANC, Feb. 1990
Yes: approve	20 %	21 %	44 %
Don't know	16 %	28 %	13 %
No: disapprove	63 %	51 %	43 %
N =	1692	1630	503

Source: M & O Surveys; Hofmeyr (1990: 40).

Figure 3.12: Attitudes towards the release of Nelson Mandela - White South Africans (1985-1990)
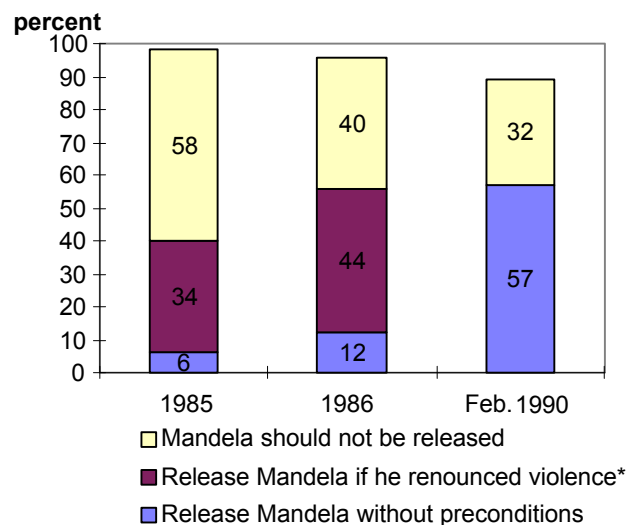
N = 500   *not asked in Feb. 1990   M & O Surveys, Hofmeyr (1990: 38).

Thus it can be argued that without these shifts in government policy there would not have been the 1992 whites-only referendum, nor the astonishingly high 69% support for the negotiation process.

Therefore, in summary the facts about white South Africans' support for apartheid are clear. A large majority voted for the NP or parties even further to the right, and consistently expressed support for a variety of apartheid practices and policies. It was only when the NP elite took the initiative, first in doing away with various forms of petty apartheid and later in unbanning the liberation movements, that white public opinion started to change.

Chapter 4

Methodology of the CSVR survey

Different methodological approaches in the Social Sciences have particular advantages and disadvantages. This chapter explains the empirical methods used to obtain the data reported on in the next chapter, pointing out the strengths and limitations of the particular research design chosen.

4.1 Telephone Surveys Compared to Other Methods

In order to conduct the survey nation-wide, it was decided to conduct telephonic interviews. This was made possible by the fact that about 89% of white households have a telephone (South African Advertising Research Foundation 1995). Telephone surveys also have the advantage of being more time and cost effective than mail or face-to face surveys. The response rate for telephone surveys is higher than that for mail-surveys (Frey 1989: 52), and does not differ significantly from that for face-to face-interviews (Frey 1989:33-78; Lavrakas 1987). In addition, the likelihood of compromising the quality of data as a result of interviewer differences is less for telephone interviews than for face-to face interviews.

To minimise respondents' feeling threatened, interviews were conducted by a white interviewer. Each interview took an average of 25 minutes to complete. Research has shown that this is an ideal length of time for interviews of this type (Dillman 1978:55; Frey 1989: 67-68).

4.2 Sampling and Respondent Selection

The sample for the survey was drawn from a complete edition of the official Telkom telephone directories of South Africa. One number was selected from every tenth page, starting with a random page number (Frey 1989: 86-91). The alphabetical order of the listing in telephone directories has no bearing on other important characteristics such as income or political affiliation. This approach was chosen for its efficiency, as it also excludes business numbers and telephone numbers of many "non-white" residents who are often identifiable by African or Indian surnames. A question in the introduction of the survey made sure that only white South Africans were interviewed.

In order to convert the household sample into a representative sample of adults, a random technique of respondent selection within each household was used. This was to prevent the sample from being biased by including disproportionate numbers of those who are more easily accessible, like housewives or retired persons. In order to include persons who are not as easily contactable (i.e. young and working people), the adult in the household whose birthday was next was interviewed. The "next-birthday method" is based on the premise that birth date is a random process (Salmon & Nichols 1983). Compared to other older respondent selection techniques (Troldahl-Carter 1964; Kish 1949) it has the advantage of being non-intrusive and less time-consuming since the contacted person does not have to provide full information about all the other adults in the household. (Lavrakas 1989:98).

4.3 Response Rate

At least six attempts at contact were made for each selected number during different times and on different days. Interviewing took place during working days and weekends up to 21h00 in the evening. The response rate to the survey was 53%. This is a satisfactory response rate, as white South Africans at present are fairly reluctant to participate in surveys of a political nature. Remarks like "The New-South Africa - I do not want to say anything about it, we have to live with it" indicate that those people not in favour of the new political dispensation may have been less willing to participate. This is also confirmed by the relatively high voting preferences for the ANC (12%), compared to astonishingly low voting preference for the Conservative Party (CP), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) in the surveyed population. This could be because more conservative white South Africans may have been less anxious to participate in a politically flavoured telephone survey linked to a university institution with a traditionally liberal or progressive image such as the University of the Witwatersrand. Also, people are generally reluctant to admit their support for political parties that are considered to be extreme. The under-reporting of political support for right-wing organisations, discernible by respondents' saying "don't know" or refusing to answer the "general election question" in public opinion surveys is in fact an internationally observable phenomenon.

4.4 Sample Size and Error Margins

In total, 124 interviews were conducted between 8 May and 1 June 1996. As some interviews could not be fully completed or respondents refused to answer some questions, the total is smaller in certain cases. The statistical standard error for 124 responses drawn at random from a large population is 9,0%. This means that if 50% supported a certain statement, one can say with 95% certainty that the actual figure would be somewhere between 41 and 59%. The error margin depends on the distribution of responses, such that if 90% said "yes" in the survey and 10% said "no", the actual figure will be in the +/- 5,4% interval with a probability of 95%, around the respective percentages. Of course, this is only the statistical variability due to the sample size. Errors due to non-response, or the influence of the interviewer on the answers obtained are not indicated by those figures as they are not calculable. Despite these limitations, the survey provides a reliable estimate of the attitudes of white South Africans towards those issues and institutions on which the opinion poll focused. However, further survey research is however necessary to confirm the validity of the results.

4.5 Socio-economic Characteristics of the Sample

A comparison of the sample with the latest available data (from the 1991 census) of the adult white population in South Africa, suggests that the randomly selected sample is fairly representative of the larger population, although white men were slightly over-represented (53,2% in the survey; 49,7% according to census data). The age profile and regional distribution of the sample also reflect the distribution of the white population of South Africa according to the 1991 government census. The Afrikaans-speaking population was under-represented by about 8% (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the white South African population and the surveyed sample

White South Africans	according population census 1991	in survey May 1996
sex		
male	**49,7 %**	**53,2 %**
female	**50,3 %**	**46,8 %**
home language		
Afrikaans	**58 %**	**50,8 %**
English	**39 %**	**47,6 %**
Other	**3 %**	**1,6 %**
percentage of adults belonging to age-group		
18-19 years	**3 %**	**3 %**
20-34 years	**35 %**	**33 %**
35-49 years	**29 %**	**30 %**
50-64 years	**19 %**	**20 %**
65 years and older	**13 %**	**14 %**

White South Africans	according population census 1991	in survey May 1996
residence in region / province		
Gauteng	**42,5 %**	**32,3 %**
Western Cape	**17,0 %**	**21,8 %**
KwaZulu-Natal	**11,8 %**	**16,9 %**
Eastern Cape	**7,3 %**	**8,1 %**
Free State	**6,5 %**	**5,6 %**
Mpumalanga	**5,5 %**	**2,4 %**
North-West	**4,3 %**	**5,6 %**
Northern Province	**2,7 %**	**4,0 %**
Northern Cape	**2,3 %**	**3,2 %**

Sources: 1991 census of the Central Statistical Service (CSS), Pretoria, reprinted in: South African Institute of Race Relations (1994:84-89) and own calculations.

4.6 Questionnaire

The Questionnaire used (see *APPENDIX A*) focuses on six broad issues: Perceptions of the New South Africa; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; attitudes towards responsibility for past repression; perceptions of the apartheid period; attitudes towards the black population of South Africa; and attitudes about human rights. Several scales were used to measure each issue as accurately as possible. Each question was carefully chosen on pragmatic or theoretical grounds, or based on previous research. Some interviews were taped to gather additional qualitative information from the respondents.

4.7 Calculation of Indices

Agreement with a single 'racist' item is not a sufficient indicator for asserting that a respondent is prejudiced against blacks. Similarly, other factors of interest, such as support for the Truth Commission, can not be deduced from single responses. Various indices were therefore developed, each consisting of summated responses from a number of items relating to the same issue. The exact composition of each index used (the NSA Index, Equality Index, HR Index, Apartheid Index, TRC Index and Denial Index) is described in more detail in *APPENDIX B*. Indices were in some cases used to classify respondents into different sub-groups, for example by degree of racial prejudice, in order to facilitate comparisons among different groups.

Chapter 5

Perceptions of the new South Africa

Results from the May 1996 CSVR survey are presented in the next three chapters. In this chapter results pertaining to white[1] South Africans' perceptions of the current political dispensation are presented. Broad trends in attitudes towards the new democratic South Africa are discussed first, followed by attitudes to specific aspects of the new dispensation. These include attitudes to measures promoting socio-economic justice, non-racism and human rights.

Figure 5.1. How happy are you with the new political system in South Africa in general?

very happy
2%

not happy at all
25%

quite happy
38%

not very happy
33%

don't know
2%

N = 123
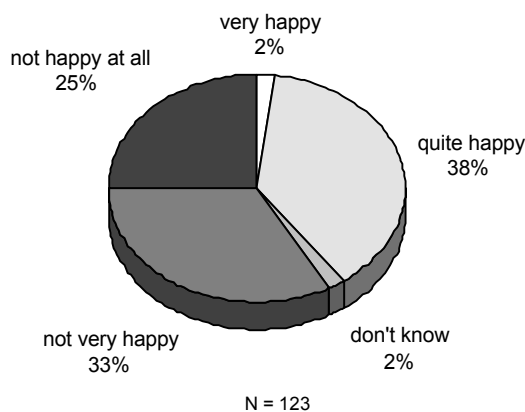
White South Africans' attitudes to the new democracy can be characterised as ambivalent. While there is relatively high support for the new national flag (33% say that they are very happy, 48% are moderately happy and only 18% say that they are not at all happy), support for the new political system is low (Figure 5.1).

These results are somewhat more positive than those from a survey done by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) in September and November 1995. Although the questions were not identical, it is worth noting that in the IDASA survey only 22% of all white South Africans said that they were satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way democracy works in South Africa.

As is illustrated in Table 5.1, younger white South Africans are more content with the new political system than older people.

In addition to age, acceptance of the new democratic political system is also dependent on a subjective rating of respondents' personal economic situation. Those respondents who said that their own economic situation had improved (about 8% of all respondents) were in four out of five cases very happy or quite happy with the new political system, while 70% of those who felt that their own economic situation had become worse (61% of all respondents) were not very happy or not at all happy.

Additional findings from the survey (not tabulated) suggest that white South Africans who are unhappy with the new democratic dispensation are more likely to live in a small town or rural area, feel economically deprived and reject policies intended to promote greater social justice. They also tend to glorify the old apartheid system. Surprisingly, no significant differences between Afrikaans and English-speaking respondents were found with respect to their attitude towards the new political system.

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[1] The terms "white South Africans" or "English speaking white South Africans" are used to refer to the surveyed population. As discussed in the previous chapter it is possible to generalise the findings to the entire white South African population, but such generalisation are subject to statistical and other error given the small sample size. If not stated elsewhere, all percentages reported reflect the results of the unweighted data of the surveyed population.

Table 5-1. How happy are you with the new political system?

	18-30 years (N = 31)	31-40 years (N = 29)	41-60 years (N = 36)	over 60 (N = 23)	*total sample (N = 123)*
very happy or quite happy	58 %	45 %	25 %	35 %	*40 %*
don't know, not very happy, not happy at all	42 %	55 %	75 %	65 %	*60 %*
	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	*100 %*

Despite relatively low satisfaction with the new political system, nearly 50% of all respondents say that they believe that South Africa is moving in the right direction. Less than 30% feel that South Africa is moving in the wrong direction. With nearly 25% undecided, a high proportion is clearly reluctant to judge the development of the country at the moment. During the interviews many respondents said that it was too soon to comment at this early stage.

President Mandela's role in the country is generally positively acknowledged by the majority of white South Africans. Over 55% say that he has done either very well or well in bringing about reconciliation in the country. Only about 33% say that he has done fairly and only about 8% say that he has done poorly in this respect. Respondents often qualified their response by explicitly distinguishing between President Mandela and the ANC, saying that the later's role or image is negative. The results confirm that President Mandela plays an important role as a symbol who is admired by large sections of the white population for his efforts to accommodate the interests of various communities in South Africa.

Identification with the concept of a "rainbow nation" is lower than with the own population group (Afrikaans or English speaking white South African). Figure 5.2 illustrates this. The question about the "rainbow nation" was introduced because it alludes to identification with the multicultural South African nation as a whole.

Figure 5.2.

Are you very proud, quite proud, not very proud or not proud at all to be a ...
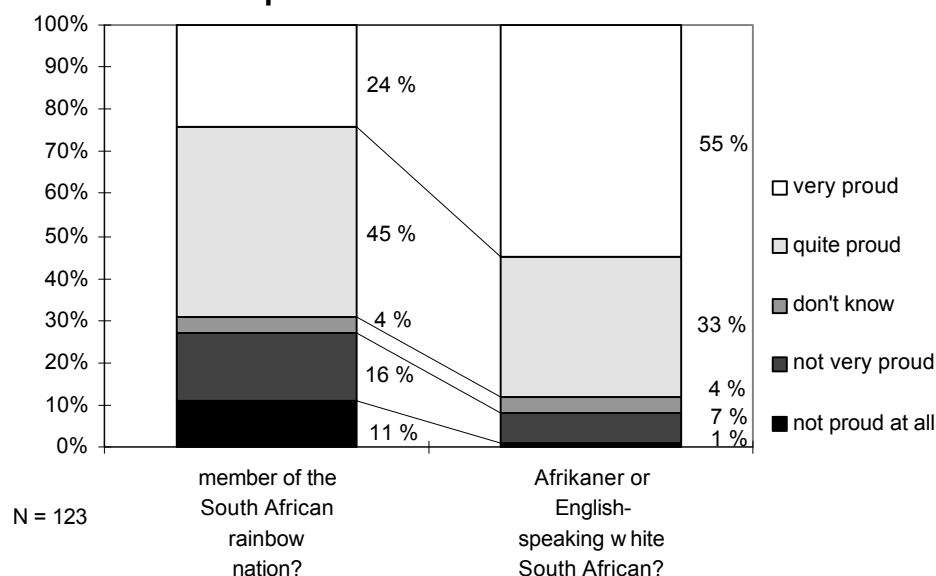
The extent to which attitudes towards the new democratic South Africa are linked to the acceptance of the TRC and the way people want to deal with the past will be discussed later.

5.1 Attitudes towards policies to promote socio-economic justice

The notion that there cannot be justice without addressing the socio-economic legacy of apartheid is not shared to the same degree by all white South Africans. Respondents were asked about their views on three different policies "which have been suggested to reduce the inequalities between the different population groups in South Africa". The items included the opening of white schools to black students, a question on affirmative action and a question on the land issue. Compared to the previously-mentioned high level of disapproval of racial integration in schools expressed in 1984 (73%; Figure 5.3), white resistance to the opening of former white schools has dropped dramatically to about 20%. While the opening of white schools to blacks was supported by 43% of all respondents, support for affirmative action and the redistribution of land to blacks for a modest compensation is relatively low.

Figure 5.3. Attitudes to different policies for greater socio-economic justice
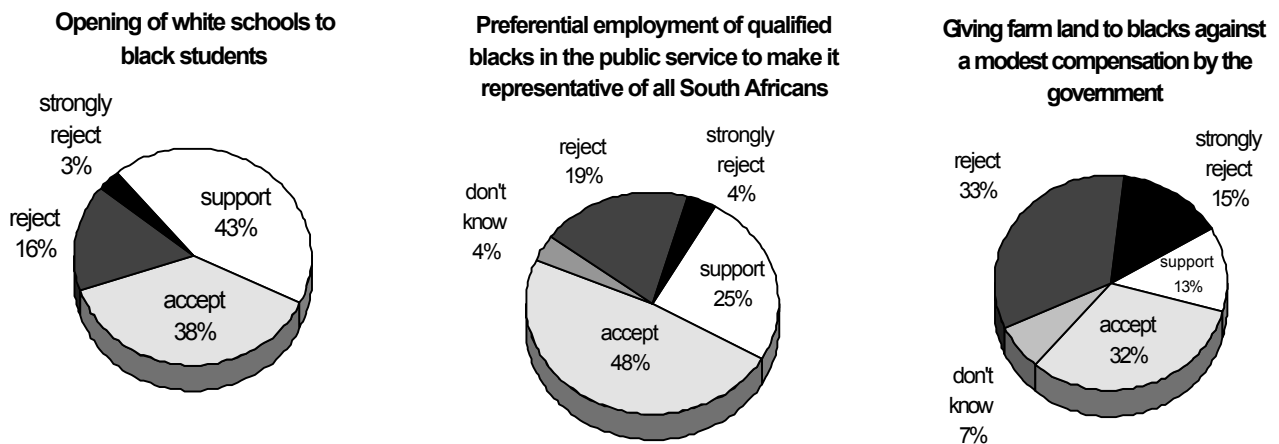
No significant differences were found between Afrikaans and English-speaking white South Africans in their attitudes towards these three equality-promoting policies in the survey. Support or disapproval did not depend strongly on the age of respondents. Compared to the older age groups there was only a marginally higher support for socio-economic justice in the youngest age-group (white South Africans under 30 years). People who support affirmative action, land distribution and racial integration in schools are on average relatively satisfied with the new democracy, have more human rights awareness, a more critical historical consciousness, and tend to glorify apartheid less.

During the interviews it appeared that many respondents wanted to accept equality-promoting policies only in principle. They felt that they were being wrongly implemented and would either result in a dropping of standards or discriminate against white South Africans. These views might partly reflect real problems arising out of the racial integration of schools or problematically implemented affirmative action policies, but the high level of disapproval for equality promoting policies is also clearly linked to racial prejudice.

How racial prejudice affect attitudes towards the issues of racial integration in schools, affirmative action and land redistribution became obvious in many of the respondents' comments: One respondent said:

> "*Integration* [in schools] *doesn't work. You know these blacks do not fit in our school here. Maybe some of them do, but you will easily find that they come from a different culture. They do not work, and can't even calculate one by one. If they want to join our school, all right. But before that they must learn Afrikaans properly and behave.*"

Another person responded to the affirmative action question by saying:

> "*Have you seen a <u>qualified</u> black person getting a job in recent times? You see what I mean. The idea might be fine, but I'll tell you what it is: It is apartheid in reverse. If you are a male, thirty years and white, you will never get a job in the new South Africa. Isn't it?.*"

The rejection of any land redistribution was often explained by the argument that it was white farmers who had cultivated the soil for the first time, so nobody should be entitled to take it away from them now. Another argument was that blacks could not run a farm. So-called bad experiences everywhere else in Africa were often used to explain their position on land reform:

> "*Just drive to Zimbabwe and look. They gave fertile land to blacks to settle. If you go there now the place is overcrowded and the soil is wasted. Nobody has gained and the economy is in crisis. That is what happened everywhere in Africa when some stupid people decided to hand out land for nothing to their people.*"

These statements indicate that the negative attitude towards policies promoting more socio-economic justice can to a large degree be explained by racism. This can be confirmed by a cross-tabulation of the Racism and Equality-Scale[2] (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. How racism affects attitudes towards equality-promoting policies

attitude towards socio-economic justice	degree of racism			*total sample*
	_not racist (N = 39)	_slightly racist (N = 47)	racist (N = 34)	
support	59 %	17 %	3 %	*27 %*
accept	26 %	32 %	32 %	*29 %*
reject	15 %	51 %	65 %	*44 %*
	100 %	100 %	100 %	*100 %*

For every three people who were classified as holding racist views, two rejected equality-promoting policies outright, and only one accepted the idea. Hardly any (3%) of the respondents in this category supported policies for greater socio-economic justice. Among people who do not hold racist views the support was much higher (59%), compared to those classified as slightly prejudiced (17%) or those classified as being strongly prejudiced (3%).

The rejection of redistributive policies is also directly linked to feelings of relative deprivation. This means that it is very often accompanied by the perception that one's own population group is being treated unfairly compared to other groups. Even if the new democratic government did not radically cut the privileges of the white population, there is a strong perception among white South Africans that too much is being done for blacks at their expense and that they are the victims of the changes since 1994. Only about 30% of white South Africans do not share either of these sentiments. Of those respondents

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[2] The scales are described in greater detail in Appendix B.

who agreed with the statement "The white population is the victim of the changes since 1994", 61% were against the three policies for more social justice. Of those who did not share that feeling, only 21% rejected these policies, while 79% accepted or supported them.

5.2 Racism and racial attitudes

As the main focus of this study is not to examine racism in South Africa per se, but rather to show how racism is linked with attitudes towards dealing with the past and the TRC, the survey only gives a few general indications. A breakdown of the response to the Subtle Racism Scale (Figure 5.4) shows that open support for items which are more socially acceptable in the new South Africa is relatively high. Two-thirds supported the statement "Immigration of blacks to South Africa should not be allowed" - a statement probably also endorsed by many black South Africans. Mozambican immigrants or Nigerian exiles are often portrayed as "criminals" or "drug-dealers". About 54% of all respondents felt that "it is crucial that whites retain economic control", but only a few people (about 15%) said that they would mind if blacks moved into their residential area. That would be too easily interpreted as supporting apartheid.

Support for items measuring social distance also varied strongly. While only about 20% said that they are not really interested in having African friends or do not want to be treated by a black medical practitioner, nearly 60% found that "it is certainly best for all concerned that interracial marriages should not take place." Figure 5.4 details the responses to the specific items on the scale.

Of particular interest is who the people are who share the more racist sentiments. The whole sample was therefore divided into three sub-groups: people who do not support the 'racist' items of the Racism-Scale at all, people with a "medium" tendency towards racism and a third group of "racists" who supported at least seven or more "racist"-items out of the ten items.

While there was only a very slight difference between male and female respondents, which could also be attributed to statistical error, it seems that people with racist views tend to have a lower standard of education and are more likely to live in small towns or rural areas. There was quite a high degree of difference of opinion between younger and older white South Africans in the sample. Thirty nine percent of all respondents over the age of 40 scored high enough on the Racism Index to be classified as holding racist views, while only 18% of the younger South Africans fall into the "racist" category. This can be seen as a source of hope for the future.

The survey confirmed that racism is an attitude predominantly shared by those who feel that they have lost out or been marginalised by society. Respondents who said their economic situation had deteriorated since 1994 scored higher on the Racism index than those claiming that their economic situation had improved or stayed the same.

The survey results also indicate that the subjective perception of one's own economic situation is more important than what a person can afford in reality. No big differences in racial attitudes could be traced between white South Africans with higher and lower income. The survey data indicated surprisingly that those who earned less than R2500 per month are slightly less racist then those who have a monthly income of between R4000 and R7000 at their disposal. This confirms research that xenophobia and racism are largely products of anxieties arising out of subjective discontent with one's own living situation and imagined competition and threat, rather than actual experiences (Geiger 1990: 34-36).

Figure 5.4:

Response to the Subtle-Racism-Scale

■ strongly agree   ■ largely agree   □ don't know   □ disagree   □ strongly disagree

Immigration of blacks to South Africa should not be allowed.
40 | **25** | 6 | 23 | 7

It is certainly best for all concerned that interracial marriages should not take place.
29 | **28** | 2 | 26 | 15

It is crucial for the stable development of the country that whites retain economic control.
18 | **36** | 6 | 34 | 7

Too much is being done for blacks at the expense of white people nowadays.
6 | **48** | 8 | 26 | 12

I do well understand why many white South Africans don't like blacks.
7 | **41** | 7 | 39 | 5

I'm not really interested to have African friends.
2 | **17** | 4 | 53 | 24

0% — 20% — 40% — 60% — 80% — 100%

■ strongly disagree   ■ disagree   □ don't know   □ largely agree   □ strongly agree

Given favourable conditions it is quite possible that black majority rule could result in a stable, prosperous, and democratic South Africa.
12 | **26** | 8 | 48 | 6

I do not mind whether I am treated by a white or black medical practitioner.
20 | 68 | 10

Given the same education and opportunities, blacks should be able to perform as well as whites in any field.
15 | 47 | 34

I do not mind, if blacks move into my residential area
13 | 68 | 15

N =122

0% — 20% — 40% — 60% — 80% — 100%

As expected, racism in this sample is accompanied by a negative attitude towards the new democracy in South Africa (DSA-Index), a relative lack of concern for human rights and civil liberties (HR-Index) and feelings of relative deprivation (RD-Index). Those who consider themselves victims of the new dispensation and discriminated against not only reject the call for more socio-economic justice for the black majority, but are also more prejudiced against black people.

Apart from long-standing prejudices, involving stereotypes of black people as lazy, violent and so on, racism is now also expressed in the relatively new resentment that black people use their new positions of power to implement unfair policies and to discriminate against whites. Some of the forms this reverse discrimination is thought to take include downgrading of Afrikaans on radio and television, higher taxes (which mainly affect whites), land redistribution, affirmative action and so on. It is also believed that blacks are using apartheid and the history of racial discrimination as a tool to make unjustified claims for things they are not entitled to or did nothing to earn. This type of argument is of course quite similar to a frequently encountered anti-Semitic stereotype in post-war Germany, discussed previously, which portrays Jews as making money out of the holocaust (Bergmann & Erb 1991: 32-34).

5.3 Attitudes towards human rights and civil liberties

On 9 May 1996 the Constitutional Assembly of South Africa adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world with a detailed catalogue of fundamental rights and freedoms. The clauses on non-racism and non-sexism are extremely advanced compared with many other countries. The constitution prohibits every form of discrimination, including that based on sexual orientation. The list of basic rights and freedoms includes the right to life and physical integrity, which is diametrically opposed to the death penalty. The new constitution has sanctioned the establishment of a permanent and independent Human Rights Commission to monitor the human rights situation and to listen to complaints. The emphasis of the new constitution is on many of those rights which have been violated in the past.

The experience of other countries suggests that changes in human rights awareness, however, do not accompany these fundamental legal and institutional changes with the same swiftness or thoroughness. No matter how advanced the constitution is, it cannot prevent human rights violations from happening if people do not know their own rights or disregard the rights of others. The most effective method of ensuring this is probably the creation of a societal consensus which holds fundamental rights and freedoms in high regard.

The TRC is one institution which is trying to promote the establishment of such an ethos. It forces the issue of human rights onto the media agenda and through its hearings is attempting to create a culture of accountability for past excesses. Other agents of change might be schooling, campaigns for the new Constitution and its values, the work of human rights NGOs and the attitude of white opinion leaders towards human rights issues. Acceptance of the new democracy in general and the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the own living condition which is often attributed to the new political order, might also significantly influence the extent to which the values of the new political system are endorsed.[3] The results of the survey do, however, establish that, despite the changes of the 1990s, human rights awareness is relatively low (Figure 5.5), confirming the need for institutions like the TRC.

The relatively low support for the item ("In every democratic society, certain conflicts must be resolved with violence") might on the one hand reflect the very strong desire of many South Africans to stop criminal violence in their country and the ongoing political violence in some parts of the country. On the other hand, this support for non-violent politics can partly be attributed to the negotiated settlement between the ANC and the NP. Despite the fact that more than 12 000 South Africans died through politically motivated violence between 1990 and 1994, the negotiations are often seen as an example of a peaceful transition process. Few white South Africans were themselves victims of the political violence.

A very frightening picture about the state of human rights awareness can be drawn from the response to another item. More than two out of three white South Africans supported the statement that detention of political prisoners may be necessary to maintain social order. This indicates that there has not been much change in the perception of the legitimacy of detention for political reasons since 1989. Only about 28% of respondents opposed this item. Support for detention of political prisoners was highest among South Africans between the ages of 41 and 60 (78%) and lowest among the youngest age group (61%).

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[3] As mentioned previously, the economic miracle after 1945 contributed to a form of *Constitutional patriotism* (Habermas) in West-Germany including greater awareness of those fundamental rights that are written down in the first paragraphs of the German *Grundgesetz* (basic law). This was not always the case. Doubts about the acceptance of democratic values by the German public were high at the time of the founding of the Federal Republic. Distrust in the German public and its values contributed at least partly to the decision to protect the essential content of fundamental rights in the Constitution against any attempts of watering them down through an eternality clause in Section 79 (3) in 1949. Even a qualified majority in parliament is only allowed to change the wording, but not the essential content of these rights.

Figure 5.5.

Attitudes towards human rights and civil liberties

■strongly agree　■agree　□don't know　□disagree　▨strongly disagree

There are times when detention of political prisoners may be necessary to maintain social order.
19 | 49 | 4 | 21 | 7

The police should be allowed to use their guns more frequently to maintain public order.
21 | 27 | 9 | 32 | 12

In every democratic society certain conflicts must be resolved with violence.
3 | 7 | 13 | 77

N = 122

0%　20%　40%　60%　80%　100%

■strongly disagree　■disagree　□don't know　□agree　▨strongly agree

Every citizen has the right to hold a demonstration
15 | 36 | 38 | 10

Every democratic party should be given the same chance to become the ruling party in an election contest.
4 | 34 | 40 | 20

Women should actively participate in politics in the same way as men.
4 | 11 | 40 | 44

People of all races should have equal access to basic rights and freedoms.
2 | 3 | 31 | 62

N = 122

0%　20%　40%　60%　80%　100%

Nearly half of all respondents (48%) felt that the police should be allowed to use their guns more frequently to maintain public order. It seems that according to white public opinion shooting people is still an acceptable way of policing. The wording of the item suggests that many respondents do not only want to allow the police to shoot in circumstances of crime control, but also in situations such as policing demonstrations or 'unrest' situations. The perception that it is necessary to make use of guns in ordinary policing is not only felt among the white respondents in the survey and will be supported by the majority of South Africans from other races. When the Minister of Justice suggested that there was an urgent need to restrict police's use of live ammunition to situations which were life-threatening to them, in order to meet acceptable human rights and policing standards, it caused a major outcry from police officials. They claimed that this would be a sell-out of the police and inevitably lead to an increase in the crime rate. The fact is that the South African Police Service is still allowed to shoot with live-ammunition to prevent the *escape* of a person who is suspected to have committed murder, armed robbery, rape, motor-vehicle theft or house-breaking. This has claimed not only the lives of many small-scale criminals but also those of people who were unfortunately considered to be involved in a

criminal activity.[4] If a police officer believes that a criminal is driving a stolen vehicle, for instance, he or she is legally entitled to shoot the suspect.

In the CSVR survey it was found that this "shoot first" mentality is stronger among male South Africans (51% support) than female (43% support) and also more accepted by Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans (56% support) than by English-speakers (39% support).

More white South Africans denied (51%) rather than approved (48%) their compatriots' right to hold a public gathering. The positive response to that item in West Germany was 86% in 1992 (Institut für Demoskopie 1993: 626). This negative attitude to public demonstrations can partly be attributed to the perception that public demonstrations are only regarded as liberation movement politics. Many respondents said demonstrations would always cause violence and unrest. Clashes between white and black students on many university campuses during the time of interviewing might have contributed to the negative connotation the word 'demonstration' obviously has for many white South Africans.

More than 80% of all respondents supported the statement that women should actively participate in politics in the same way as men. Fifty four percent of women strongly agreed, while only 35% of men did. Younger South Africans under the age of 40 supported women's political participation (90%) more than those over the age of 60 (70%). Afrikaans-speaking respondents tended to be less liberal on the gender issue (79% support) than English-speaking respondents (90%). Disagreement with the item is stronger among white South Africans with a lower educational qualification and was strongest among respondents who live in the countryside (28%) or in small towns (24%), compared to those living in metropolitan areas (5%).

As Figure 5.5 shows, only very few respondents disagreed with the item "every person should have equal access to basic rights and freedoms". This suggests an awareness among the white population that the denial of these rights is not acceptable in today's political climate. However, this positive response could be superficial and is therefore not sufficient for drawing general conclusions about the human rights awareness or democratic values of a respondent. This is obvious if one looks at the response rate to the other items. Only 20% strongly agreed that every democratic party should be given the same chance to become the ruling party in an election contest, and more than one-third of all respondents disagreed. The response rate for the "strongly agree" category for a comparable item in West Germany was 55% and disapproval only at about 6% (Institut für Demoskopie 1993: 627).

There is also a very high rate of support for the death penalty (Figure 5.6). The death penalty has always had a racial skewing: 97% of the 1070 people executed on Pretoria's gallows between 1980 and 1988 were black (67% were 'Africans', 29% 'Coloureds' and 0,2% 'Asian'). Only 3% were white (Bekker 1989: 1).[5] Compared to the population statistics of adult South Africans in 1991 the chances of being executed as a black person were six times higher than for those of a white person. Statistics have shown that between 1987 and 1989, 39% of all executions were for the murdering of white people, who accounted for less than 18% of the total adult population. (Naudé 1990:9). This means that the death penalty was more frequently imposed for capital crimes against white South Africans than against blacks.

Figure 5.6.

Are you in favour of the death penalty or are you against it?

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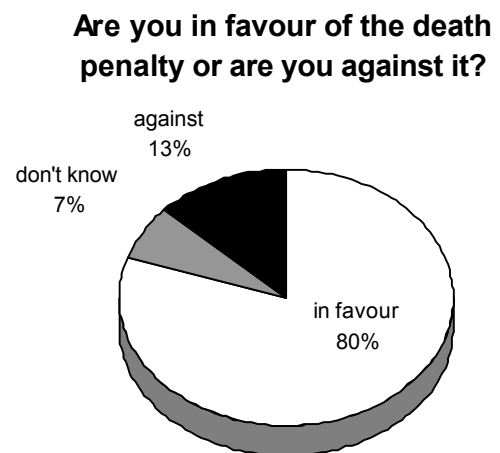
[4] Standing Orders (G) 251 - Police Duties, Duties of Relief - „Use of Arms", 251.5.4, 1991-05-02; see also Network Independent Monitors et al. (1995: 27-38).
[5] These figures exclude over 90 people executed in the 'independent homelands'.

Between acknowledgement and ignorance

The political misuse of the death penalty in South Africa is also well known. Extensive research has shown that the death penalty is not a suitable tool for deterring offenders.[6] Despite this the death penalty is still seen as the only solution to combat the increasing crime rate. About 80% of all respondents supported the reintroduction of the death penalty, which was outlawed by a Constitutional Court Judgement on 6 June 1995 (Figure 5.6).

These findings are confirmed by a nation-wide public opinion survey conducted by Hennie Kotzé (1996: 17-18) in October 1995 among 2163 South Africans belonging to all different population groups. Support among white South Africans was even a few percentages higher in this latter survey. The call for the death penalty is not confined to the white population group alone in South Africa.

Neither does support for the death penalty only get expressed in surveys. A group named *Concerned Citizen Committee* managed to collect over 100 000 signatures for the reintroduction of the death penalty in fewer than seven days. Over 160 000 signatures were handed over to the Constitutional Assembly in February 1996 and the reintroduction of the death penalty was the issue which attracted most support in terms of popular political participation during the Constitutional process (Citizen, 07.02.1996).

In the CSVR survey support for the death penalty was higher among Afrikaans-speaking whites (87%) compared to English-speaking ones (74%). There were more abolitionists among female respondents (16%) than male (11%). Metropolitan areas account for a slightly lower hang-man mentality (77%) than small towns and rural areas (85%). The same applies to respondents with post-matric degrees (72% support) compared to respondents with matric or educational qualifications below (88% support). The youngest respondents, i.e. those under the age of 30 showed less support for the death penalty (74%). Arguments that individual's position on the death penalty is not related to their attitude towards human rights in general can be easily disapproved by a cross-tabulation of all items of the Human Rights Scale with the death penalty question (Table 5.3). From this it is clear that a person's position on the death penalty is in fact a very reliable predictor of general attitudes towards human rights. Not a single person who was against the death penalty scored low enough on the HR-Index to be classified as having a 'very weak' human rights awareness.

Table 5.3. Attitude towards the death penalty and human rights awareness

attitude towards death penalty	human rights awareness (HR-index)			total sample (N = 122)
	very weak (N = 38)	moderate (N = 60)	strong (N = 24)	
in favour	97 %	88 %	33 %	*80 %*
don't know	3 %	5 %	17 %	*7 %*
against	-	7%	50 %	*13 %*
	100 %	100 %	100 %	*100 %*

Studies about attitudes towards the death penalty in the United States indicate that knowledge about the death penalty is very limited (Ellsworth & Gross 1994). Only between 36% and 22% of all respondents knew that "studies have shown" that it does not deter criminal behaviour (Sarat & Vidmar: 1976). Only about 11% knew that capital punishment in the USA is more expensive than life imprisonment. Lack of information alone is probably not the main reason for supporting the death penalty, as the difference in levels of knowledge between supporters and abolitionists is not that great. Many death penalty

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[6] see Amnesty International (1989: 24-28) for a review of relevant literature.

supporters stated in surveys that they would continue to favour the death penalty even if they could be convinced that it would not have a deterrent effect (Ellsworth & Gross 1994: 34). Support for the death penalty is also not driven by personal experience. Many studies have shown that people who have been victimised themselves, or fear for their personal safety, are no more likely to support the death penalty than those who have been more fortunate (Fox et al. 1991; Stinchcombe et al. 1980; Tyler & Weber 1982).

In West Germany support for the death penalty has declined since 1970, despite continually rising crime rates. This shows that support for the death penalty is also not necessarily directly linked to anxiety or a rising crime rate, but rather to public perceptions of and frustration with the crime problem. The declining support for the death penalty in West Germany suggests that a consensus against the death penalty by politicians and public opinion leaders is essential. Support for the death penalty has become a taboo in political circles and any prominent figure who openly supports the death penalty would probably be stigmatised as holding undemocratic or unconstitutional values.

The characteristics of people with very weak, moderate and strong human rights awareness as measured by the eight items of the HR Scale, generally correspond to those patterns already mentioned. The percentage of respondents under the age of 30 years who showed weak human rights awareness is relatively low (16%) compared to those over 30 (36%). There is a clear difference between metropolitan and non-metropolitan residents (16% versus 47% 'very weak'), white Afrikaans and English speakers (40% and respectively 23%) and respondents with tertiary education and without (19% and 39% respectively, were classified in the 'very weak'-category). There were no significant differences between male and female respondents.

In conclusion, it is thus clear that white South Africans are in many respects out of step with the new democratic ethos. Although they have accepted some of the outer manifestations of a new South African patriotism, such as the new flag, they are on the whole not happy with the new political system, give primacy to ethnic and cultural over national concerns, oppose various measures aimed at bringing about greater socioeconomic justice, continue to endorse a variety of racist sentiments, and show low human rights awareness. Repressive acts still enjoy overwhelming support. While the repression of political opponents might enjoy less endorsement in the New South Africa, human rights violations are largely tolerated as long as they are used to "combat crime". Like in many post-authoritarian Latin-American countries only the terrain of abusive power might have changed (Hamber 1997). Probably the victims of tomorrow will be rather "criminals", street kids and other "deviants", not township activists. This state of affairs can in part be explained with reference to white South African's perceptions of the apartheid past and how it should be remembered. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 6

The TRC and perceptions of the past

In Chapter 4 we have already alluded to the desire by many white South Africans to distance themselves from apartheid. This chapter is a further attempt to interrogate whether this reaction is an expression of an authentic attitude change towards apartheid, its ideology and policies, or is due to the fact that it is no longer opportune to be openly in favour of apartheid in the "New South Africa".

6.1 Attitudes Towards Apartheid

When directly asked if they thought apartheid was unjust because it excluded blacks from general elections, 25% of respondents said it was not unjust and nearly 20% said "don't know" - a remarkably ambivalent response to an obvious injustice. Only 56% conceded that the former political system was unjust. The percentage of those who said that apartheid was unjust decreased the older the respondents were. In the youngest age-group, i.e. under the age of 30, two out of three respondents said that it was unjust (67%). Only 13% said it was not unjust. In the oldest age group (over 60) the corresponding figures were 50% and 28%, respectively.

Attitudes towards apartheid are very dependent on educational level, political interest and access to information. Seventy percent of respondents with post-matric education admitted that the old order was unfair (Standard 10 and lower: 46%). Also, respondents who said they regularly read a newspaper or were interested in politics tended to state with more conviction that the former political system was unjust.

Figure 6.1. White perceptions of apartheid injustice

Figure 6.2. Opposition to the reinstallation of apartheid

Would you say that the former political system was unjust, as it excluded blacks from voting in general elections, or would you say it wasn't because they were allowed to vote in their homelands and townships?
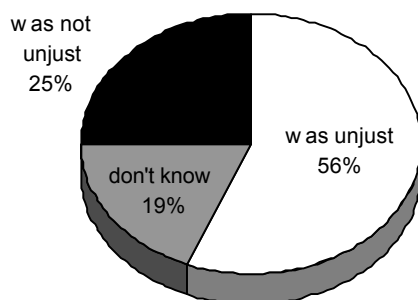
was not unjust 25%
don't know 19%
was unjust 56%

Imagine there would be an attempt to reinstall apartheid. Would you do everything to prevent that happening, would you be unhappy but do probably nothing or would you rather support the reinstallation of the former political system?

support reinstallation 9%
don't know 5%
would do everything 41%
would be unhappy 45%
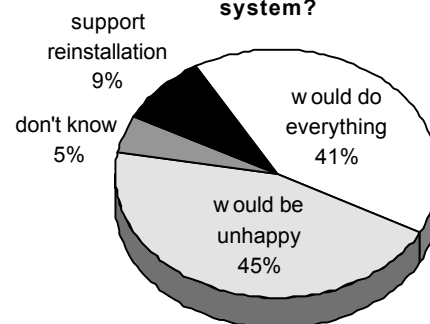
Encouragingly, Figure 6.2 shows that there is no strong desire to have the old political system back, and public support for a return to the apartheid days is low. Nevertheless, 9% openly admitted to this desire. This percentage might in fact be a little higher as some respondents may have feared expressing such sentiments. Only 41% said that they would do everything to prevent a reinstallation of apartheid. These findings suggest that many white South Africans probably still would not resist the reintroduction of an authoritarian regime.

Another indicator of support of apartheid is the idea of a whites-only Volkstaat. Respondents were therefore asked "*How do you feel about demarcating an area for Afrikaners and other white South Africans in which they may enjoy self determination? Do you support the idea of a Volkstaat?*" (Table 6.1). This replicated a question posed in July 1993 by an HSRC survey (Schlemmer: 1994).

Table 6.1: Reactions of white South Africans to the idea of a Volkstaat

	July 1993 (HSRC)	**May 1996 (CSVR)**
Would move there	18 %	9 %
Support the idea	29 %	22 %
Do not support the idea	34 %	66 %
Don' t know	19 %	2 %
	100 %	100 %

Two out of three respondents said that they were against the idea of a Volkstaat in CSVR survey, which was significantly more than in July 1993, suggesting that support for the Volkstaat has dropped during this time. The decline in support, though, may be due to the fact that respondents of right-wing political orientation who are the strongest supporters of a Volkstaat, were underrepresented in the survey. Declining support may also be due to the realisation that after the April 1994 elections life has continued. The chaos and bloodshed that right-wing parties had forecast so melodramatically, in the event of a "terrorist organisation" coming to power, has not materialised.

Those who in 1996 said that they would consider moving to a Volkstaat are mainly Afrikaans speaking males, who are supporters of the Conservative Party or Afrikaner Freedom Front, hold racist views (24%; slightly racist: 6%, non racist: 0%) and are not content with the new democratic South Africa.

Figure 6.3 indicates 44% support for the statement that apartheid was a good idea, but badly carried out. Only 50% of white South Africans surveyed distanced themselves from the very idea of racial segregation. Sixteen percent of respondents strongly rejected the idea of apartheid. Many respondents explained their negative reaction to this item with comments like "*you are right, apartheid didn't work*" or "*we only made the mistake of making racial segregation a law*". This shows dissatisfaction with the implementation of apartheid rather than rejection of the whole ideology of 'separate development'. Only the younger respondents, i.e. those under the age of 30 were more distanced from the idea. None of them strongly agreed with this item and a majority of 63% disagreed. More women and English-speaking white South Africans did not agree that apartheid was a good idea (Women: 40%; English-speakers: 38%) than men (48%) or Afrikaans-speaking whites (50%). The pattern in the language groups can be attributed to the traditionally lower level of support for apartheid among white English-speakers.

About two out of three white South Africans share the view that apartheid has done more harm than good to South Africa (64%), but nearly every third respondent says that apartheid has done more good to the country. Some respondents justified their opinion by saying that apartheid had contributed to socio-economic development, or that it was not as bad as it was being portrayed today. This comment is typical of many:

"Well, there has been a lot of development since 1948, and without apartheid we wouldn't be where we are now. We wouldn't have this good infrastructure, or electricity or tarred roads. Look at all other African countries. I think apartheid was good for our country."

Another frequently expressed opinion was that "[...] *we abolished apartheid at the right moment.*" Respondents argued that blacks would not have been capable of running the country before. As one respondent put it:

"It did not make sense to hand over power to Africans who could not write or read. How should they know who to vote for? Their chiefs would have told them. It happened like that in the homelands, you know. More and more blacks have got a proper education now, so this problem is over. I think it was totally right to have general elections with one man one vote. We probably would have had even less trouble if these elections had taken place ten years ago. I always was for reform. And if you look at Mr. Mandela, or Thabo Mbeki, they are very distinguished, intelligent and brave men. There are now enough African people who can do their job well."

Figure 6.3:

Perception of apartheid

Legend: ■ strongly disagree ■ disagree □ don't know □ largely agree ▨ strongly agree

Statement	strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	largely agree	strongly agree
The long-time occupation of Namibia was an illegal act by former South African governments.	15	33	27	19	6
We should admire white and black South Africans who joint the struggle against apartheid in the past.	7	30	6	46	12
Apartheid has done more harm than good to South Africa	6	26	6	27	37

Legend: ■ strongly agree ■ largely agree □ don't know □ disagree ▨ strongly disagree

Statement	strongly agree	largely agree	don't know	disagree	strongly disagree
Human rights violations have always been exaggerated by foreign countries	16	39	15	27	3
Apartheid was merely a good idea but badly carried out.	10	34	5	35	16
If the National Party had agreed to majority rule before 1990, communists would have taken over and we would have lost our freedom.	7	26	17	29	11

Turning to the Namibia item of the Apartheid Scale (Figure 6.3) it becomes obvious that still twice as many white South Africans perceive the occupation of Namibia as justified, compared to those who say that it was an illegal act. This perception is held despite the fact that in 1966 the General Assembly of the United Nations declared that the South African mandate over the territory of the former German colony of Southwest Africa had ended. In 1971 the International Court of Justice ruled that the continued presence of South Africa in Namibia was illegal. This sentiment was repeatedly expressed in resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on several occasions, but the overwhelming reaction of respondents is either a "don't know" or an actual defence of the South African Namibia policy. Fewer Afrikaans speaking than English speaking respondents acknowledged the illegal nature of the Namibian occupation (19% and 30% respectively). The large difference between respondents who had no post-matric education compared to those with post-matric degrees (15% and 37% respectively) suggests that the low awareness could in part be due to an information deficit. Respondents who read a newspaper regularly were also slightly more ready to admit that the South African occupation was illegal (28%) than those who do not (22%), although this was not significant.

The majority of white South Africans are probably still of the opinion that the international community treated South Africa unfairly and badly during apartheid. This is not only indicated in responses to the Namibia question, but also through the allegation that human rights violations in South Africa have always been exaggerated by foreign countries. Fifty five percent agreed with this item, while only 30% rejected it. Interestingly, this perception is not affected by variables of gender, language group, level of education or newspaper readership. Only younger respondents and the relatively small group of people who claim to be very interested in politics were less willing to accept the statement (40% disagreement among respondents under 30 compared to 30% disagreement among older ones). This suggests that an affirmative response to the allegation is not linked to a lack of knowledge about past human rights abuses, but is rather a manifestation of a deep-seated defensiveness towards the 'people from outside, who know nothing about South Africa'.

Given the high degree of support shown for aspects of apartheid, it is surprising that the statement "*we should admire white and black South Africans who joined the struggle against apartheid in the past*" elicited positive responses. Fifty four percent supported that item, while only 37% disagreed. The item was expressly designed to include members of the white population as anti-apartheid activists so respondents could identify more strongly. This result may be a way of attempting to perceive the role of whites in the past as being much more constructive than is commonly perceived. It might deflect attention from the majority of those who either did nothing or supported apartheid, as it is preferable and more comfortable to remember what are currently regarded as the more positive features of a culture than the negative. This syndrome of selective memory reflects the need to feel that one's views are socially acceptable, and could explain the good response to this item.

Responses to the item on admiring those who joined the struggle could also be interpreted more positively. Psychological research has shown that apart from the importance of negative experiences or positive reinforcement in the learning process, people also learn from observing others, particularly those regarded as positive role models (Bandura & MacDonald 1963; Bandura 1971). Models are important for the development of moral consciousness and can significantly influence behaviour. Thus "resistance fighters" or "anti-apartheid activists" can play an important historical and "retrospective" role.

Figure 6.4 attempts to draw together a number of the issues discussed in this section, by profiling those respondents who appear to glorify apartheid. A closer look at the complete Apartheid Scale (Figure 6.4) confirms the patterns already indicated by the response to some of the items. Twenty five percent of the surveyed population was classified as being "critical" towards apartheid, 35% as "only partly critical" and 40% as "glorifying apartheid". This means that they responded predominantly to all Apartheid-Scale items in that way. Those who tend to glorify apartheid more are men, older than 30, live in a rural area, speak Afrikaans and have an educational qualification lower than or up to Standard 10 (Grade 12).

Figure 6.4:

Who is glorifying the apartheid past?
(percentage of glorifyers in each group)
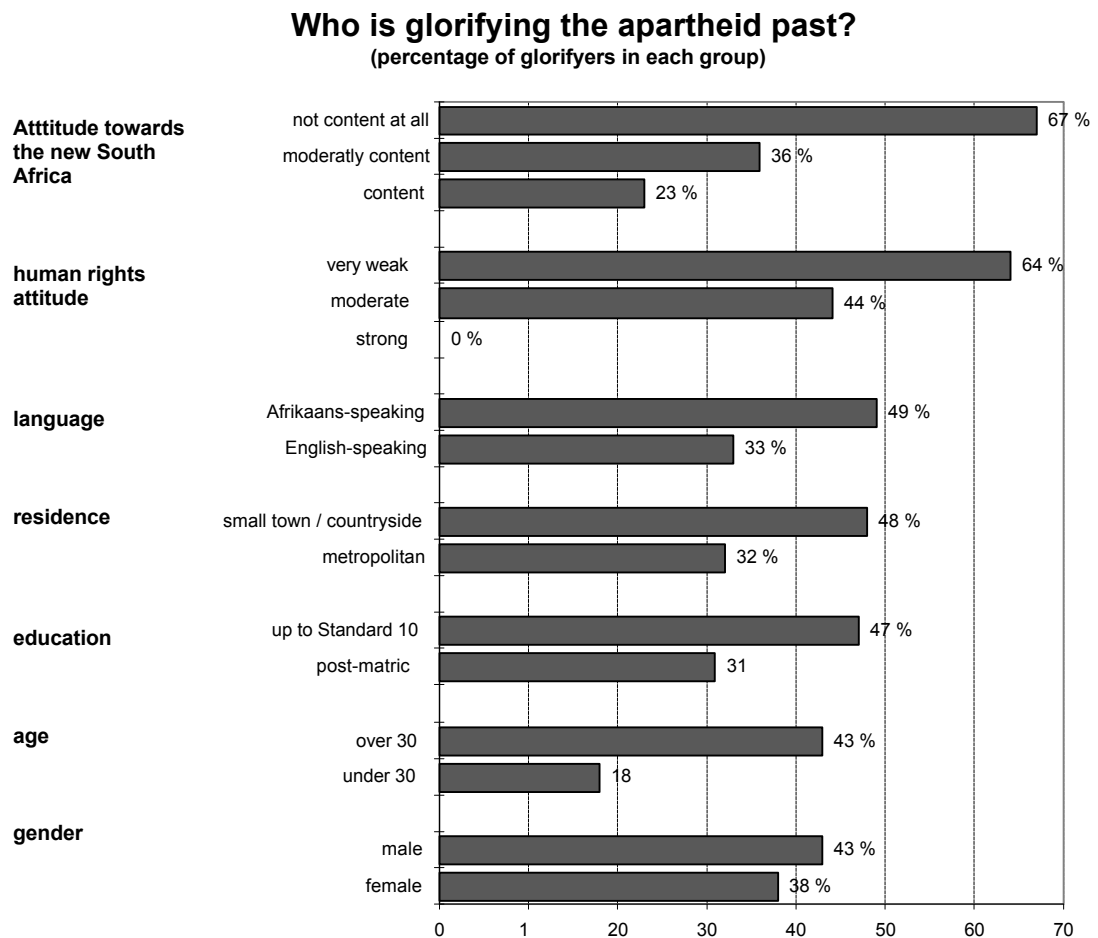
6.2 Attitudes towards the TRC, 1992-1995

The current survey is not the first opinion poll to include questions about the TRC or related issues. In October 1992 an HSRC poll asked South Africans from all population groups if they would insist that whites who harmed blacks during apartheid be charged in court.

Fifty four percent of all African respondents said they would immediately demand this from a new government, a further 20% said they would like to see it happen but not at once, 20% said they would not like to see it and 7% said they would oppose it and try to prevent it.

For the white population, the response was quite different. Only 4% said they would demand it immediately from a new government, another 13% felt they would like it but not at once, and the rest claimed that they would not like it (35%) or would oppose it and try to prevent it (48%). As Schlemmer (1992) pointed out at that time, the divergent expectations on that issue indicate that the issue of past atrocities is highly controversial, along with questions of affirmative action and the redistribution of land.

The next survey to include questions on the TRC was conducted in August 1994 by IDASA after the first democratic elections. By that time the ANC had already proposed the establishment of a TRC and open public debate on the issue had begun. A nation-wide sample of 2 517 South Africans from all population groups was questioned. The survey showed that 60% of all South Africans were in favour of "a Commission to investigate crimes that occurred under the previous government" (Figure 6.5). However, support varied strongly between the different population groups. While 65% of all Africans

supported the establishment of a TRC, only 39% of white South Africans were in favour of it, with 40% opposed. Thus there had been a considerable increase in white support for the TRC since 1992.

Figure 6.12. Should there be a Commission to investigate crimes that occurred under the previous government? (August 1994)
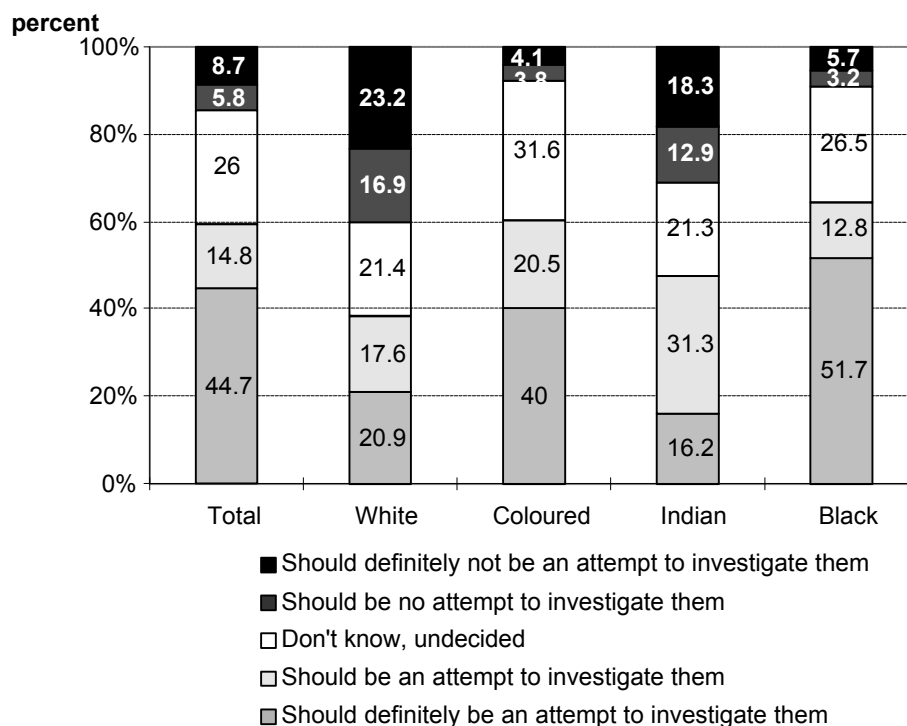
Source: IDASA Public Information Centre (1994)

There was relative consensus across population groups that a TRC should investigate crimes committed by both the liberation forces and supporters of the former government. Fifty-eight percent wanted all crimes to be investigated, with only 18% wanting only those crimes committed in support of the former government to be investigated. The remaining 24% said that they had not thought about the issue. Hardly any white respondents wanted only those crimes in support of the apartheid regime to be investigated, while only 23% of African respondents preferred that option. Fifty three percent of the African population group said the TRC should investigate all crimes.

The third survey which included questions about the TRC was conducted in May 1995 by the HSRC. At the time the National Unity and Reconciliation Bill outlining the TRC was already being discussed in parliament. The results confirmed the patterns of opinions about the TRC. Forty-three percent of all South Africans were in favour of the establishment of a TRC, with only 27% opposed to it, but while the majority of black South Africans supported the establishment of a TRC, about 53% of all white South Africans rejected it. (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Are you in favour of the establishment of a TRC? (All South Africans, May 1995)

	white (N=445)	asian (N=158)	coloured (N=219)	black (N=1407)	*total (N=2229)*
yes	35 %	31 %	25 %	48 %	*43 %*
no	53 %	28 %	31 %	20 %	*27 %*
don't know	12 %	40 %	44 %	32 %	*30 %*
	100 %	99 %	101 %	100 %	*100 %*

The relatively high percentage of people who had no opinion in the Black, Asian and Coloured communities is probably due to a lack of knowledge about the TRC at that time, as the question was asked without any advance explanation.

Respondents were also asked why they were in favour of or against the TRC. The answers to this open question were later coded into different categories. Table 6.3 gives the percentage of all statements made in favour of or against the TRC by the different population groups (refusals and "don't know" answers were excluded). It shows that those South Africans who were in favour of the TRC were mainly expecting it to help to uncover past human rights violations, while many of them also expected the TRC to deter people from getting involved in destabilising, underground activities.

The rejection of the TRC by white South Africans was largely based on the perception that the Commission would not bring them any good, and that it might even create more problems or intensify conflict. Some of them also said that the TRC would be a waste of money. Six white respondents feared that the TRC would not be independent, and three respondents felt that the TRC would punish people who were not guilty because they "only followed orders".

Table 6.3. Why are you in favour of / against the TRC? (All South Africans, May 1995)

	white (N=315)	asian (N=31)	coloured (N=83)	black (N=845)	*total (N=1274)*
We need to know more about past atrocities.	18 %	33 %	27 %	50 %	*41 %*
Truth Commission will prevent covert actions / human rights abuses.	11%	15 %	20 %	18 %	*16 %*
Truth Commission needed to solve crimes previously hidden.	7 %	10 %	8 %	13 %	*11 %*
Other positive	7 %	8 %	5 %	7 %	*7 %*
Truth Commission will do nothing good for us.	23 %	7 %	14 %	4 %	*8 %*
Truth Commission will create more problems.	18 %	4 %	16 %	2 %	*8 %*
The Truth wont come out.	5 %	7 %	2 %	2 %	*3 %*
Truth Commission is a waste of money	5 %	11 %	2 %	0,4 %	*2 %*
Other negative	6 %	6 %	6 %	3 %	*4 %*
	100 %	100 %	100 %	99,4	*100 %*

The HSRC survey also showed interesting differences among white South Africans regarding support for the TRC. The percentage of respondents in favour of the TRC decreased significantly with age. Support was twice as much among the younger generation (18-30 years) compared to those over 60 years of age (Figure 6.6).

The rejection of the TRC was higher among Afrikaans-speaking whites (59%) compared to English-speaking whites (48%), and male respondents tended to be rather more against it (62%) than female white South Africans (50%). White students were the only group within the white community to favour the establishment of a TRC, with 53% supporting the TRC and 35% against it.

Nearly two out of three white South Africans viewed the establishment of a TRC with mistrust in May 1995. Sixty three percent doubted whether the TRC would be able to find out what really happened with regard to human rights violations (Figure 6.7). The expectations of black South Africans were quite different. Seventy-two percent felt that a TRC would be able to accomplish this task.

Figure 6.6.

Are you in favour of the establishment of a Truth Commission?

(White South Africans - May 1995)
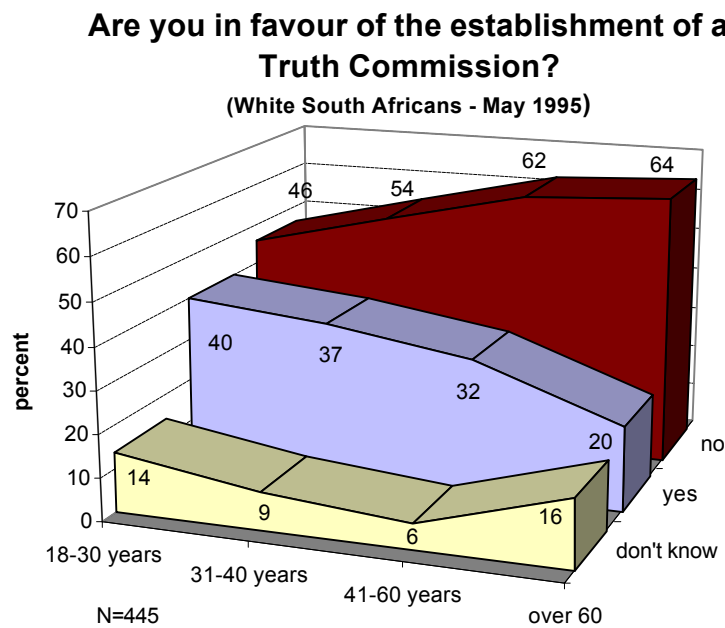
Source: May 1995 Omnibus - HSRC

Figure 6.7. Do you think the TRC will be able to find out what really happened with human rights violations? (May 1995)
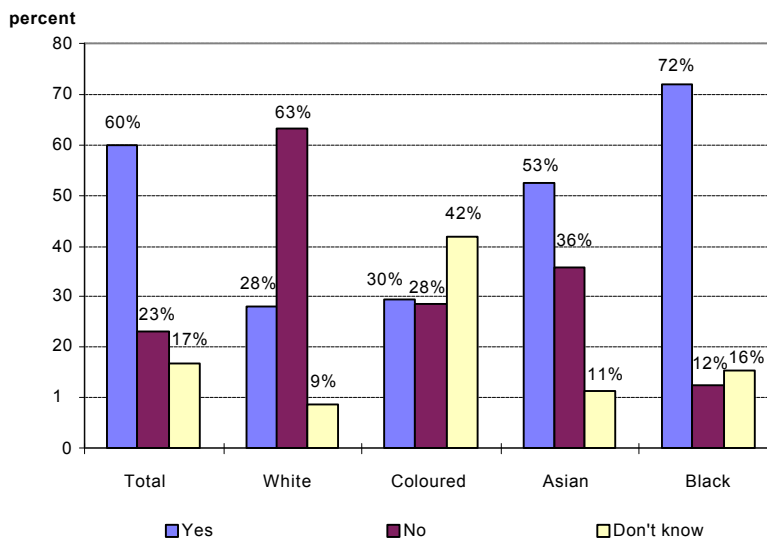
Source: May 1995 -Omnibus, HSRC (1995: 84)

The results demonstrate that one year before the TRC started operating, the prevailing attitude of white South Africans towards it was that of mistrust. It is therefore likely that many will not accept the findings of the Commission. Only young white South Africans, especially students, were less suspicious. One explanation for these results may be that it is easier to justify other aspects of apartheid, such as the idea of separate development or influx control, than it is to justify political murder, torture and other forms of inhuman and morally reprehensible actions. These cannot be easily integrated into the perception that apartheid was not as bad as it has been portrayed to be, a perception still shared by many white South Africans. It is therefore possible that human rights violations have to be assimilated by denial, inappropriate counter-allegations or by placing the responsibility on a handful

of criminals. It is also likely that many white South Africans will doubt the validity of the findings of the TRC and there may well be attempts to deny or explain away state atrocities. In Germany much pseudo-scientific effort has been spent on attempts to deny the holocaust, an historiographical "argument" which neo-nazism needs to survive.

6.3 Attitudes towards the TRC, May 1996

Public opinion surveys in the period 1992 to 1995 show considerable, but steadily decreasing, opposition to the idea of a TRC among white South Africans, and this pattern is confirmed by the CSVR survey (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8. Support for investigation of human rights violations - White South Africans (1992-1996)
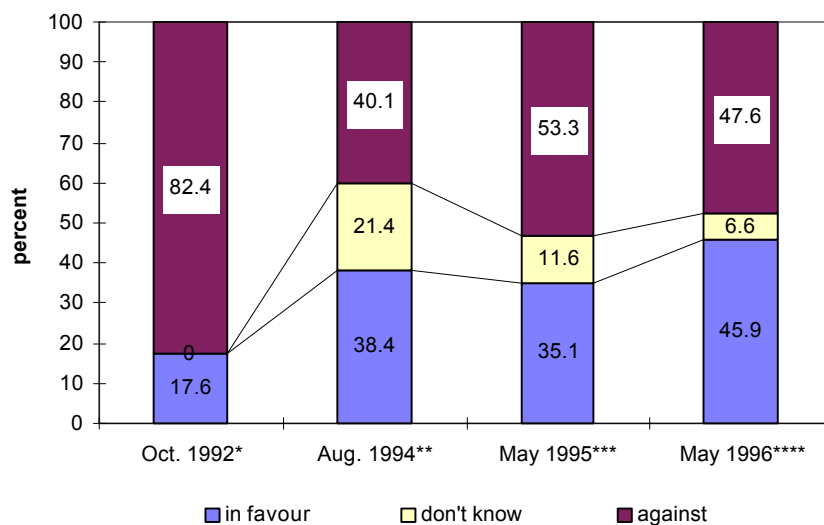
Sources: *HSRC-Omnibus, **IDASA-Public Information Centre, ***HSRC-Omnibus, ****CSVR-Survey[1]

The idea of a TRC uncovering human rights violations also committed by members of the liberation movement, was probably more acceptable than the idea of charging in court only whites who did harm to blacks during apartheid. Also, many whites might have lost their fears that the new Government of National Unity would use its powers to discriminate against former government officials. The 1994 elections had passed and President Mandela stressed the importance of reconciliation. It is also possible that a growing consensus among white South Africans was emerging that at least "some elements" under the previous government had been responsible for political murder and other atrocities, as newspapers had been reporting regularly about "dirty tricks" and the involvement of the security forces in political violence.

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[1] It should be noted that the comparability of results is limited by variations in the questions used in the different surveys. In the October 1992 HSRC Omnibus respondents were asked if they would demand, like it, not like it, or oppose it from a new government that "whites who harmed blacks during apartheid should be charged in court", there was no "don't know" category. The IDASA survey asked "Should there be a Commission to investigate crimes that occurred under the previous government." The question of the May 1995, HSRC Omnibus was "Are you in favour of the establishment of a TRC?", without giving any information about what a TRC is. The CSVR Survey asked: "The TRC is currently investigating human rights violations which occurred between 1960 and 1993. Do you support the idea to investigate political motivated crimes committed in South Africa's past?".

Before asking respondents about their attitudes towards the TRC and related issues, respondents were first asked if they had ever heard about a TRC (Figure 6.9). Only 13% of all white South Africans did not know about such a commission in May 1996. Eighty seven percent said that they had heard about it. Sources of information indicated by this group are shown in Figure 6.10. These results show that public awareness about the newly established TRC is relatively high and that few white South Africans were not at all informed about the Commission. The apparently high level of interest in the TRC in South Africa is also documented by the high programme rating for the weekly *TRC Special Report* on the SABC TV2 during the first weeks of the hearings of the TRC. With AR figures between 9 and 13% (equalising an average of about 1,2 million adult viewers weekly) the *Special Report* had a bigger audience than the news on prime time or other popular programmes like *America's Funniest Home Videos* (Du Preez 1997; South African Advertising Research Foundation 1996).

Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.10.

Have you ever heard or read about a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
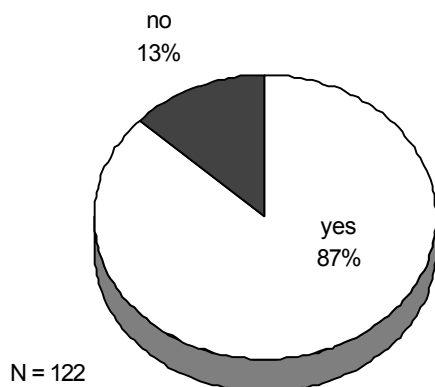
no
13%

yes
87%

N = 122

Did you read about it in a newspaper, or did you listen to a broadcast in radio or television?

all three
types
30%

only TV
29%

only radio
6%

only
new spaper
9%

tw o types of
media
26%
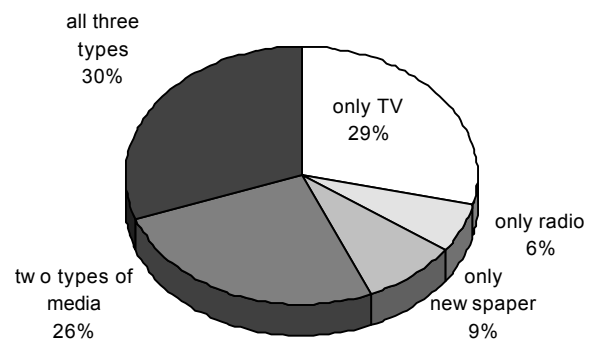
As part of building a human rights culture and promoting reconciliation, the TRC has three chief functions. To investigate human rights violations, to grant amnesty for politically motivated crimes committed between 1960 and 1993, and to suggest methods of reparation for victims and surviving relatives. Respondents were therefore asked about their attitudes towards these issues. Nearly half (46%) of all white South Africans supported the idea of investigating politically motivated crimes. Strangely, support for granting amnesty to perpetrators of politically motivated human rights violations is higher (56%) among white South Africans than support for the investigation of those crimes (Figure 6.11).

As amnesty can only be given to those who apply within the given time frame and make a full disclosure of their politically motivated crimes to the Amnesty Committee of the TRC, it is possible that ordinary courts in the future will try those perpetrators who did not apply. Forty three percent of all respondents said that even those who had been involved in political crimes and do not confess before the TRC should not be prosecuted and punished. The same percentage of respondents said they had no objection to people being punished later for crimes that were not brought before the TRC.

Figure 6.11.

Do you agree with the idea to ...
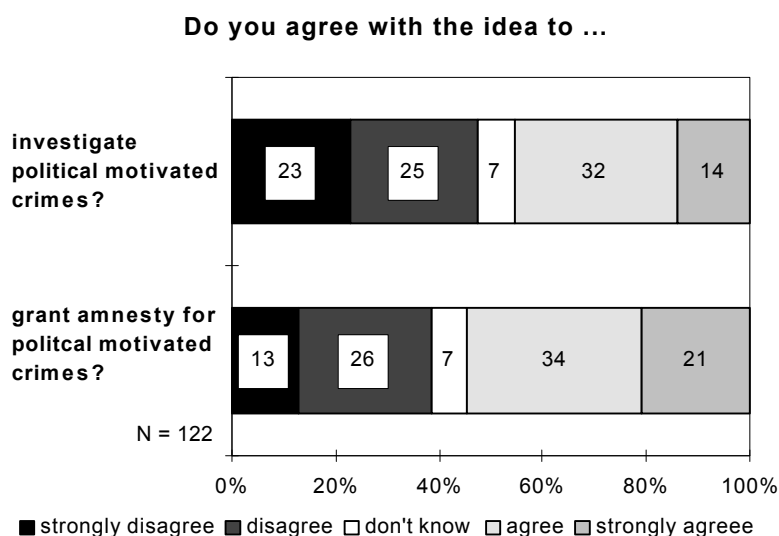
A nation wide survey with 2507 respondents (excluding rural areas) conducted for *Business Day* in May 1996 by Market Research Africa revealed that the idea of granting amnesty was mostly supported by black South Africans. In this survey only 29% of all white respondents agreed with the statement "Once a person has told the commission about the crime or crimes they commited, they should be given amnesty and not prosecuted." (see Table 6.4.)

Table 6.4. Support for amnesty (All South Africans, urban population May 1996)

	white (N=972)	indian (N=252)	coloured (N=260)	black (N=1023)	*total (N=2507)*
strongly agree	10%	10%	5%	22%	*17 %*
agree	19%	18%	23%	19%	*19 %*
neither agree nor disagree, don't know	25%	11%	21%	23%	*23 %*
disagree	27%	41%	40%	16%	*22 %*
strongly disagree	18%	19%	12%	20%	*19 %*
	99%	99%	100%	100%	*100 %*

Source: May 1996 Multibus - MRA (1996: Table 02/1)

The CSVR survey confirmed results of the HSRC survey conducted one year earlier, that more young white South Africans are in favour of past human rights violations being investigated by the TRC than older people. Metropolitan residents, English-speakers and people with a post-matric education were more in favour of the TRC compared to people living in rural areas, speaking Afrikaans and holding educational qualifications of Standard 10 or lower.

In order to obtain a nuanced a picture of the attitude of white South Africans towards the TRC, respondents were asked to consider eight statements about it (Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.12.

Attitudes towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

■ strongly agree ■ agree ☐ don't know ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

Statement					
The Truth Commission won't be able to ensure that justice is done to the victims of human rights violations.	17	40	13	27	3
The Truth Commission won't be effective in bringing about reconciliation.	26	29	9	30	6
The Truth Commission is a waste of money.	27	20	14	24	14
The Truth Commission is an ANC-inspired witch-hunt to discredit its enemies.	13	33	8	36	10

N = 118

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ strongly disagree ■ disagree ☐ don't know ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree

Statement					
The Truth Commission is necessary to ensure that human rights won't be violated in the same manner in the future.	9	43	8	36	4
The Truth Commission will improve the immage of South Africa internationally.	14	36	9	32	9
The Truth Commission is needed to uncover the truth about human rights violations in the past.	9	38	6	33	15
The Truth Commission is an independent body investigating crimmes irrespective of the political affilation of victims and perperators.	5	33	17	35	10

N = 118

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

This response pattern is corroborated by the results of the survey conducted during the same time by Market Research Africa (MRA). In this survey slightly more white South Africans (38%) disagreed that "the Commission will be fair to all sides and to all races" than agreed (35%). Black South Africans in contrast said overwhelmingly (68%) that the TRC would be fair. Of those respondents only 12% disagreed with the same statement. While 40% of all white respondents believed that "the Commission is the ANC's way of punishing its opponents"; 55% of black respondents denied this (MRA 1996; Table 03/1).

Figure 6.13 confirms that many white South Africans doubt the evidence brought before the TRC. In the CSVR survey 41% claimed that incidents brought before the TRC were being exaggerated by victims and only 36% were of the opinion that most of the allegations were true.

Figure 6.13.

Do you think that most of the allegations made by victims before the Truth Commission are true, or do you think that incidents are being exaggerated?

exaggerated
41%

most of
them true
36%

don't know
23%

N = 121
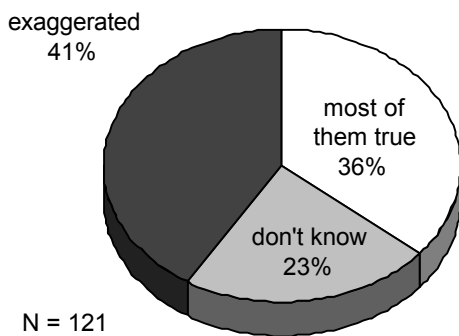
People who were less informed about the TRC and did not speak with friends or family members about it, tended to claim more often that human rights violations were exaggerated by victims. The same applies to citizens over the age of forty and people who said that they were not interested in politics at all. These results prove that the claim that human rights violations are exaggerated by victims is not necessarily based on an objective evaluation of the hearings of the TRC or on the evidence brought before it. Those people who have less information about the work of the TRC are also those who think that the truth is not being spoken.

Those who doubt the victims' allegations about human rights violations were also overwhelmingly not content with the new democratic dispensation, had racist views and tended to glorify apartheid. In order to deal with the dissonant information about human rights violations of the apartheid regime it appeared necessary for them to claim that victims exaggerate events or are only going to the TRC to make money out of it. As one respondent put it:

> "*Just yesterday I saw one old lady on television start to cry and weep when she gave evidence about her missing son. She claimed that he was abducted years ago. If she had really lost her son more than ten years ago, she wouldn't behave like this now, she would have come to terms with her grief a long time ago. These hearings are like the theatre. I must say blacks are good actors, they have a talent for the stage. I don't believe that lady, she probably only went there for money. She would have behaved totally differently if it was true that her son had been abducted.*"

There are also differences in attitude towards the TRC among different sub-groups of white South Africans. Respondents were classified as being either supportive of the TRC, having a mixed attitude towards it or rejecting it, according to their score on the TRC Scale. The results (Figure 6.14) confirm that attitudes towards the TRC are mixed. Slightly more respondents rejected it than supported it. Many respondents supported some of the items of the TRC Scale and rejected others, thus falling into the "mixed" category. The rejection of the TRC is slightly lower among female and English speaking respondents, and there are marked differences of opinion between young white South Africans and the older generation. Metropolitan residents are more open to the TRC than people staying in small towns or in the countryside and the percentage of people who support the TRC increases with higher educational qualifications.

Figure 6.14.

Attitudes towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Figure 6.15.
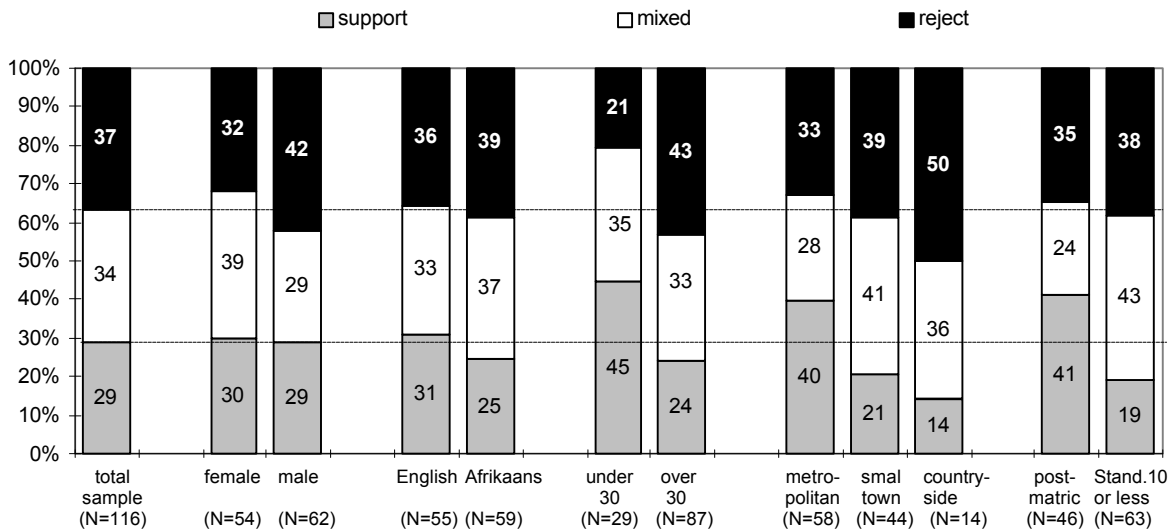
Some white South Africans claimed that they had never heard about human rights violations in the past. Twenty three percent of all respondents claimed that the first time they heard about torture and mysterious deaths in police cells was through the TRC (Figure 6.15), but the majority admitted that they had known about these human rights violations without realising their full extent. Twice as many female respondents claimed that they had heard about these human rights violations for the first time through the TRC compared to male respondents, but there were no noticeable gender differences among those who said that they had been more or less fully aware of what had happened in the past. Those who tended to assert more often that they did not know about these human rights violations were over the age of 60, claimed not to be interested at all in politics, stayed in a non-metropolitan areas, had

The Truth Commission has heard many black people speaking about torture and mysterious deaths in police cells. Is this the first time you heard about these things?

lower educational qualifications and were Afrikaans speaking. Not surprisingly, only one respondent who was classified as having a strong human rights awareness claimed that he heard about these atrocities for the first time through the TRC. Interestingly, many people who tended to glorify apartheid claimed to be more or less fully aware of what had happened in the past, more in fact than those who seemed more critical about apartheid. This could be partly due to an attitude expressed by one respondent as follows: "*We know enough about these allegations* [of human rights abuses]*, I don't want to hear more about that*".
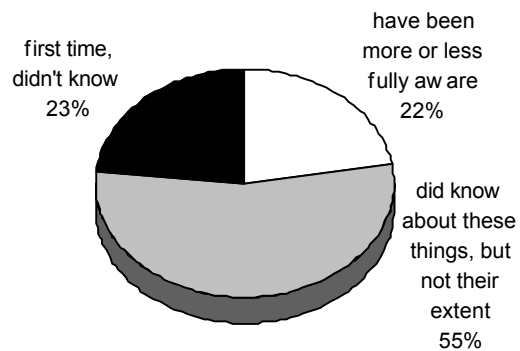
6.4 Equalising Moral Differences: The Struggle Against Apartheid and Human Rights Violations

In order to build a human rights culture in South Africa it is deemed necessary to hold every individual who committed gross human rights violations accountable and the TRC therefore has a mandate to investigate human rights violations regardless of the political background of the perpetrator or victim. This means that those who fought against the apartheid regime also have to apply for amnesty, particularly those allegedly responsible for severe human rights violations, such as those perpetrated in ANC camps outside the country. Although the ANC appointed an internal commission of inquiry into these abuses in March 1992, and a report was released to the public in October 1992, it did not provide any of the names of those responsible and painted a somewhat incomplete picture of what may have occurred in the camps (ANC 1992; Amnesty International 1992).

The TRC is also tasked with identifying the ANC military wing or Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) members who committed violent acts in South Africa as it is felt that the relatives of those who have been killed by MK have the right to know more about these acts. Without looking at ANC human rights abuses, the TRC would probably be rejected outright by the white community. The possibility for at least some white South Africans to learn something about the human rights abuses put before the TRC would have been lost, as hardly any white South Africans would have seen a 'one-sided approach' as legitimate. Only a handful of white respondents (2%) said in August 1993 that a TRC should only investigate crimes which supported apartheid, while 76% favoured it investigating all politically motivated crimes (IDASA 1993). In the CSVR survey over 97% endorsed the principle of the TRC investigating all human rights violations, regardless of whether they were committed to opposing or defending the former political system.

Despite these reasons for treating all past politically motivated crimes equally, this remains highly problematic as it tends to imply a moral parity between those human rights abuses committed by a state which oppressed the majority of its citizens, and legitimate acts of violent resistance against an illegitimate regime. Thus the Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, has repeatedly argued that past atrocities should be seen in historical context, even if they are examined by the TRC in the same manner. He argues that most of the acts of ANC members were only committed in the context of the struggle against apartheid, which was declared as a crime against humanity by the international community[2]. The liberation struggle of the ANC against the Pretoria regime was also approved as a legitimate form of resistance by the United Nations.[3] This does not mean that all acts committed by ANC members were legitimate, as some of them were obviously contraventions of international law. Examples of this were the executions, torture, bombings of civilian targets and detention without trial which took place in ANC camps. These acts were also not in compliance with internal ANC security regulations or the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war to which the ANC had officially declared its adherence on 28 November 1980.

Compared to the bombings of state institutions of the former regime, which can be interpreted as legitimate acts of resistance against an illegitimate regime, the atrocities in ANC camps fall into another category. The right to resist an illegitimate regime does not imply that the end justifies the means.

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[2] Resolutions of the General Assembly Res. 2202A (XXI) adopted 6 December 1966 and Article 1 of the International Convention on Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid [Res. 3068 (XXVIII) 30 November 1973].

[3] The right to resist against apartheid was explicitly stated by resolutions of the General Assembly Res. 2307 (XXII) 13 December 1967, and of the Security Council 288 (1970); 311 (1972); 392 (1976) and 556 (1984).

Despite this necessarily differentiated view on politically motivated crimes, the TRC might unintentionally, simply by its approach, encourage the perception that there are no differences in moral terms between any acts which are labelled in the National Unity and Reconciliation Act as "politically motivated." It could confirm the problematic perception that past human rights violations by members of the security forces or other state agents can be excused because "*... it was just a war between two parties, and both sides did wrong things*", as one respondent emphasised. The fact that human rights violations occurred in ANC camps does not in any way diminish the responsibility of those who ordered the "removal" of Matthew Goniwe and his colleagues "permanently from society".

The results of the survey confirm that a differentiated perception of past politically motivated crimes is more or less absent among white South Africans. In general they do not see any moral difference between the human rights violations committed in defence of the apartheid system and those acts committed as part of the liberation struggle. Eighty one percent claimed that there was no difference, 11% said that crimes committed to defend apartheid were more justified, while only 8% felt that those acts committed during the freedom struggle were more justified on moral grounds. White public opinion in South Africa is still out of touch with the need to decriminalise the resistance against apartheid, as Suresh Roberts, Kader and Louise Asmal have convincingly argued (Asmal et al. 1996).

Besides the infamy of a moral equalisation of apartheid repression and its legitimate resistance, it is also not appropriate to equalise the extent of acts committed by members of liberation movements and the apartheid regime in quantitative terms. Statistics released by the South African Police public relations division in 1989 account for 205 persons killed by "guerrilla attacks" between January 1976 and 15 November 1988. More than half of them were killed during the last three years of the State of Emergency, when the MK started targeting representatives of government structures, compared to former acts of sabotage only (SA Barometer 1989: 167). By comparison, the official figure for township residents killed in "unrest-related incidents" by the South African Police between 1985 and June 1986 was 1 113 (Hansard 1986: col. 255.617). These figures indicate that the extent of human suffering inflicted by the liberation movements and the former apartheid government differed vastly.

It remains to be seen if the final report of the TRC will adequately consider the different contexts, extent and moral background of those politically motivated crimes which it is currently investigating.

6.5 Acknowledging and denying responsibility

The hearings thus far held by the TRC have already contributed to the development of a political culture in which past human rights violations can no longer easily be denied. However, the question has to be asked, are white South Africans prepared at this stage to acknowledge the past regime's responsibility for these crimes as well as their personal responsibility? Have many begun to critically evaluate their own role in the past?

In order to assess this, respondents were asked who was responsible for the repression of black communities in the past (Table 6.4). They were presented with five different groups and each time asked to comment about the particular group's responsibility. The groups were the security forces, anti-apartheid-activists and other 'troublemakers' in black communities, a small group of senior security officers and politicians, the former National Party government, and all those who supported the National Party in the past. The last group's involvement was qualified by "at least to a certain degree" so that respondents would not consider it as totally unjustified.

Table 6.4. Who was responsible for the repression of black communities in the past?

I will read out some groups who have been named and I wish you to say me whether you would say, yes, they have been responsible for the repression of black communities in the past, or rather no, they haven't, that is more a unjustified claim. (N=118)	Yes	unsure don't know	No	
Anti-apartheid activists and other 'troublemakers' in black communities	57 %	24 %	19 %	100 %
The security forces	46 %	16 %	38 %	100 %
The former National Party governments	46 %	13 %	42 %	101 %
Only a small group of senior security officers and politicians	40 %	19 %	42 %	101 %
All those who supported the National Party in the past, at least to a certain degree.	14 %	11 %	75 %	100 %

This table demonstrates that many white South Africans deny that the security forces and the former National Party governments had been responsible for the repression of black communities in the past, with less than 50% of the respondents acknowledging that they had been responsible. Forty percent claimed that only a small group of senior security officers and politicians had been responsible. In their view, only a small criminal élite is to be blamed for the many forms of repression against the black majority. By blaming only a small group of culprits the issue of the tacit support of many white South Africans is side-stepped and their own role downplayed. Only a very small minority of 14% admitted that those who supported the National Party and its apartheid policy in the past had also been responsible for the repression of black communities. Seventy five percent claimed that those who voted for the political party responsible for the introduction and maintenance of apartheid, do not carry any responsibility for the carrying out of repressive acts such as forced removals, detention without trial and so on. In fact, possibly to appease their own moral conscience, more than 50% claimed that anti-apartheid activists were responsible for the repression of their own communities. In the survey sample, white South Africans were more eager to claim that repression of black communities was a product of anti-apartheid activists and black 'troublemakers' than a consequence of security force activities.

Claiming that "troublemakers" in black communities might also have contributed to repression does not necessarily imply a denial of the role of the former regime and its enforcement structures in the repression of black communities. Some respondents might have responded affirmatively to the item blaming "anti-apartheid-activists" simply because they felt that repression had also existed within black communities. However, 21% of all respondents claimed that anti-apartheid-activists and other "troublemakers" were responsible for the repression in their communities, without blaming the security forces, the former National Party governments or their supporters at all. The sample was divided into two groups, using these criteria, to compare those respondents who blamed anti-apartheid activists nearly exclusively and those who did not. Again the youngest age-group is less tempted to make the "troublemakers" or anti-apartheid-activists the scapegoats for the repression of black communities. Those who did do this tended to glorify apartheid and to have a rather low human rights awareness. Racism seems to contribute clearly to the transfer of responsibility for the repression of the apartheid regime onto those who fought against it.

Blaming "the other" has important consequences, it protects the blamer from feelings of shame and guilt. Among those 24 respondents who put the blame for the repression of black communities on anti-apartheid activists and other "troublemakers" alone, 18 (75%) claimed that people should not feel "ashamed that South Africans have committed so many human rights violations against their fellow citizens during the days of National Party rule." Blaming the victims for their fate and denying any moral responsibility also leads to the perception that there is no need for greater socio-economic justice

(75% of this group rejected that) or compensation for victims of gross human rights violations (70% rejected the idea of compensation).

There also appears to be a clear relationship between apportioning blame to only a small group of people and denying the responsibility of others. The tendency to deny that supporters of the previous government also have a certain degree of responsibility for the repression during apartheid was stronger among those who claimed that only a small group of senior security officers had been responsible (89%), compared to those respondents who did not support this item (65%). The perception that only a few securocrats were responsible is significantly higher among males and those who are Afrikaans speaking.

Figure 6.17.

Responsible for the repression of black communities are...

■ the former National party governments

■ all those who supported the NP in the past, at least to a certain degree

total sample	(N=118)	46 % 14 %
human rights awareness	strong (N=24)	83 % 42 %
	moderately & weak (N=94)	36 % 7 %
attitude towards apartheid	not glorifying (N=64)	63 % 23 %
	gloryfying (N=43)	26 % 5 %
interracial attitude	not racist & slightly racist (N=83)	54 % 18 %
	racist (N=32)	28 % 6 %
Truth Commission	heard and talked about it (N=64)	52 % 22 %
	heard about it, but did not talk about it (N=38)	45 % 8 %
	have not heard about it (N=14)	21 % 0 %
information about Truth Commission	through TV, radio and newspaper (N=32)	63 % 19 %
	only throughTV, radio or newspaper (N=43)	40 % 14 %
education	post-matric (N=46)	65 % 26 %
	Standard 10 and lower (N=64)	30 % 5 %
language	English (N=56)	50 % 21 %
	Afrikaans (N=60)	42 % 7 %
gender	male (N=62)	47 % 8 %
	female (N=56)	42 % 21 %
age	under 30 (N=29)	59 % 21 %
	over 30 (N=88)	41 % 13 %

percentage of respondents supporting the statement

Conversely, those who were better educated, had heard about the TRC, talked about it with friends or family, and were better informed about it through news from different types of media, tended to be less tempted to blame only a small group of securocrats or anti-apartheid activists as being largely responsible for the repression of black communities.

There is a strong correlation between awareness of the TRC and an acknowledgement that the former National Party governments were highly responsible for repression in the past. People with knowledge

of the TRC were more willing to accept that those who ruled the country and their supporters share some responsibility too (Figure 6.17). They are also more open to reflecting about the role that ordinary white South Africans played in the past. This difference in attitude in terms of awareness is marked. It is not possible to conclude, however, that the differences between those who heard and spoke more about the TRC and those who did not, are necessarily the result of attitude change in the latter group. Such a conclusion could only have been drawn from a panel survey in which respondents were asked these questions before and after the start of the TRC hearings.

Respondents were also asked if they feel ashamed that South Africans committed so many human rights violations against their fellow citizens during the days of National Party rule (Figure 6.18). About 50% said they did have such feelings. Respondents who expressed feelings of shame generally had higher educational qualifications (72%), were reasonably interested in politics (66%), had heard and talked about the TRC with friends or family members (63%) and did not reject policies to promote more socio-economic justice (60%). Interestingly, younger respondents under the age of 30 claimed to having feelings of shame (58%) more than those over the age of 30 (48%) despite most of them having been too young to have voted for the apartheid government during the eighties.

Figure 6.18.
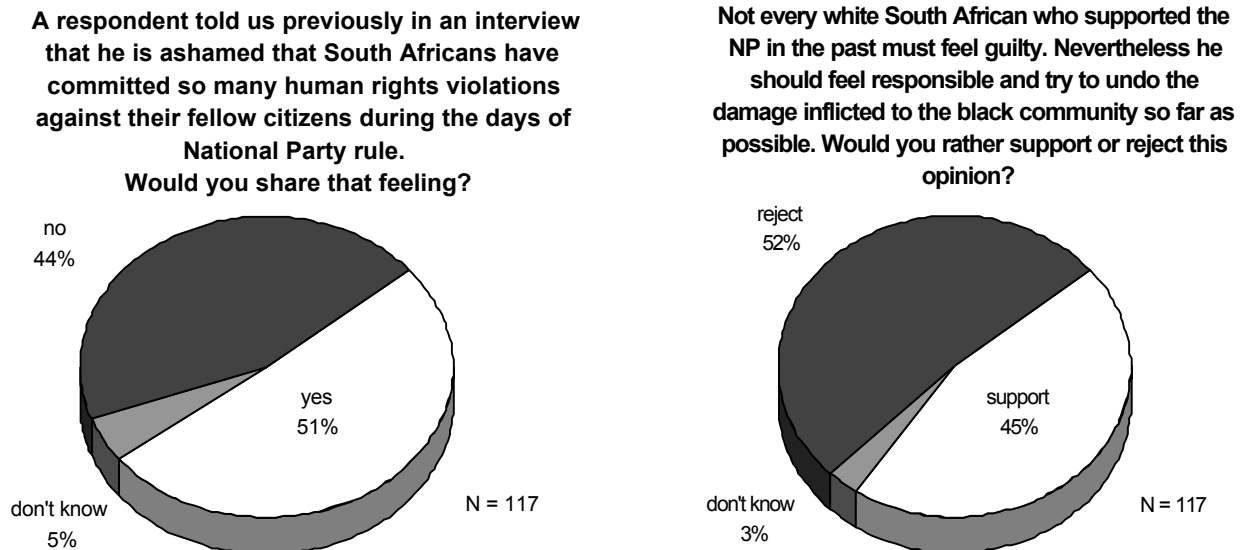
As can be seen from this figure, every second respondent rejected the idea that there is some form of political liability for every citizen for crimes and repressive acts committed by the predecessor regime, even if they were not guilty in legal terms. The fact that 45% of all respondents did not reject the item can nevertheless be seen as a positive sign. Many white South Africans do feel some commitment to undoing the damages inflicted on black communities. Compared to the responses that West Germans gave to similar statements in 1951, this percentage is quite high. Of concern, however, is whether this positive response of many white South Africans is lip service to the New South Africa, rather than a genuine commitment. Many people might support the idea that everything should be done to undo the legacy of apartheid, while at the same time actually rejecting concrete attempts to do it. The fact that only 40% supported the idea that the government should pay compensation to the relatives of those who had been murdered in the political conflict illustrates that this concern could be justified. Only 25% of all respondents supported affirmative action policies and only 13% were in favour of land redistribution. Of those respondents who claimed that *"people should feel responsible and try to undo the damage inflicted to the black communities as far as possible"*, only 40% scored high enough on the Equality Scale to be classified as supporting policies that promote greater socio-economic justice, while 36% accepted them and 25% actually rejected them.

Metropolitan residents, those with post-matric qualifications and those who were more interested in politics, read the newspaper daily and had heard and talked about the TRC were again more willing to claim that white South Africans should do their best to undo the legacies of apartheid. The concept of political liability is also significantly more readily acknowledged by younger white South Africans. Sixty-six percent of those who under the age of 30 supported it while only 39% of those over the age of 30 claimed that every white South African should feel responsible and try to undo the damages inflicted on the black community.

Differences within the white South African population regarding willingness to acknowledge responsibility for the past regime and its supporters for the repression of the black majority are shown in Figure 6.19. Female respondents were less eager to deny responsibility than their male counterparts and nearly twice as many English speaking whites admitted responsibility compared to Afrikaans speaking respondents. Respondents with post-matric education were more inclined to acknowledge than deny that the past regime and its executive organs were responsible. The younger generation (under the age of 30) were also far more likely to acknowledge responsibility.

Figure 6.19.

Acknowledgement of responsibility and social characteristics
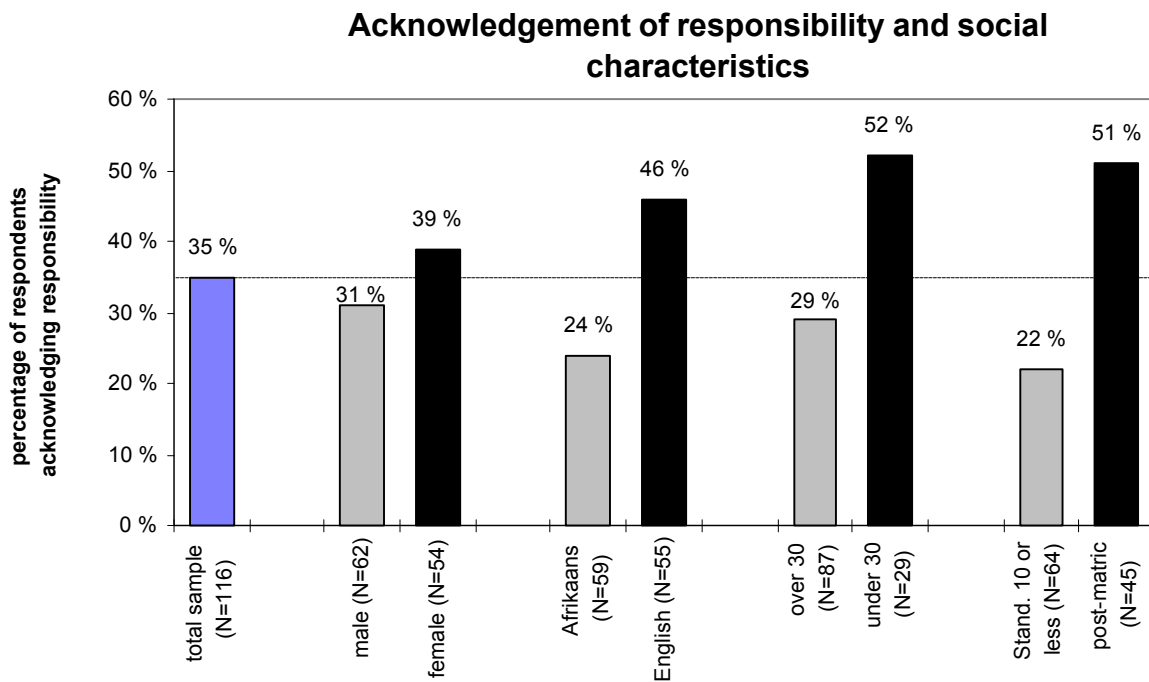
The results suggest that people who actively engage in a dialogue about the horrors brought before the TRC are more willing to accept that these atrocities could not have happened without the active participation of the past government, its security forces and the consent of many white South Africans.

6.6 The Compensation of Victims and the Desire to Forget about the Past

In March 1995 the HSRC posed the question as to whether victims of human rights violations should be compensated for past human rights violations. While nearly 60% of white respondents rejected the idea of compensation, nearly the same percentage of black South Africans expected victims to be compensated (Figure 6.20).

Figure 6.20. Should the victims or the families of victims of human rights violations be compensated for past wrongs? (May 1995)
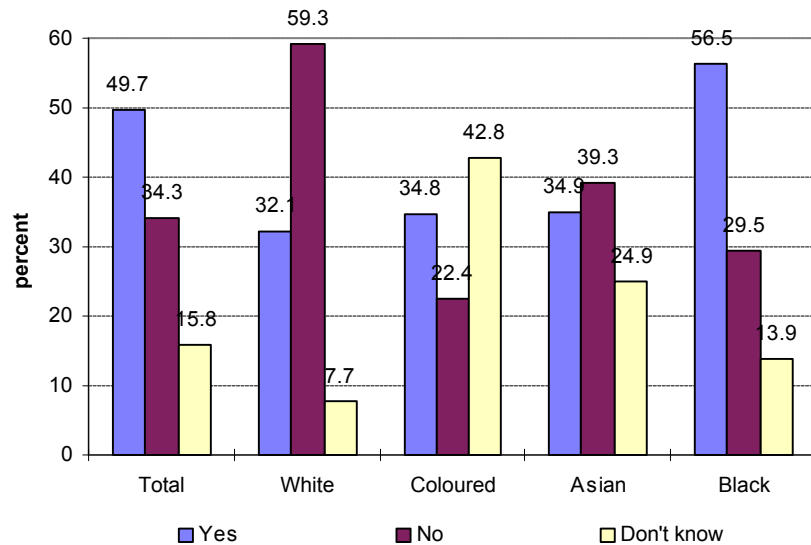
Source: May 1995-Omnibus, HSRC (1995: 92)

The rejection of compensation is another typical indicator of the desire to forget about the past which exists in the white community. This is illustrated by the fact that 75% of all white respondents who rejected the idea of a TRC were also against compensation. Only 19% of these respondents were in favour of compensations for victims and their relatives.

One year later, white respondents were again asked whether they would support the government paying monthly compensation to relatives murdered in the political conflict. A similar pattern emerged. Fifty-six percent of all respondents rejected the idea (Figure 6.21). Afrikaans-speaking whites tended to reject compensations more than English-speaking ones; non-metropolitan more than whites staying in metropolitan areas and males more than females.

The rejection of compensation is accompanied not only by negative attitudes towards the TRC, but is also linked with racist attitudes, low human rights awareness and the glorification of apartheid.

Figure 6.21.

Would you support it, if the government paid a monthly compensation of about 500 Rand to the relatives of those people who have been murdered in the political conflict in the past?
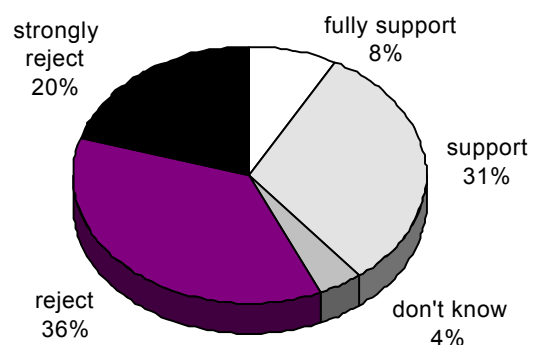
Figure 6.22.

**I think it is better to forget about the past and to
stop prosecuting people who committed crimes
against anti-apartheid activists in the past. Would
you rather agree or disagree with this statement?**

agree
64%

disagree
31%

don't know
5%

Two out of three respondents claimed in May 1996 that it would be better to forget about the past and to stop prosecution of crimes committed against anti-apartheid activists (Figure 6.22). Those respondents who wanted to forget about the past were also asked why they support this view. They were given some frequently used reasons, and asked if they would rather support or reject the specific argument. Nearly all (97%) felt that "*we should forget about the past because we should rather concentrate on the future*". Seventy seven percent felt that crimes against anti-apartheid activists should not be prosecuted, as members of the liberation movement have also committed crimes and have not been tried for that.

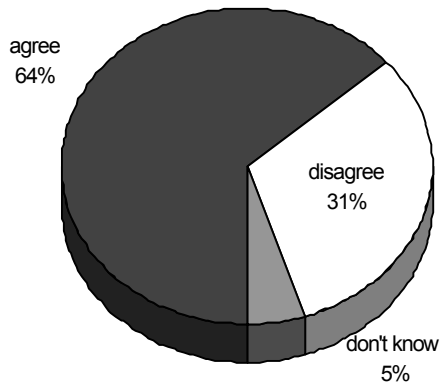Sixty three percent claimed that those people who are being prosecuted today did their duty to prevent a violent overthrow of the former government. And 46% alleged that perpetrators who committed crimes against anti-apartheid activists were themselves victims of apartheid.

It is interesting to note that those who explain their support for an end to prosecution with "we should rather concentrate on the future" are not at all committed to policies supporting more socio-economic justice compared to those who said that we should not forget about the past and continue prosecutions. The argument that the past must be forgotten for the sake of a better future is therefore not very convincing. Even if it is claimed to be so, the wish to forget about the past is not at all motivated by a positive commitment to the new South Africa. The less contented respondents were with the democratic South Africa the more they wanted to forget about the past (see Figure 6.23). It would moreover appear as if these respondents wanted to forget selectively, i.e. about what makes them feel potentially uncomfortable, such as state perpetrated atrocities. Those who claim that the time has come to forget about the past in fact glorify the apartheid era more then those who believe it necessary to remember it.

Figure 6.23.

Should we rather forget about the past?

attitude towards: | **apartheid** | **new South Africa** | **socio-economic justice**

The desire to close the book about the past was also evident in the survey conducted for Market Research Africa in May 1996. Most whites (57%) said the TRC should not be allowed to continue for as long as necessary, while two out of three black respondents held the opposite view (MRA 1996: Table 03/1). The call for laying the past to rest is made by older white South Africans more than by younger ones. Nearly 80% of all respondents over the age of 60 years were in favour of forgetting the past. This supports the thesis that people who were still young adults or teenagers when apartheid was abolished have fewer problems in dealing with it. Those who lived most of their adult life under apartheid are those who want to forget about its negative aspects, and to have an untainted sense of their own history (Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.24.

I think it is better to forget about the past and to stop prosecuting people who committed crimes against anti-apartheid activists in the past
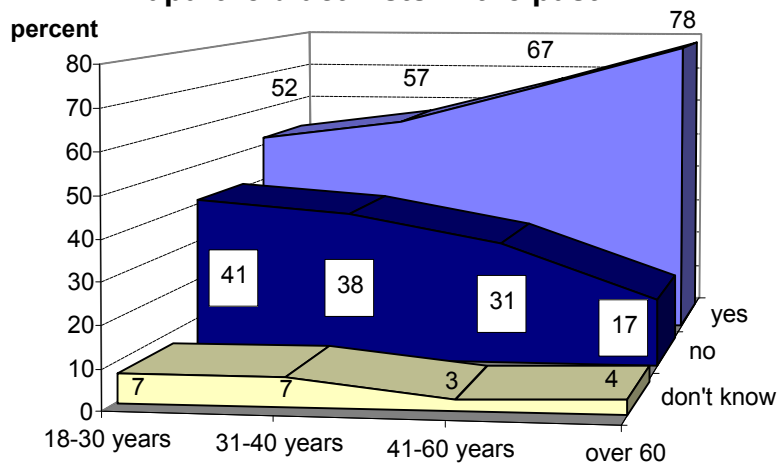
The possible implications of these stark differences between young and old white South Africans are considered in greater detail in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 7

The 'rainbow generation'

and the white post-apartheid syndrome

Before concluding, two of the major issues emerging from the CSVR survey are highlighted. First, there appears to be some evidence of a nascent new political generation of white South Africans who are significantly more critical of apartheid and are more accepting of the new democracy than the older generation. Second, there is a clear minority of white South Africans, about 25% of respondents, who can be characterised as exhibiting what could be called a 'post-apartheid syndrome', i.e. the harbouring of a self-confirming set of mutually-reinforcing attitudes revolving around idealisation of the apartheid past, low human rights awareness and negative attitudes towards the New South Africa.

7.1 The 'rainbow generation': A new political generation?

The CSVR survey shows that there is no single reaction of the white population group in South Africa towards the TRC and the issue of past human rights violations, but that there are discernible trends. The younger generation is more receptive to the TRC, less inclined to denial, and less willing to lay the past to rest and feel it has to be dealt with. Respondents under the age of 30 shared more democratic norms, were more welcoming of the new democracy and were less tempted to glorify apartheid than the older generations. There are two factors which might explain these differences, namely, life cycle factors and generation factors (Lipset 1960: 264-270).

Life cycle factors occur when individual behaviour or inclination corresponds to that which is typical of tendencies of others of the same age, for example youths, adults or senior citizens. The causes of these life-cycle effects are biophysical, psychological and social. Individuals' mental capacities and social roles change; they develop habits and react to age and role-specific behavioural expectations. Older people are therefore often more rigid and tend to have more dogmatic and conservative political attitudes (Glenn 1974).

Generation factors, on the other hand, depend on the fact that dramatic political upheavals, such as wars or the collapse of the political order, have a particularly strong effect on younger people, thus determining the development of new political generations (see Fogt 1981: 74-79). Major political events prompt discussion and re-evaluation of the ideals and values of the political order and young adults, whose political attitudes are not hardened, are more willing to participate in these reflections, and to undergo a long-term reorientation of their political beliefs as a result.

The collapse of apartheid is a political event which has probably had a particularly strong impact on young white South Africans. Booysen & Fleetwood (1994) could already document considerable changes between 1989 and 1991 in the degree of acceptance of alternative political organisations by white Afrikaans-speaking students of the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg. They mention that "preliminary evidence in other parts of the current study suggests that there is a *comparable but lesser* effect of political events on the attitudes of the parents of these students" (Booysen & Fleetwood:

103). The same effects have been found in studies about change of racial attitudes in the United States during the 1960s. The fact that the United States became more tolerant in the aftermath of the civil rights movement was not so much due to a change of attitude across the whole society, but was mainly caused by the rise of a new political generation which espoused more liberal views (Jennings & Niemi 1975: 1329-35).

The CSVR study suggest that the formation of a new political generation in the aftermath of authoritarian rule could also be linked to the question of perceived guilt. This factor, which has until now been neglected in literature on the effects of political events on generation formation, appears to be salient among young South Africans, who are willing to reflect more critically on the past because they are less threatened than the older generation by feelings of guilt. Thus having been born at a later date allows them to distance themselves more easily from apartheid and its values.

Figure 7.1.

Attitude towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

percentage of respondents
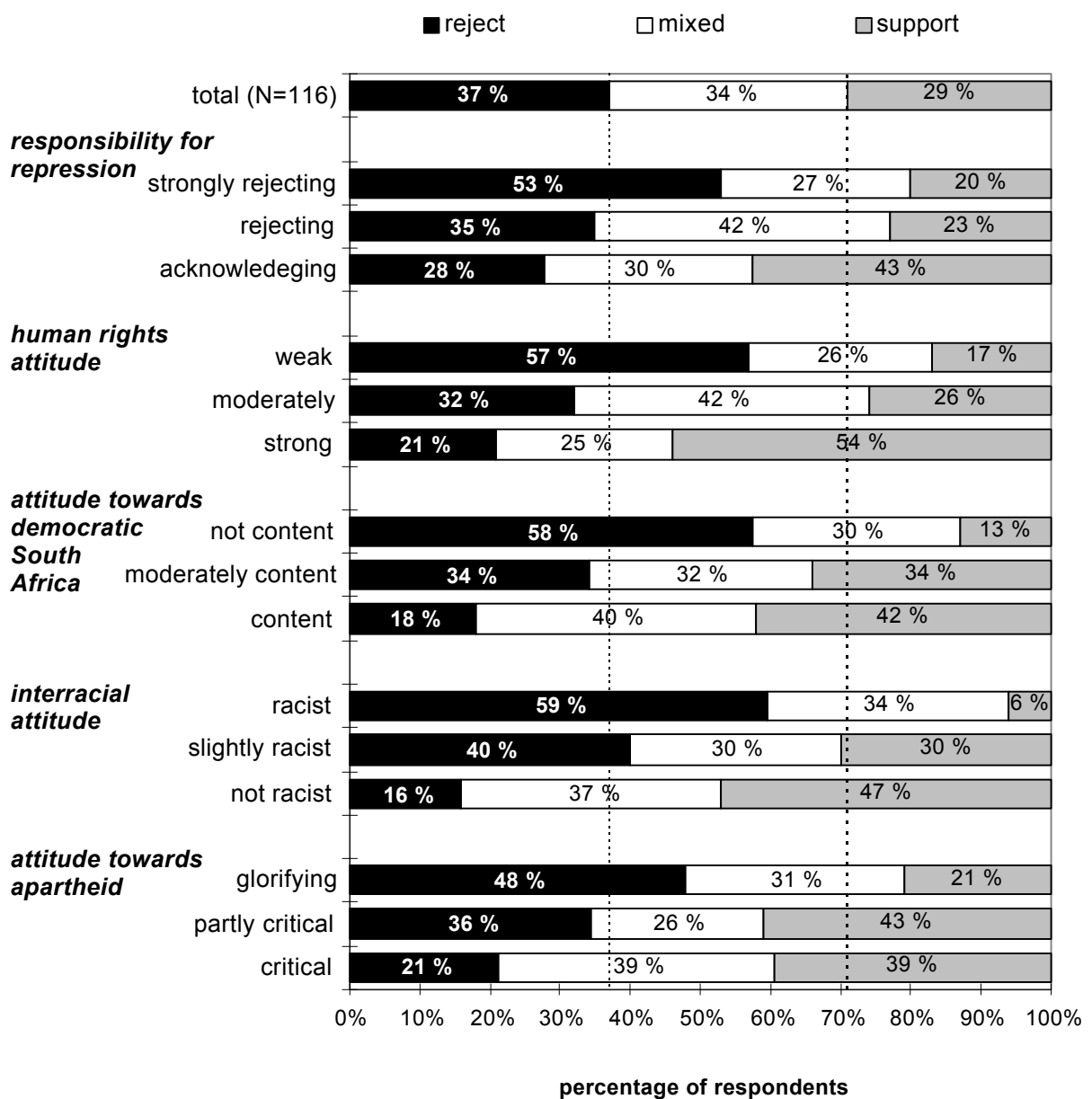
The generation of South Africans between the ages of 16 and 25 at the time when the political transformation occurred will most probably be distinguished by more non-racial and democratic attitudes despite the fact that they attended school during the apartheid years and grew up in families and a social environment where the old political order was largely supported. In the long run it therefore seems likely that the political culture of white South Africans will become more democratic and non-racial as more members of the 'rainbow generation' start to occupy important positions in society. There is also hope that healthy debate about the past will intensify in the future among the sons and daughters of both the "victim" and "perpetrator" camps.

7.2 A white post-apartheid syndrome?

On the other side of the political spectrum can be found a group of white South Africans who appear to exhibit what can be termed a 'white post-apartheid syndrome'' (the CSVR study suggests about one quarter of the white population). Evidence for this stems from the relationship found in the CSVR survey among a cluster of variables including low human rights awareness, racism, denial of the past and negative attitudes towards the new democracy. Those respondents who rejected the TRC also overwhelmingly denied that they or the past government had any responsibility for the repression of black communities, glorified apartheid, were unhappy with the new democratic dispensation, had a low regard for human rights and espoused racist views. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 illustrate these relationships

Of course not every white South African who opposes the new regime can be said to suffer from the post-apartheid syndrome. Some may have good reasons for feeling dissatisfied, for example negative experiences (such as unemployment or becoming a victim of crime) which they attribute to the new political order, and if people feel worse off than before, they naturally tend to exalt the past. Nevertheless, even in such cases it needs to be said that racism was an integral part of apartheid and that non-racist views are therefore inconsistent with the idealisation of apartheid. Similarly, a positive attitude towards apartheid conflicts with a high human rights awareness.

Figure 7.2. The post-apartheid syndrome
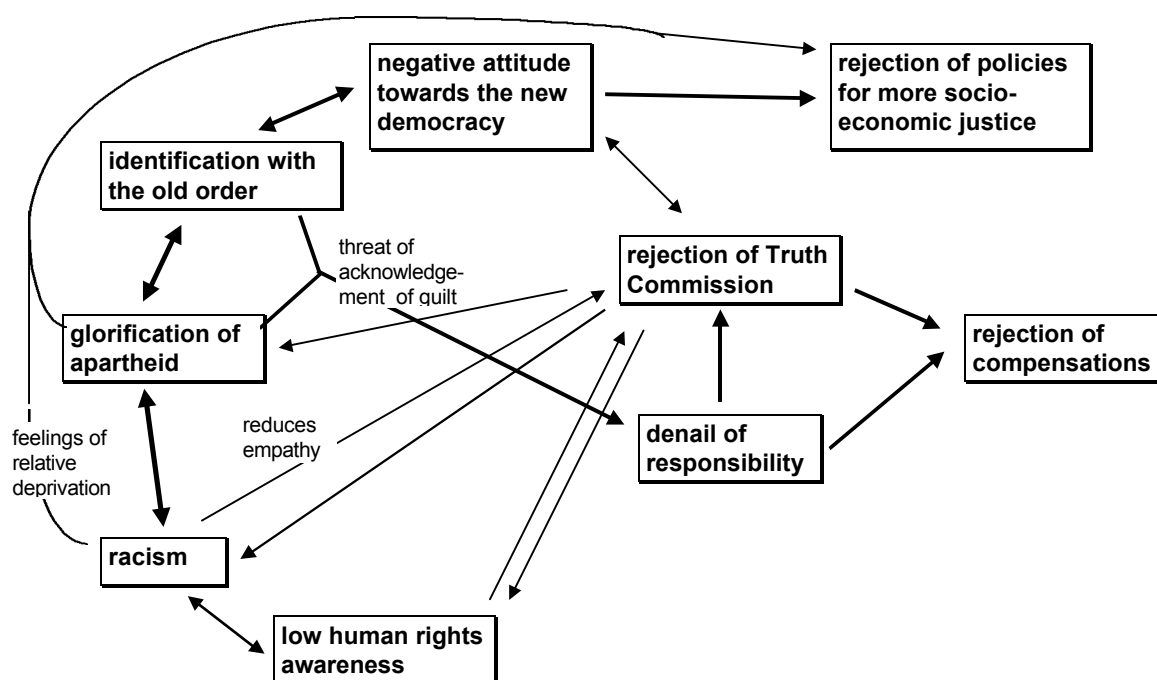
Between acknowledgement and ignorance

The kind of consistency in attitude found in the 'post-apartheid syndrome' can be explained with reference to Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger's basic assumption is that discrepancies in an individual's cognitive system are a source of psychic distress and that he or she will therefore act to reduce this dissonance, for example by avoiding situations and information which increase dissonance, and by actively seeking out information, that stabilises his or her belief structure.

Individuals with a 'post-apartheid syndrome' will therefore probably try to avoid being confronted with information contradicting their beliefs and attitudes. They will try to avoid talking about past human rights violations and rather switch of the TV if information on the TRC is broadcast. In addition, a person exhibiting the 'post-apartheid syndrome' will actively search for information confirming his or her believes that the new political order is unsatisfactory. A non-racial democracy was for a long time portrayed as a threat to white South Africans, and many people can therefore be expected to be actively seeking for information confirming these negative expectations in order to stabilise their attitudes. Negative aspects of the new dispensation will thus be more frequently perceived than positive ones, and better remembered. In essence, the expectation that the new South Africa is bad becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Another assumption of Festinger's theory is that states of cognitive dissonance are reduced by taking the path of least resistance. In other words, cognitions that are easiest to change are the ones that do change. Changing an attitude which is part of a complete set of congruent attitudes needs a lot of effort, as not only one specific attitude has to be changed to bring about consonance. In the case of white South Africans negative attitudes towards the TRC are unlikely to change as they are part of a much larger constellation of attitudes.

Strategies for dealing with dissonant information include ignoring inconsistencies with established attitudes, doubting the accuracy of the new information, wrongly attributing the new information, discrediting the information source, and finding additional information which supports one's established attitude. This could be one reason why people exhibiting the 'post-apartheid syndrome' try to deny or wrongly attribute human rights violations, discredit witnesses giving testimony before the TRC and claim that their evidence is untrue or exaggerated. It is also possible to discredit the whole institution as unfair or a witch-hunt in order to make its information less valid. Inconsistent information can also be reduced by highlighting information about human rights abuses committed by the ANC. Wrongs can thereby be made to cancel each other out, at least in the perception of certain individuals.

It can further be argued that attitudes are resistant to change because they are central to individuals' self-definition (Zimbardo & Leippe 1991: 35). By asking people to change their attitudes towards the apartheid past one is quite literally asking them to change who they are. Anthony Greenwald (1980) has compared the human mind to a totalitarian state. According to him we all have "totalitarian egos" and as non-democratic totalitarian states resist social and governmental changes, so we resist cognitive changes. Totalitarian governments distort events and rewrite history to make it fit the "party line". Similarly, human minds select and interpret information to make it fit with established beliefs and attitudes, and may "rewrite" memory to make past actions and thoughts cohere with present and anticipated behaviours. In other words: "People are 'cognitive conservatives' in that they resist changing their thoughts and evaluations of the objects of their world" (Zimbardo & Leippe 1991: 205).

The more openly people were involved in the apartheid system, the more difficult is it for them to accept that their support for the past order was wrong as this would threaten their own self-esteem. Agreeing that we were wrong implies that something is amiss in our self-defining value system, which implies in turn that we are not as worthy as we thought. It also means that a change in one part of our cognitive network will reverberate, requiring changes elsewhere. Sooner or later, of course this cognitive change will have to be done by white South Africans, both individually and as a group, if they are to fit into the new South Africa.

The way the National Party is dealing with is own past is a interesting example of how the past can be reconstructed by a social group trying to fit into the new dispensation. To avert self-devaluating

cognitions threatening the self-image of the party and its members, apartheid is reinterpreted as a mistake, which was seen and corrected by the party itself. By freeing Nelson Mandela and unbanning the liberation movements, so the argument goes, the party laid the foundation for a peaceful solution of the conflict. The stability of the new order and the new democracy is therefore due to the party's foresight. The whites only referendum of 1992 was therefore not only strategically successful, but now allows 65% of white citizens to claim to have contributed to the historic change.

Such interpretations of the past are self enhancing. Although not completely untrue, they show only one side of the truth, and those who suffered under apartheid might well want to claim that the old political elite changed their policies only because local and international pressure forced them to do so. Despite its partially dishonest character, the NP's version of the past does allow many white South Africans to show support for the new political order without necessarily rejecting the old. It also prevents them from being overly negative about the new democracy as they would have to admit that they made a wrong decision in the 1992 referendum.

According to social-identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979; Tajfel 1982) our own self-concept is not independent of various group memberships. We define ourselves not only through our attitudes or physical appearance but also through our personal friends, family and various societal groups we belong to or identify with. As long as we identify with those groups, we also try to prevent them from being cast in a negative light, and our own self-esteem can be enhanced or reduced through the behaviour of groups we identify with. This means that in order to maintain his or her self-esteem a person who exhibits the 'post-apartheid syndrome' must not only deny his or her personal responsibility, but also that of groups he identifies with. Instead, blame has to be placed on groups who are excluded from positive identification, for example, a small group of criminals in the former regime, or 'black troublemakers'.

Not only does the TRC have to deal with a formidable array of resistances to attitude change among white South Africans, particularly those showing signs of the 'post-apartheid syndrome', but it is also faced with the possibility that attitudes may harden when people with strong opinions are confronted with opposite messages. Instead of being persuaded to change their attitude, such people are known to shift in the non-intended direction. The way individuals react to new messages depends, according to Sherif & Hovland (1961), on the content of the new information and their own position on the topic. Each person has a certain latitude of acceptance, within which messages will be readily accepted, a latitude of noncommitment, within which messages will be partly supported or rejected, and a latitude of rejection, within which messages will invariably be rejected. The assumption is that people only change their attitudes if they are confronted with new messages which fall in the latitude of noncommitment. If a message falls into the latitude of rejection, people are motivated to contrast their attitude and belief by moving in the opposite direction. Instead of, for example, being convinced that apartheid was bad, a boomerang-effect takes place. That is, white South Africans may be even more convinced that it was not that bad because they want to make it clear that they do not subscribe to such an allegation.

While the TRC may encourage some white South Africans who were not very critical of the past to adopt a more critical attitude, it could thus also further strengthen idealisation of the past among those who were strongly identified with it. It is therefore unrealistic to expect that the TRC will have any educative effect on hard-core right-wingers; at best it will marginalise their opinions as other white South Africans increasingly find them unacceptable.

Summary

Challenging the apartheid mind

As South Africa emerges from apartheid, white South Africans' attitudes to the past and to the new democracy can be expected to undergo radical changes. This report attempted to understand the nature of these changes with reference to similar changes in post-World War II Germany, a review of recent opinion surveys conducted among white South Africans, and new findings from a survey conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR).

In a pluralistic society attitudes towards the past and opinions about contemporary political problems do differ, but despite this there is still a need for a basic acceptance of important democratic values and institutions, to make the dream of a "rainbow nation" a reality. A certain common understanding of the apartheid past and its human rights violations is very significant for the interaction of people from different cultural groups in everyday life. How can interpersonal trust increase across former conflict lines, if one side ignores the fate of the other? And how can reconciliation take place, if past discrimination is not accepted as principally wrong and evil?

In West Germany the adjustment of the political culture to democratic values and a critical understanding of the National Socialist (NS) past took time. The American dream of re-educating Germany was only partly successful. Only twenty years after the end of World War II, most Germans accepted that their country had been responsible for the outbreak of the war. During the first decades of the Federal Republic many Germans still believed that "National Socialism was a good idea, badly carried out". While many former war criminals and NS officials were re-integrated into the West-German society with the consent of most Germans during the 1950s, a lack of empathy and support for the victims of the NS regime and the holocaust prevailed. Although the German political culture of today has dramatically changed, especially with the rise of new political generations, problematic historical perceptions are still encountered. These revisionist positions are closely linked with a secondary anti-Semitism. Jews are hated by certain sections of the society because they remind them about the NS past, a past which many people want to forget. The German experience shows that the desire to lay the past to rest is often linked to the glorification of the past authoritarian order and deep racial prejudice.

The apartheid regime was not only repeatedly supported by most white South Africans at the polls, but survey research during the 1980s confirms that the former government could rely on the consent of most white South Africans for their racial policies. White South Africans did not only turn a blind eye to the ongoing human rights violations, most of them even openly supported the way the security forces dealt with black opposition. Apartheid was not only a product of some 'mindless thinking' NP politicians, it was deeply entrenched in the mind of many ordinary white South Africans as well. The political responsibility for the apartheid past is broader than most white South Africans believe today. The view that most white South Africans have always been against apartheid is nothing but a myth.

While South Africa has adopted many challenging institutional changes to deal with the legacy of apartheid, the new democracy and its values still require more support by its citizens. The civil rights of the new constitution will only be safeguarded if they are accompanied by a growing human rights

culture. The CSVR survey confirmed that many white South Africans have still to break mentally with the apartheid past. Although they have accepted some of the outer manifestations of the new South African patriotism, such as the new flag, they are on the whole not happy with the new political system, give primacy to ethnic and cultural over national concerns, oppose various measures aimed at bringing about greater socio-economic justice, continue to endorse a variety of racist sentiments, and show low human rights awareness. The danger persists that human rights violations are still tolerated by many South Africans as long as they are used for some superficial reasons like "combating crime".

Even if support for a "white" Volksstaat has dropped since 1993 and very few whites openly admit that they would like to reinstall apartheid, only 56% of all respondents conceded that the former political system was unjust. Many white South Africans still believe that Apartheid was merely a good idea, badly carried out, and every third respondent held the view that apartheid has done more good than harm to South Africa. Eighty-one percent claimed that there is no moral difference between an act committed in defence of the apartheid system and an act committed as part of the liberation struggle.

While other surveys indicated widespread support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), especially from black South Africans, most white South Africans have a rather ambivalent or negative perception of it. Only younger white South Africans seem to be more open towards the TRC. Nearly every second respondent supported the view that "the TRC is an ANC-inspired witch hunt to discredit its enemies". Many white South Africans doubt the evidence broad before the commission.

Only few white South Africans feel that those people who supported the National Party in the past, have at least, to a certain degree, been responsible for the repression of black communities. Instead of reflecting their own participation in the former political system, the responsibility for the atrocities is mainly placed on the doorsteps of anti-apartheid activists and 'troublemakers' in black communities and to a lesser degree on the security forces and former NP governments.

Over fifty percent of all respondents rejected compensations for relatives and survivors of gross human rights violations and two out of three feel that it is better to forget about the past. Even if respondents claim, we should better concentrate on the future, this sentiment is unfortunately not supported by a stronger commitment to undo the past injustice in socio-economic terms.

On the other hand the survey confirmed a strong relationship between low human rights awareness, racism, denial of the past and negative attitudes towards the new democracy. Therefore there is good reason to believe that a certain section of the white South African population is locked up in a set of selfenforcing attitudes incompatible with the new democratic ethos. I have labelled this symptom a post-apartheid syndrome, as it is not easy to change a self-serving system of attitudes.

If it is accepted that a 'post-apartheid syndrome' exists among some white South Africans, several consequences follow. Firstly, the syndrome can be expected to contribute to the perpetuation of racism and a refusal to undo the legacy of apartheid. This is similar to what occurred in West Germany, where post-war anti-Semitism and a denial of the past, contributed to the rejection of compensation for the victims of Nazism. Instead of accepting the legacy of the past some persons engage in racist (or anti-Semitic) counterclaims, attribute guilt to the victims and white-wash their own role as ordinary citizens under the past regime. This can result in new racist prejudices being added to old ones. For example, blacks are portrayed as non reconciliatory, vengeful, and as using past suffering to excuse their current excesses.

The second consequence of the 'post-apartheid syndrome' is that those affected are unlikely to develop a stronger regard for human rights and democratic values. The message that people will be held accountable for human rights violations will not be heard by such people. While the TRC will probably contribute to the moral reconstruction of those who do not clearly reject it, it will probably fail to do so for people who can be said to have a 'post-apartheid syndrome'.

Thirdly, the post-apartheid syndrome can be expected to lead to a denial of the right to compensation and rehabilitation for the victims of apartheid. The payment of reparations will be seen as a misuse of government money and policies to combat socio-economic injustice will be rejected, as people who do not admit to the evil of the past, will not see the need for corrective action.

Finally, we may see the rise of an extensive revisionist historiography playing down the horrors of apartheid, denying its atrocities, and minimising the extent to which it was supported by white South Africans. It is hoped that the material collected together in this report will help to counteract this possibility.

Having said this, there is still some hope for the future. Generally, respondents under the age of 30 were more receptive to the TRC, less inclined to denial, and less willing to lay the past to rest. We might therefore encounter a 'rainbow generation`, a new generation of young white South Africans, who are less tempted to glorify the apartheid past and are willing to support non-racialism and democracy. It is the daughters and sons of the masters of the past, who hold the key to challenging and undoing the slavery of the apartheid mind.

Appendix A: Questionnaire of the CSVR Survey

Questioning was done with this questionnaire and question-order. The numbers of the questions do not reflect the question order. People who said they were "undecided" were always classified to the "don't know" category

INTRODUCTION

My name is XXXX and I am calling from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation which is part of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

I am phoning because we are conducting a nation-wide telephone survey among white South Africans. The purpose of the survey is to find out how white South Africans feel about the new situation and current political issues in order to give decision-makers a feed-back about the feelings of the white community.

Your number was selected at random from a local telephone directory and your responses will be confidential. Your co-operation is voluntary, but we appreciate your help. Please feel free to ask questions at any time and if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, please say so. Okay?

RESPONDENT SELECTION

This survey is only looking at the white population group: Are the members of this household South African citizens and do they belong to the white population group?

> IF NO: Well, for this study we are only interviewing white South Africans, because we want to find out how those are dealing with the past and how they feel about the future. We are sorry that we bothered you. Have a nice day (afternoon, evening), good bye.

> IF YES: Secondly I will have to find out, who is supposed to be interviewed in your household. We need to give every adult who is staying with you the same chance to be interviewed. Please think about everybody who is 18 years of age or older. Whose birthday is next? Would you be that person?

>> IF NO: May I speak to him / her (that person)?

>> IF NOT AVAILABLE: When could I contact her/him? Could you give me (again) the Christian name of that person? Thank you very much. Would you please tell her/him that we will phone again for an interview. Thank you very much for your co-operation so far, good bye.

INTERVIEWER FALL-BACK STATEMENTS

<u>EXPLANATION OF THE SURVEY</u>: The survey takes about 15 minutes time. Most of the Questions deal with your opinions towards the new South Africa and current political issues as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We want to get a true picture about the public opinion of white South Africans throughout the country, because we feel their views must be heard in the New South Africa.

<u>HOW CONFIDENTIAL IS THE SURVEY</u>: Well, I do not know your name or address. The answers will all be grouped together, so no responses can be identified with any particular person.

USE OF THE SURVEY: The results of the survey will be published by us/the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Political parties and government institutions will have access to the results. But no responses can be identified with any specific person.

WHERE DID YOU GET MY PHONE NUMBER? Telephone numbers have been selected by using the official Telkom-telephone directories. Every 10th page one number was selected. This approach has been chosen as it allows to draw a sample which is representative of the white population in South Africa.

NEXT-BIRTHDAY-METHOD: Well, this is not a cheap commercial survey, but one which has to meet scientific standards. Therefore it is necessary that every person in your household has the same chance to be interviewed. If we just interviewed that person who answers the phone, we are likely to get particular people in the household such as elderly people and housewives. The next-birthday question ensures that we survey a cross-section of people.

MOTIVATION ENHANCING: Well, we would very much appreciate your participation. We think it is very important that the opinions of white people are heard in the New South Africa. We are very interested in your views.

Phone No. Centre: 011 / 403 - 5650

PART 1: FEELINGS TOWARDS THE NEW DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA
(DSA-SCALE: Q6, Q4, Q7, Q1, Q3, Q18)

Q6: In 1994 South Africa got a new national flag. Would you say you are very happy, moderately happy or not happy at all with the new national banner?
    [1] very happy   [8] don't know
    [2] moderately happy   [9] refusal
    [3] not happy at all

Q4. You hear often people speaking about reconciliation in these days. How well has the president done in reconciling the different population groups in South Africa. Would you say president Mandela has done very well, well, fairly or poorly to bring about reconciliation?
    [1] very well   [3] fairly   [8] don't know
    [2] well   [4] poorly   [9] refusal

Q2: If you look at your own situation since the 1994 national elections. Would you say you economic situation has improved, stayed the same or got worse?
    [1] improved   [8] don't know
    [2] stayed the same   [9] refusal
    [3] got worse

Q8A: Would you say you are very interested, moderately interested or not interested at all in politics?
    [1] very interested   [8] don't know
    [2] moderately interested   [9] refusal
    [3] not interested at all

Q3: How happy are you with the new political system in South Africa in general? Are you rather very happy, quite happy, not very happy or not happy at all?
    [1] very happy   [8] don't know
    [2] quite happy   [9] refusal
    [3] not very happy

[4] not happy at all

Q7: Are you proud to be a member of the South African rainbow nation? Would you say you are very proud, quite proud, not very proud or not proud at all?
    [1] very proud   [3] not very proud   [8] don't know
    [2] quite proud   [4] not proud at all   [9] refusal

Q36: What is your home language? (Do you speak Afrikaans or English?)
    [1] Afrikaans   [2] English   [3] Other

Q8: Would you say you are very proud, quite proud, not very proud or not proud at all to be an
                Afrikaner?
                English-speaking white South African?
                Portuguese- "   "   "   "   ?

    [1] very proud   [3] not very proud   [8] don't know
    [2] quite proud   [4] not proud at all   [9] refusal

Q1: People have different views about the changes in South Africa. Do you believe that South Africa is moving in the right or wrong direction?
    [1] right direction   [8] don't know
    [2] wrong direction   [9] refusal

EQUALITY-SCALE (Q5)

Several policies have been suggested to reduce the inequalities between the different population groups in South Africa. Could you please tell me whether you would rather support, accept, reject or strongly reject the specific policy.

	support	accept	reject	strongly reject	don't know
Q5a) Opening of white schools to black students	1	2	3	4	8
Q5b) Giving farm land to blacks against a modest compensation by the government.	1	2	3	4	8
Q5c) Preferential employment of qualified blacks in the public service to make it representative of all South Africans.	1	2	3	4	8

Q9: How do you feel about an area in which white South Africans may enjoy self-determination? Do you support the idea of a Volksstaat?

    IF YES: Well, Would you consider moving there?
        IF NO OR DON'T KNOW: ENTER [3]
        IF YES: Would you move there even if the standard of living dropped?
           [1] yes   [2] not move, if dropped or don't know

    IF NO: ENTER [4] don't support it.
    IF DON'T KNOW: ENTER [8]

PART 2: SUBTLE RACISM-SCALE (Q10 & Q11)

Q10: Some people are chatting about the new South Africa. Could you please listen to their statements and say to me whether you would rather strongly agree, largely agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

	strongly agree	largely agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a) "I'm not really interested to have African friends."	1	2	3	4	8
b) "I do not mind, if blacks move into my residential area." (R)	1	2	3	4	8
c) "It is certainly best for all concerned that interracial marriages should not take place."*	1	2	3	4	8
d) "I do not mind whether I am treated by a white or black medical practitioner." (R)	1	2	3	4	8
e) "I do well understand why many white South Africans don't like blacks."	1	2	3	4	8
f) "Immigration of blacks to South Africa should not be allowed."	1	2	3	4	8

Q11: Here are some statements about the future of our country. Could you please say to me again whether you would rather strongly agree, largely agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement?

	strongly agree	largely agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a) Given the same education and opportunities, blacks should be able to perform as well as whites in any field. (R)*	1	2	3	4	8
b) It is crucial for the stable development of the country that whites retain economic control. *	1	2	3	4	8
c) Given favourable conditions it is quite possible that black majority rule could result in a stable, prosperous, and democratic South Africa. (R)*	1	2	3	4	8
d) Too much is being done for blacks at the expense of white people nowadays.*	1	2	3	4	8

*(R)= item reverse scored, * = adopted from the Subtle Racism Scale of Duckitt (1991) with minor changes.*

Q12: In 1992 the former government called for a referendum, to find out whether the white community supported a negotiated settlement for South Africa. Do you remember, if you voted?

IF YES: How did you vote? Did you support De Klerk in his efforts to reach a negotiated settlement or did you oppose?

[1] yes / support transition   [0] didn't vote   [8] don't know any more
[2] no / against transition   [3] voted, but don't now   [9] refusal

Q13: If national elections were to take place today, which political party or movement would you support?   DO NOT READ OUT!!!

[01] NP   [07] DP   [00] None / won't vote
[02] CP   [08] ANC
[03] AVF   [09] PAC   [88] don't know
[04] AWB   [99] refusal
[05] HNP   [10] ACDP
[06] IFP

PART 3: DEMOCRATIC VALUES, ATTITUDES TOWARDS CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS (HR-SCALE Q14 & Q15)   (=MR-Skala)

Q 14: People have often different opinions how to behave in a society. Could you please tell me, whether you would rather strongly agree, largely agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

	strongly agree	largely agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a) Every citizen has the right to hold a demonstration	1	2	3	4	8
b) In every democratic society certain conflicts must be resolved with violence. (R)	1	2	3	4	8
c) Women should actively participate in politics in the same way as men.	1	2	3	4	8
d) Every democratic party should be given the same chance to become the ruling party in an election contest.	1	2	3	4	8
e) The police should be allowed to use more frequently their guns to maintain the public order (R).	1	2	3	4	8
f) People of all races should have equal access to basic rights and freedoms.	1	2	3	4	8
g) There are times when detention of political prisoners may be necessary to maintain social order. (R)	1	2	3	4	8

(R) = item reverse scored

Q15: Are you in favour of the death penalty or are you against it?

[1] in favour (R)   [8] don't know
[2] against it   [9] refusal

PART 4: PERCEPTION OF APARTHEID
(APARTHEID-SCALE: Q17, Q18, Q16 without Q16g, Q25)

Q17) Would you say that the former political system was unjust as it excluded blacks from the voting in general elections or would you rather say that it wasn't so unjust because they were allowed to vote in their townships and homelands?
[1] was unjust   [8] don't know
[2] wasn't unjust   [9] refusal

Q18: Imagine there would be an attempt to reinstall apartheid. Would you do everything to prevent that happening, would you be unhappy but do nothing, or would you support the reinstallation of the former political system?
[1] would do everything   [8] don't know
[2] would be unhappy but do nothing   [9] refusal
[3] support reinstallation

Q16: The opinions about the recent history of South Africa are often quite controversial. I will read out various views and I would like you to tell me whether you would rather strongly agree, largely agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

	strongly agree	largely agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a) Apartheid has done more harm than good to South Africa.	1	2	3	4	8
b) If the National Party had agreed to majority rule before 1990, communists would have taken over and we would have lost our freedom (R)	1	2	3	4	8
c) The majority of white South Africans have always been in opposition to apartheid. (R)	1	2	3	4	8
d) Apartheid was merely a good idea but badly carried out. (R)	1	2	3	4	8
e) The long-time occupation of Namibia was an illegal act by former South African governments	1	2	3	4	8
f) Human rights violations in South Africa have always been exaggerated by foreign countries (R)	1	2	3	4	8
g) The white population is the victim of the changes since 1994. (not included in Scale)	1	2	3	4	8
h) We should admire white and black South Africans who joint the struggle against apartheid in the past.	1	2	3	4	8

PART 5: PERCEPTION OF THE TRUTH COMMISSION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEALING WITH THE PAST
(TRC-SCALE: Q22 & Q27 without Q27g; DENIAL-SCALE: Q34, Q30 & Q31)

Q19: Have you ever heard or read about a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
    [1] yes   [2] no GO TO Q21   [9] refusal

    IF YES: Q20: Did you read about it in a newspaper or did you listen to a broadcast in radio or television?
             [1] newspaper only   [4] in two types of media
             [2] radio only   [5] in all three types of media
             [3] TV only

    Q20A: Did you talk about the truth commission with friends or family members?
             [1] yes
             [2] no

Q21: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is currently investigating human rights violations that occurred between 1960 and 1993. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the idea to investigate these political motivated crimes?
    [1] Strongly agree   [3] disagree   [8] don't know
    [2] agree   [4] strongly disagree   [9] refusal

Q23: The Truth Commission may also grant amnesty to perpetrators of human rights violations. That means that these people won't be prosecuted in court or could be released from prison. Do you agree with the idea of granting amnesty for political motivated crimes committed in South Africa's past. Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?
    [1] strongly agree   [3]disagree   [8] don't know, maybe
    [2] agree   [4] strongly disagree   [9] refusal

Q24: What about those people, who have been involved in political crimes and do not confess before the Truth Commission. Should they still be prosecuted and punished?
    [1] prosecuted and punished   [8] haven't thought about it, don't know
    [2] not prosecuted and punished   [9] refusal

Q25: Is there a moral difference between somebody who committed an act as a freedom fighter in the struggle against apartheid and somebody who committed a crime in order to defend the former political system?
    IF NO: ENTER [2]
    IF YES: Would you say violent resistance against apartheid was morally more justified? [1] YES
        IF NO CONFIRM: Am I right that the you would say that defending the former political system was more justified?

    [1] Fighting against apartheid more justified   [8] don't know
    [2] No difference   [9] refusal
    [3] Defending apartheid more justified

Q26: Human rights violations have been committed by those who defended apartheid and fought against it. According to your opinion: Should the Truth Commission only investigate crimes committed by one side, or should it look at all human rights violations committed by both sides?

> IF ONLY ONE SIDE: Well, do you feel that it should only investigate those crimes committed by the ANC and other liberation movements?
>
> IF NO CONFIRM: Did I understand you correctly. You think that the Truth Commission should only investigate crimes in support of the former political system?

[1] Only crimes by ANC and other liberation movements [8] don't know
[3] Only crimes in support of apartheid   [9] refusal
[2] crimes committed by both sides

Q22: Do you think that most of the allegations made by victims before the Truth Commission are true, or do you think that these incidents are being exaggerated?
     [1] most of the allegations are true   [8] don't know
     [2] incidents are being exaggerated (R)   [9] refusal

Q34: Various claims have been made before the Truth Commission, who is responsible for the repression of black communities in the past. I will read out some groups who have been named and I wish you to say me whether you would say yes, they have been responsible for the repression of black communities in the past, or rather no, they haven't , that is more a unjustified claim.

a) Some people say that the security forces have been responsible for the repression of black communities in the past. Would you rather agree or disagree with that opinion?
     [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

b) Others say anti-apartheid activists and other ' troublemakers' in the black community have been responsible for the repression of black communities in the past. Would you ...
     [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

c) Some people say that <u>only</u> a small group of senior security officers and politicians has been responsible. Would you ...
     [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

d) Others say that the former National Party governments have been responsible. Would you ...
     [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

e) And again others say that all those who supported the NP in the past have been responsible for the repression of black communities, at least to a certain degree. Would you ...
     [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

Q27: I will read out some different opinions about the Truth Commission. Could you please again say me, whether you would rather strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	don't know
a) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an ANC-inspired witch-hunt to discredit its enemies (R)	1	2	3	4	8
b) The Commission is an independent body investigating crimes irrespective of the political affiliation of victims and perpetrators.	1	2	3	4	8
c) The Commission won't be effective in bringing about reconciliation. (R)	1	2	3	4	8
d) The Truth Commission is necessary to ensure that human rights won't be violated in the same manner in the future.	1	2	3	4	8
e) The Commission is a waste of money. (R)	1	2	3	4	8
f) The Commission is needed to uncover the truth about human rights violations in the past.	1	2	3	4	8
g) The Commission won't be able to ensure that justice is done to the victims of human rights violations. (not included in TRC-Scale)	1	2	3	4	8
h) The Truth Commission will improve the image of South Africa internationally.	1	2	3	4	8

Q28: At the moment there is a discussion whether relatives of those people who have been murdered in the political conflict in the past should receive a monthly compensation of about 500 Rand from the government. Would you fully support, support, reject or strongly reject that?

[1] fully support   [3] reject   [8] don't know
[2] support   [4] strongly reject   [9] refusal

Q29: The Truth Commission has heard many black people speaking about torture and mysterious deaths in police cells. Is this the first time you heard about these things?

IF NO: Would you say, you knew about these things, but didn't realise their extend or have you been more or less fully aware of what was going on ?

[1] didn't know   [8] don't know
[2] did know, but not their extend   [9] refusal
[3] have been aware of what was happening

Q30: A respondent told us previously in an interview that he is ashamed that South Africans have committed so many human rights violations against their fellow citizens during the days of National Party rule. Would you share this feeling?

[1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

Q31: From somebody else we heard:
"Not every white South African who supported the NP in the past must feel guilty. Nevertheless he should feel responsible and try to undo the damage inflicted to the black community so far as that is possible."
Would you rather support or reject this opinion?
  [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know

Q32: An other person we interviewed told us:
"I think it is better to forget about the past and stop prosecuting people who committed crimes against anti-apartheid activists in the past."
Would you rather agree or disagree with this statement?
  [1] agree GO TO Q35   [2] disagree   [8] don't know

Q33: IF AGREE / SUPPORT: Could you please listen to the reasons other people gave to us who share this opinion and say to me, whether you would rather support or reject the specific argument. The first argument is:

a) We should stop prosecuting people because members of the liberation movement committed themselves crimes and haven't been tried for that.
  [1] support   [8] don't know
  [2] reject   [9] refusal

e) We should forget about the past because we should rather concentrate on the future.
  [1] support   [8] don't know
  [2] reject   [9] refusal

c) We should stop prosecuting because those people were doing their duty to prevent a violent overthrow of the former government.
  [1] support   [8] don't know
  [2] reject   [9] refusal

d) We should stop prosecuting because the perpetrators have been victims of apartheid too.
  [1] support   [8] don't know
  [2] reject   [9] refusal

PERSONAL DETAILS

Before we finish the interview I have some few questions regarding yourself.

Q35: In which year have you been born? _ _ _ _ _

Q37: What is the highest educational level you have completed?

    [1] up to Standard 8   (Form III, NTC I)
    [2] Standard 9 (Form IV, NTC II)
    [3] Standard 10 / Matric (Form V, NTC III)
    [4] Post-Matric (BA, Honours Degree)
    [5] Master's degree or doctor's degree (MA, PhD).
    [9] refusal

Q38: What is your current occupation? _

    [4] unemployed   [9] refusal
    [5] student   [7] retired
    [6] housewife

Q39: Are you living in a big metropolitan area like Durban, small town, or in a rural area?
    [1] metropolitan area
    [2] small town
    [3] rural area

Q41: Do you read a daily newspaper regularly, that is at least four out of six issues a weak?
    [1] yes   [2] no   [8] don't know   [9] refusal

Q42: What is your (joint) income (both spouses) per month? (Gross income from all sources?) Is it more than 4.000 Rand?

    IF YES: Do you earn (jointly) more or less than 7.000 Rand?
            [1] more than R 7.000
            [2] less than R 7.000

    IF NO: Do you earn (jointly) more or less than 2.500 Rand?
            [3] more than 2.500 Rand
            [4] less than 2.500 Rand

This was the last question. In the name of our research team I want to thank you very much for your readiness to answer our questions. Have a nice day (afternoon, evening). Good bye.

Enter additional data:

SEX, CONFIRM IF NECESSARY: [1] man   [2] women

Directory No. (Province):   _ _
Data No.(see case No.):   _ _

Appendix B: Scales and Indices

1. DSA-Scale: Attitude towards democratic new South Africa:

Six items (Q6, Q4, Q7, Q1, Q3 and Q18)
Items were recoded in the following manner:
Q6:

8, 9 → 2

Q4, Q3, Q7:

8, 9 → 3

3 → 4

4 → 5

Q1:

8, 9 → 2

2 → 3

Q18:

8,9 → 3

3 → 4

The DSA-Index was build through summing up all recoded items. Scores of 6 to 11 were classified as "content", scores of 12-15 were classified "moderately content" and scores between 16 to 25 as "not content at all".

Attitude towards New South Africa
(according 6-item NSA-Scale)

not content at all
34.4%

content with NSA
32.0%

moderately content
33.6%
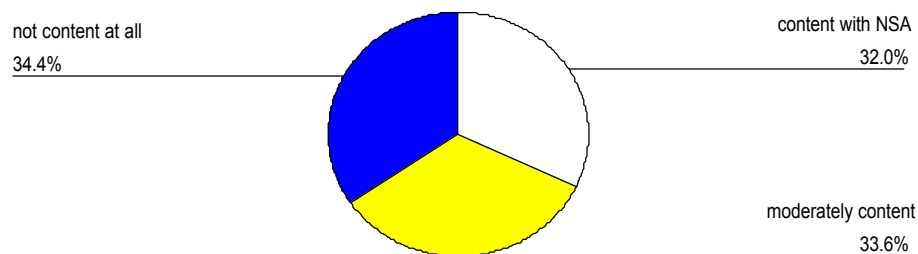
May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=122

2. EQUALITY-Scale: Support for socio-economic policies to reduce the inequalities between the different population groups

Three items (Q5a, b, c)
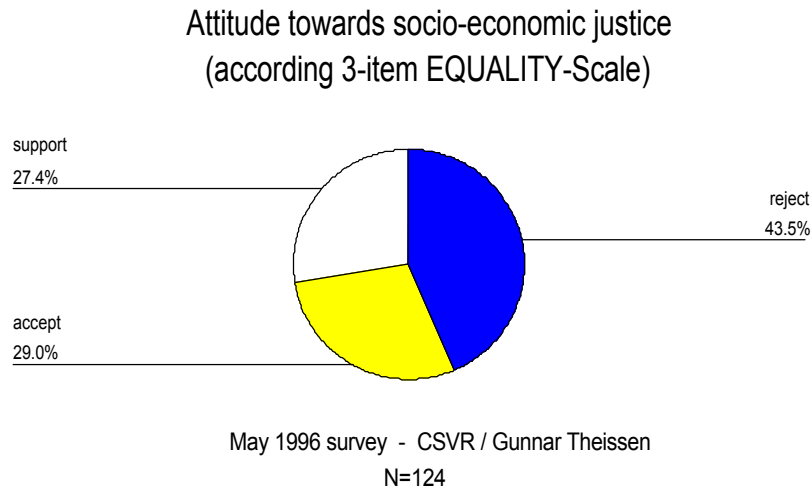All items were recoded according the following manner:

1 → 5

2 → 4

8, 9 → 3

3 → 2

4 → 1

The EQUALITY-Index was built through summing up all recoded items. Scores between 3 and 10

were classified "reject", those between 11 and 12 as "accept" and those between 13 and 15 as "support".

Attitude towards socio-economic justice
(according 3-item EQUALITY-Scale)

support
27.4%

reject
43.5%

accept
29.0%

May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=124

3. RACISM-Scale: Degree of racism of respondent.

10 items (Q10a, b, c, d, e, f and Q11a, b, c, d)
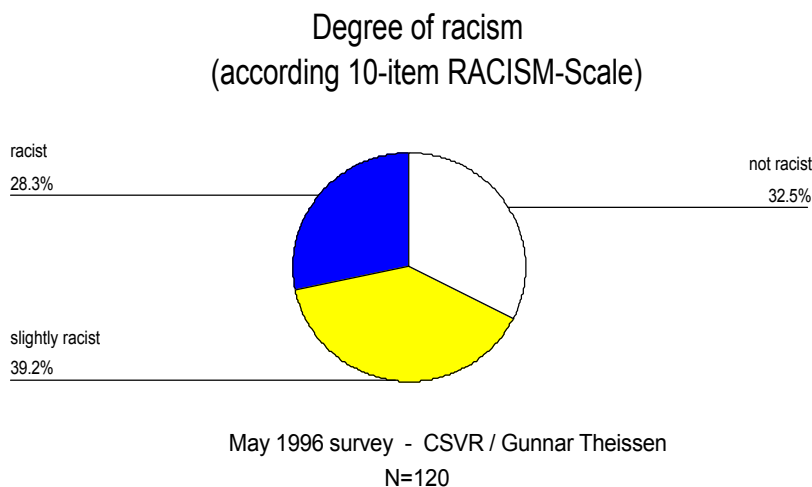Items expressing 'racist' sentiments (non-reverse items) were recoded in the following way:
    8, 9 → 3
    3 → 4
    4 → 5
Items expressing 'egalitarian' sentiments (reverse items marked with R) were recoded:
    1 → 5
    2 → 4
    8, 9 → 3
    3 → 2
    4 → 1
The RACISM-Index was built through summing up all ten recoded items of the RACISM-Scale:
Scores of 10-25 were classified as 'not racist', those of 26-31 as 'slightly racist' and scores of 32-50 as 'racist'.

Degree of racism
(according 10-item RACISM-Scale)

racist
28.3%

not racist
32.5%

slightly racist
39.2%

May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=120

4. HR-Scale: Degree of human-rights awareness and democratic values

8 items (Q14a, b, c, d, e, f, g and Q15)
Q14a, c, f (non-reverse items) expressing support for human rights were recoded:
  1 → 5
  2 → 4
  8, 9 → 3
 3 → 2
  4 → 1

Q14b, e, g (reverse items) were recoded:
  8, 9 → 3
  3 → 4
  4 → 5
Q15 was recoded:
  1 → 4
  2 → 1
  8, 9 → 3
The Human-Rights-Index was calculated through summing up all recoded 8 items of the HR-Scale. Respondents who scored 8-24 were classified to have a "very weak" human rights awareness, those who scored between 25 and 31 were classified to have a "weak" human-rights awareness and those who scored between 32 and 40 to have a "strong" human rights awareness.

Attitudes towards human rights
(according 9-item HR-Scale)

strong
19.7%

very weak
31.1%

weak
49.2%
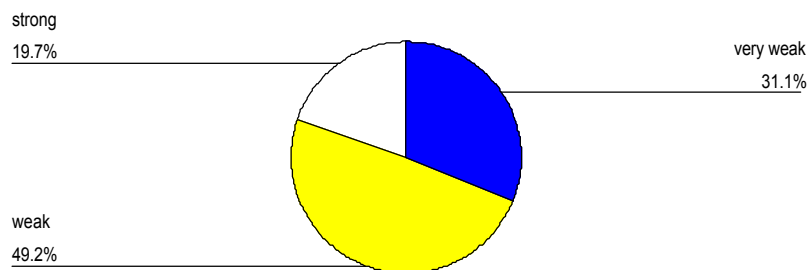
May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=122

5. APARTHEID-Scale: Perception of Apartheid by respondent.

10 items (Q17, Q18, Q16 a, b, c, d, e, f, h, Q25)
Items were recoded in the following way:
Q17:
  1 → 2
  8, 9 → 3
  2 → 5
Q18:
  8, 9 → 3
  3 → 5
Q16a, e, h: (non-reversals) were recoded:
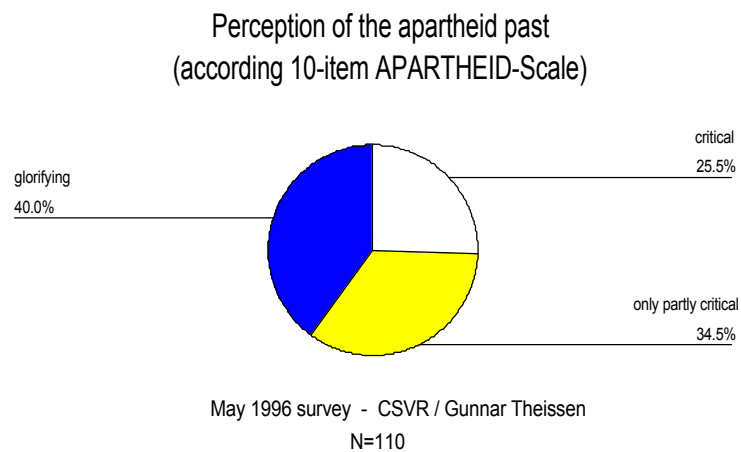
8, 9 → 3
3 → 4
4 → 5

Q16b, c, f: (reverse items) were recoded:
1 → 5
2 → 4
8, 9 → 3
3 → 2
4 → 1

Q25 was recoded:
2, 8, 9 → 3
3 → 5

All 10 recoded items were summed up as a APARTHEID-Index. People who scored 10-25 were recoded as "critical" towards apartheid , those who scored 26-30 as "only partly critical" and those who scored 31-50 as "glorifying" apartheid.

Perception of the apartheid past
(according 10-item APARTHEID-Scale)

critical
25.5%

glorifying
40.0%

only partly critical
34.5%

May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=110

6. TRC-Scale: Attitudes towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

8 items: (Q22, Q22a, b, c, d, e, f, h)
Q22 was recoded:
1 → 1
8,9 → 3
2 → 5

Q27a, c, e (reverse items) were recoded:
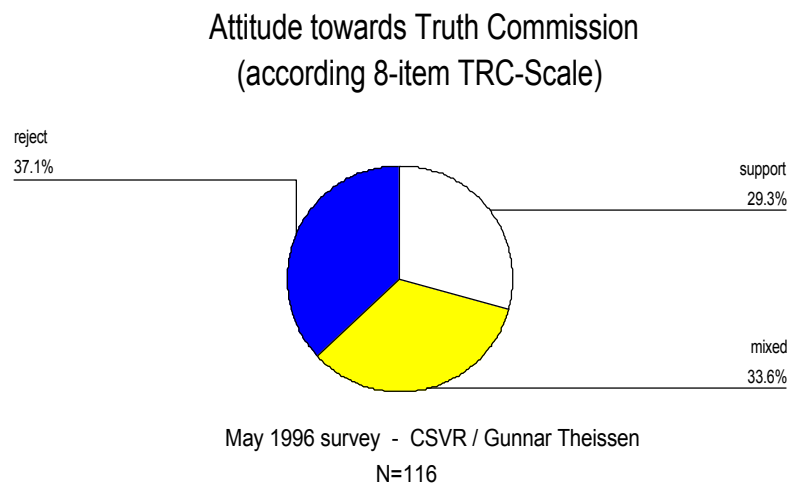1 → 5
2 → 4
8, 9 → 3
3 → 2
4 → 1

Q27b, d, f, h (non-reverse items) were recoded:
8, 9 → 3
3 → 4
4 → 5

Respondents who scored between 8-20 on the TRC-Index were classified as to be "in favour" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, those who showed values of between 21 and 27 as having

"mixed" feelings about the Truth Commission and those who scored with 28 to 40 points on the TRC-Index to reject the Commission.

Attitude towards Truth Commission
(according 8-item TRC-Scale)

reject
37.1%

support
29.3%

mixed
33.6%

May 1996 survey - CSVR / Gunnar Theissen
N=116

7. DENIAL-Scale: Rejection of responsibility for apartheid repression

6 items: Q34a, c, d, e (without Q34b) , Q30, Q31

Q34a, d, e and Q30, Q31 were recoded in the following manner:
  1 → 1
  8,9 → 2
  2 → 3
Q34c (reverse scored) was recoded:
  1 → 3
  8,9 → 2
  2 → 1

All items were summed up to an DENIAL-Index. Respondents with scores between 6 and 11 were classified to „acknowledge" responsibility, those with scores between 12-14 as „partly rejecting" responsibility and those with 15 to 18 as „rejecting" the responsibility of the previous government, its executive or those who supported it.

Correlations (Pearsons-r) of Attitude Scales

	Human Rights Awareness	Racism	Denial of Responsibility	Socioeconomic Justice	Attitude towards New South Africa	Attitude towards TRC
Attitude towards Apartheid Past	- 0,631***	0,606***	0,571***	- 0,548***	- 0,513***	- 0,478***
Human Rights Awareness		- 0,590***	- 0,495***	0,489***	0,472***	0,450***
Racism			0,411***	- 0,558***	- 0,636***	- 0,521***
Denial of Responsibility				- 0,454***	- 0,367***	- 0,292**
Socioeconmic Justice					0,486***	0,380***
Attitude towards New South Africa						0,416***

*** p = 0,001; ** p= 0,01

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