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Rainbow's End: Public Support for Democracy in the New South Africa

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This paper is written to honor the talented and dedicated journalists of Independent Newspapers (South Africa) who produced the “Reality Check” series: Ryland Fisher, Roger Friedman, Shaun Johnson, Karen MacGregor, Eric Ntabazalila, Judith Soal and Simon Zwane.

Challenges to Democracy in South Africa

The two headlines on the front page of the Cape Times on this South African summer morning in February told of two democracies battling their own worst impulses. Terrorists had bombed another police station in downtown Cape Town, killing a woman passerby. And in equally large type: "Lewinsky to Testify."

To this newly arrived visitor from the United States, the juxtaposed headlines were at once startling and revealing. Eight thousand miles away, the world's most powerful and successful democracy lurched toward a constitutional crisis over a sex scandal that most Americans viewed as inconsequential. Meanwhile in South Africa, one of the world's newest democracies confronted issues of life and death, stability and chaos.

The story of South Africa's political transformation from international pariah to the Rainbow Nation has been told often, and told well. In April 1999, a team of reporters and editors from Independent Newspapers, the largest newspaper chain in the country, added another chapter to this inspiring narrative. These journalists, drawn from newspapers around the country, worked as a team to report the findings of a survey of 3,000 South Africans who shared their views on democracy, race relations, reconciliation and national unity in the new South Africa.

The project was called “Reality Check.” The five-part series ran April 19-23, 1999, two weeks before voters went to the polls to cast ballots in the second free and democratic election in South Africa’s history.

The survey and resulting stories clarified the challenges that democracy faces in South Africa: widespread unemployment, particularly among the black majority; an anemic economy; a soaring crime rate and the gaping disparities between white and black South Africans. "But the strongest message that came through in the survey was an unequivocally positive one," wrote Mollyann Brodie, Drew Altman and Michael Sinclair of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, which jointly sponsored the survey with Independent Newspapers. "Finding after finding

underscored the South African people's commitment to democracy and national unity; their confidence in South Africa's major institutions; their realism about the pace of change; and their optimism for the future."[1]

It is doubtlessly true that South Africa has come quickly down the freedom trail; perhaps even further than visionaries like Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu could have imagined. But do South Africans believe this transformation will continue? Or do they expect the democratic moment—this golden age--will quickly pass into blood and chaos? More to the point, what are the sources of optimism and uncertainty about the future of democracy? Do the factors that encourage optimism among blacks provoke uncertainty among whites? What lessons, if any, should politicians and policymakers glean from these survey data as they attempt to consolidate and deepen democracy in South Africa?

The sometimes-surprising answers to these questions occupy the rest of this paper. As this analysis will suggest, pessimism about the future of democracy frequently comes from unexpected sources. The most pessimistic South Africans are black, not white. Even more unexpectedly, the ethnic group that now dominates political life in South Africa—the Xhosa, the tribe of Mandela and his successor Thabo Mbeki—express the most uncertainty about democracy's future.

These data also suggest that crime may be killing democracy in South Africa, or at the least, eroding public confidence in democratic institutions and systems. At the same time, broad mistrust of police, the army and the courts complicates efforts to combat crime.

The enormous gap between rich and poor South Africans, a legacy of apartheid, also sharply reduce belief that democracy will endure. Democratic institutions appear threatened by unrealistically high expectations about the ability of democracy to deal effectively—and quickly—with the country's biggest problems.

Yet counterpoised against these pessimistic signs is equally compelling evidence that South Africans stand poised to once again to defy long odds and pessimistic predictions about their

future. After all, recent history has already proven that South Africa is a place where political miracles can happen.

The Survey: An Overview

Data for this analysis comes from the Reality Check survey, a joint project of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Independent Newspapers of South Africa. A nationally representative sample of 3,000 South Africans was surveyed in face-to-face interviews in November and December of 1998. The questionnaire was administered to respondents by trained interviewers in the eleven official languages of South Africa. In theory, the sample should provide statistically reliable results for the South African adult population as a whole, as well as for South Africa's major racial groups and provinces. Margin of sampling error for the overall results is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

The Kaiser Foundation, Independent Newspapers and two South African research firms, Strategy & Tactics and the Community Agency for Social Inquiry (CASE), jointly developed the survey questionnaire. Data analysis for the Reality Check project was led by David Everatt and Ross Jennings of Strategy & Tactics, and by Mollyann Brodie, vice president of public opinion research at the Kaiser Family Foundation. This author served as a consultant to reporters and editors on the Reality Check team after the survey was completed.

The survey revealed a broad national consensus on the central principles of democracy. Nine in 10 South Africans believed voting should be private. Nine in 10 believed that the "right to vote for the party of my choice defines democracy." Eight in 10 supported the right of a free press. Three in four agreed that "for good government we must have strong opposition."

It was not always so. "The basic democratic principles—such as multi-partyism, a strong opposition and an unfettered political right to choose—are now widely accepted notions compared to five years ago, when attempts to assert them often led to hostilities," concluded Simon Zwane, a reporter on the Reality Check reporting team.[2]

South Africans expressed high levels of confidence for many key democratic institutions. Overwhelming majorities expressed confidence in the national government in Pretoria, the Parliament and in their local governments. Standing alone, these expressions of confidence in all levels of government are noteworthy; when compared to the results of similar questions asked in other countries, these findings are little short of astonishing. Nearly eight in 10 South Africans said they expected the national government in Pretoria to do "the right thing" almost all or most of the time—more than twice the proportion of Americans who express similar confidence in the federal government.

Yet the story of South Africa often is two stories: One black, the other white.[3] The racial divide, once enforced by law and state-sponsored terrorism, continues to run deep and wide through the heart of South Africa. The persistence of this sad division is reflected in these survey results. Whites are far less confident of the national government than Africans, though a majority still expressed high levels of trust. The confidence gap narrows when blacks and whites are asked to evaluate their provincial and local governments.

If these were the biggest racial differences laid open in this survey, the numbers might be cause for celebration, not concern. They are not. Other questions that probe more deeply into attitudes toward other key democratic institutions reveal larger and more disquieting differences.

Table I here

As Table 1 illustrates, blacks consistently expressed significantly more confidence in each of 10 institutions critical to democracy-building in South Africa. Black and white attitudes were roughly similar in only two areas. More than six blacks and whites said they "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence toward the churches, a positive but not necessarily surprising result.

The second area of agreement underscores the difficult challenges that face South Africans today. More than a third--35 percent--of black South Africans expressed high levels of

confidence in the South African Police Service (SAPS), a view shared by 31 percent of whites. Significantly, however, when ranked in terms of confidence, the police finished at the bottom among blacks, reflecting the legacy of oppression of blacks by the police under apartheid as well as continuing instances of mistreatment and brutality by a haphazardly trained, demoralized and disproportionately white police force. Among whites sampled, the police were the second highest rated institution, behind the churches.

While not embracing politics, the overwhelming majority of South Africans—both black and white--sees the need for vigorous, contested elections. Three in four agreed that "for good government, we must have strong opposition." About half – 52 percent – acknowledged that they "didn't really like politics, but it's important to keep in touch with what's happening," while 36 percent said it was important to them "to be as involved as possible" in politics. Only one in eight – 12 percent–said, “politics is a waste of time."

The survey suggests that South Africans believe that much has gone right in the Mandela years. Nearly half – 48 percent –said public education has gotten better, while and 23 percent said there's been no change. Only 29 percent said education has gotten worse, a view shared by a disproportionately large number of white South Africans. Nearly four in 10 – 37 percent – said relations between the races had improved, while 42 percent reported no change. One in five reported that relations between the races had eroded.

In other important areas of South African life, the results are distinctly more troubling. About eight in 10 – 85 percent – said crime has gotten worse. And nearly two in three – 64 percent – said the economy had declined.

"This survey of South Africans certainly underscores South Africa's challenges but it also shows that the new South Africa has made a good beginning and there is cause of guarded optimism about the future," the Kaiser team wrote. "When viewed in the context of South Africa's history and what might have been, the survey illuminates South Africa's standing as perhaps the leading example of democratic transformation in the world." [4]

Some Theories and Some Hypotheses

South Africans remain deeply ambivalent about the future of democracy. A question asked at the end of the Independent Newspapers-Kaiser survey captures this tension: “Thinking ahead to when Mandela leaves office. Will South Africa remain a democracy country?”

A bare majority of South Africans – 54 percent –said they believed that South Africa will remain democratic. Another 38 percent said they were unsure. Only 8 percent doubted democracy would survive. Even among white South Africans, only one in eight offered this pessimistic view.

For practical as well as theoretical reasons we collapse together those who were unsure and those who answered the question in the negative into a single category. Only 8 percent of our sample offered a purely pessimistic view. Such a small sample places constraints on how far we can press for answers to our questions, and how successful we will be.[5] It also is reasonable to suspect that social desirability bias is hard at work in this question. The arduous but ultimately successful struggle against apartheid still burns brightly in the memories of South Africans. The international acclaim that greeted the fall of apartheid --including two Nobel Peace Prizes to the principle architects of the democratic movement--still ring in their ears. Even those with the deepest doubts might think it disrespectful or unpatriotic to predict so quick an end to the democracy. The relatively low levels of overt pessimism also may reflect what political theorist Larry Diamond in another context has called the “bias for hope”—the belief that even against long odds and in defiance of overwhelming contrary evidence, miracles do happen in politics.

We divide our sample into two groups. “Optimists” comprise 54 percent of the 3,000 respondents. “Uncertains” constitute the 46 percent who were either unsure or pessimistic about the future of democracy after Mandela.

At least two challenges might be posed to this attempt to model optimism. One is cynical, the other pragmatic. As a concept, “optimism” may be devalued in this alienated age. The word may conjure up notions of a romantic sentimentalist, or a naïf unwilling to see the world as it is (it is unhelpful to my case that the thesaurus suggests “pollyannaish” as a synonym for “optimist.”) Perhaps optimism, like “perkiness,” is a concept unworthy of serious inquiry.

A pragmatist, on the other hand, might argue that this survey question has a right answer--and a majority of South Africans got it wrong. The only sensible answer is, “Who knows?” Democracy is too newly arrived in South Africa. Besides, nobody can know the future. Nothing useful can result from attempting to learn why so many South Africans are so mistaken.

I argue that optimism is neither a naïve nor an unhelpful concept. Faith that democracy and democratic institutions will survive to the next day, to the next year, and to the next is essential if democracy or any other form of government is to survive. As historian Garry Wills has note about democratic institutions, “When you take away predictability, you take away identity.”

Political scientist Joseph S. Nye, Jr. has suggested some areas of public life where political faith may be crucial. “Voluntary compliance with the law, the public’s willingness to pay taxes, and the eagerness of bright young people to enter government service are three ways in which institutional confidence and faith in government may be vitally connected.”[6]

Nye was speaking of trust in government. He could just as well have been talking the role of optimism and hope in politics. In fact, these data suggest that optimism is directly connected to—and may be a consequence of--confidence in democratic institutions and faith in government. These data further suggest a direct and strong relationship between optimism about democracy’s future and such essential democratic acts as voting: Optimists, for example, were significantly more likely than other South Africans to report voting in 1994 or say they planned to vote in the June, 1999 election.

Notions of optimism and faith also are part of what Lucian Pye has called “the attitudes, sentiments and congnitions that inform and govern political behavior in any society [that] are not

just random congeries but represent coherent patterns which fit together and are mutually reinforcing."[7]

Pye's claim leads to a practical defense of optimism. If optimism about the future of democracy is worth studying, a study of optimism will produce worthwhile results. Specifically, it will reveal a coherent web of relationships between feelings of optimism with attitudes and life experiences. But if the analysis detects no pattern—if the old are no more or less optimistic as the young, the rich just as optimistic as the poor, blacks as optimistic as whites--then optimism may be dismissed as another of Pye's "random congeries."

The search for patterns begins with theoretical concepts useful in modeling other aspects of democracy. Four decades ago, Seymour Martin Lipset demonstrated the link between economic performance and democracy. Other researchers such as Ronald Inglehart have broadened and deepen this insight to show how political culture and economic development are correlated with stable democracy.

This work has moved far beyond linking actual economic conditions with political attitudes. Political scientists such as Donald Kinder have shown how people's perceptions of economic performance inform political attitudes and behaviors such as voting in presidential elections. Simon Jackman has found that unfulfilled expectations about economic performance exert a strong impact on presidential approval ratings. The act of voting thus becomes the instrument whereby citizens punish or reward presidents or their parties for failing to meet expectations.[8]

Scholars have identified conditions that seem to foster stability in emerging democracies. These factors should also be expected to enhance optimistic feelings about the durability of democracy. Confidence in democratic institutions consistently has been showed to enhance the stability and legitimacy of democracy. Belief that democracy matters, that real-world problems can be solved by free and open elections and that, on a personal level, that voting—the single essential act in any democracy--is not waste of time are attitudes that have been shown to sustain and strengthen democracy.

Scholars also suggest that positive performance by a government deepens commitment to democracy. Some even argue that the belief in the legitimacy of democracy is shaped more by political than economic performance. In short, good works in the form of successful policies may serve short-term as well as long-term political objectives in emerging democracies. "The democratic regime must produce sufficiently positive policy outputs to build broad political legitimacy or at least to avoid the crystallization of substantial pockets of resistance to the regime's legitimacy," Diamond argues.[9]

Also critical to any democratic government is its ability to produce and broadly distribute improvements in living standards and avoid creating the appearance—or the reality—that benefits are inequitably distributed among citizens. For example, "people expect democracy to reduce income inequality, and democracies are more likely to survive when they do," writes Adam Przworski.[10]

Other quality of life issues appear to bear directly on attitudes toward democracy. Robert Putnam argues that civic engagement strengthens and deepens democracy and trust in democratic institutions. Other theorists argue that crime is a particularly destabilizing and politically corrosive force in politics, particularly in new and emerging democracies. South Africa is on a short list of countries where crime currently undermines democratic authority. "In such areas as Moscow and St Petersburg, the Cali region controlled by Columbia drug cartels, and some of South Africa's townships, violence and fear may be so endemic as to negative the state's monopoly control of force and even to construct a powerful parallel economy that the state cannot tax and to which businessmen must pay tribute," Diamond wrote in "Developing Democracy."[11]

Together, these theories suggests where we might look in the survey data to find sources of optimism about the future of democracy in South Africa, and some hypotheses to test.

Positive perceptions of economic performance in the democratic era (since the 1994 election) should be associated with higher levels of optimism. Likewise, greater confidence in

the government and key democratic institutions should translate into more optimistic feelings. How well the Mandela government has dealt with core issues such as housing, education and health care also should be related to feelings of optimism or uncertainty about the nation's political future.

Higher levels of political efficacy as well as higher level of involvement in political and civil life should be positively related to the belief that democracy would endure. Exposure to crime and discrimination should diminish optimism. Racial tolerance should be associated with higher levels of optimistic feelings.

We now test these hypotheses against the Reality Check data.

The Model

Stage 1: Demographics

Who we are affects how we think. Demographics are not destiny, but they do help shape attitudes. Are men more or less optimistic about the future of democracy than women? Do younger South Africans think differently than the old? Do the rich think differently than the poor? Are whites more pessimistic than blacks? Do rural residents think differently than urban South Africans?

One way to answer these questions is to see how each group directly answers the question on the future of democracy after Mandela. TABLE II breaks down the results individually by these standard demographic variables: race, ethnicity/tribal affiliation (as measured by language spoken in the home), sex, age, education, children under 18 in the household, and by a variable that measures relative economic deprivation.

Table II here

These simple two-way tables are useful, but limited. These breakdowns account for the impact of a single variable, without controlling for the influence of other variables. To identify the independent effects of each factor, the variables are entered into a logistic regression model.

This analysis produces a startling surprise: The South Africans least optimistic about the future of democracy are black and not white. Xhosas consistently expressed the most uncertainty--a finding made even more significant because Xhosas dominate the ANC, the party of Mandela and his successor Thabo Mbeiki, and the party that handily swept the first two national elections. Xhosa also fill top positions in the trade unions and the Communist Party, the other two parties in the coalition that governs South Africa.

The Zulu, traditional enemies of the Xhosa and now their political rivals, were somewhat more optimistic, but still more pessimistic than whites. It is among other tribes that optimism flourishes. Among these South Africans, nearly three in four expressed optimism for the future of democracy.

Material comfort also matters: Those rated as economically privileged were more likely than economically deprived South Africans to feel confident that democracy would endure, other factors in the model being equal.[12] [A complete definition of the economic deprivation measure is found in the appendix.]

Rural residents were more optimistic than those living in the suburbs or cities. Age, too, was significant: Younger South Africans are more optimistic than older South Africans that democracy will endure. It is a finding that is both expected and reassuring. Younger people across cultures are significantly more optimistic about the future than their elders; a contrary finding in South Africa would have raised immediate and serious questions about the future of democracy.

Race, however, complicates the relationship between age and political optimism. Among blacks, optimism about the future did not gradually fade with age. In fact, these data suggest that optimism is largely confined to the youngest black South Africans. The two-way tables hint

at these differences: More than six in 10 blacks 35 years old or younger are optimistic about the future of democracy. But this “rosy glow” quickly vanishes: The proportion of optimists plummeted 10 percentage points to 52 percent among those 36 to 45, then remains at about that level among those 46 to 60 (54 percent) and older than 60 (52 percent). And while it will later be shown that other factors serve to dampen the magnitude of these differences, the relationship between age and optimism remains robust.

The pattern is slightly different and perhaps more ominous among white South Africans. Among whites, the relationship between relative youth and optimism disappears. Younger whites are just about as optimistic (50 percent) as whites who were older than 60 (54 percent).

Embedded in this generational data is an even more troublesome finding. Barely a third of all whites between the ages of 26 and 45 are optimistic, compared to half of younger and older whites. The implications of this difference are enormous. Members of these middle generations are well into their careers and on the cusp or in the midst of their prime earning years. It is true these whites benefited enormously and unfairly from apartheid. It is also true their skills are needed to support South Africa’s economic, social and political institutions. Their incomes helps to fuel the private economy; their taxes help pay for needed services. These families are the foundation of such institutions as schools, churches and civic organizations. As we will later see, this “pessimistic generation” of whites will remain distinctly different from other whites through all stages of the analysis.

This first step has been productive in three important ways. Most directly, it has culled from the ranks a short list of demographic variables that appear to be significant predictors of optimism. These results suggest that it matters if you are black, other demographic factors being equal. Tribal affiliation also is strongly associated with optimism, other demographic factors being equal. Residents living in rural areas are more optimistic than those in urban or suburban regions. Economic disadvantage appears to reduce optimism; economic privilege is associated with a more positive view.

The dogs that don't bark also are important. Gender doesn't seem to matter. Men and women saw the future of democracy in much the same way, other factors being equal. Being white or being an Afrikaaner also is not closely related to optimism, once other demographic factors are taken into account.

Education also doesn't matter, another surprising result. Education is strongly associated with democratic consolidation in many emerging democracies, particularly those in Eastern Europe. South Africa appears to be different. Other political surveys in South Africa also have failed to detect a relationship between education levels and democratic consolidation, which researchers have attributed to the country's unique history, economic experiences and the character of its new democratic institutions.[13]

But demographics do not work alone to shape attitudes. In the next stage of the analysis, personal experiences are added to the emerging model.

Table III here

Stage 2: Experiences

Six variables measuring different types of life were added to the full list of demographic variables. These new variables included:

- **Civic engagement** A survey question asked respondents whether they participated in 15 different types of civic organizations, ranging from burial societies to environmental groups to youth and sports clubs. Each respondent was assigned to one of three categories, based on the number of groups to which they belonged. [A complete list of the groups and a full description of the scale is included in the appendix.]

- **Party membership** This dichotomous variable measured whether the respondent was a dues-paying member of a political party (coded 1), or not (coded 0).

- **Political knowledge** A scaled variable that roughly measured how much basic information respondents had about government. Questions in the survey asked respondents how the president was elected, which branch of government decided whether laws were constitutional and what the primary responsibility of Parliament was. Additionally, respondents were asked if they had "heard of" various government institutions and programs. Each correct answer and "heard of" mention was counted. The result was an eight-point scale.

- **Experience with crime** A dichotomous variable that measured whether the respondent had reported being the victim of a crime in the past five years (coded 1), or not (coded 0).

- **Experiences with racism** This dichotomous variable measured whether the respondent had reported being the victim of racism in the past five years (coded 1), or not (coded 0).

Three of these variables—party membership, political knowledge and crime--emerged as clearly associated with attitudes toward South Africa's future. One other—victim of racism--fell just above the <.05 threshold of statistical significance.

Table IV here

South Africans who belonged to a political party were more optimistic than those who did not, all other factors held constant (p=.0031). It is an entirely unremarkable finding. Paying dues to a political party can be seen as an investment –or perhaps a calculated bet--on the future of democracy. It would have been noteworthy had party membership not been significantly and positively related to optimism.

The second finding is both statistically significant and substantively meaningful. Victims of crime were far more pessimistic about the future of democracy than were those who had not been crime victims, other factors being equal (p<.0001). A simple two-way table tells the basic story: A clear majority of those who had been victimized by crime said they were uncertain about the future of democracy. An equally large majority of those who were not crime victims offered the optimistic view.

These data suggest that crime particularly sours perceptions of black South Africans toward the future. Among those blacks who have not been the victims of crime in the past five years, 62 percent expressed optimism about the future of democracy. But among black crime victims, not even a majority—48 percent—shared this optimistic view. The impact of crime on the attitudes of whites also is negative: Optimism drops from 47 percent to 38 percent.

One fact and several important caveats complete this discussion of crime. Victimization is closely tied to race and to economic status. More to the point: Whites are far more likely to report having been the victim of crime. Similarly, more affluent South Africans also are more likely to be victimized than less affluent residents.

The differences are unsettling. Nearly half of all whites—45 percent—report they had been the victim of crime sometime in the last five years, compared to 19 percent of blacks, 28 percent of Indians and 20 percent of coloured South Africans.

Wealthier South Africans also were more likely to be crime victims. Among those who reported monthly household incomes of less that R200 (about $35), fewer than one in five--18 percent—were crime victims. But among those who earned more than R3,000 (about $500) a month, about a third—35 percent—had been crime victims.

It's tempting to conclude from these facts that whites are more likely to fall victim to crime simply because whites are wealthier. Whites experience more crime not because they are white, but because they have more to steal.

Other findings challenge this easy conclusion. Even for controlling for income or material wealth, whites were significantly more likely to be crime victims. About 11 percent of all black South Africans reported monthly incomes of R3,000 or more. Among these relatively affluent blacks, slightly more than one in four--28 percent--reported they have been a crime victim in the past five years. The proportion of crime victims among similarly affluent whites was 48 percent. [In a more formal test of this relationship, a logistic regression model that included as independent variables race, age, income/economic deprivation, area of residence (urban/suburban/rural) and education found that whites were significantly more likely than blacks to say they had been a crime victim in the past five years ($p=<.0001$.]

Several important warnings must be raised about these crime data. The survey simply asked whether the respondent had been a victim of crime in the past five years. It did not attempt to determine the severity of the crime, or measure how often a respondent had been a crime victim.

More detailed information about reported victimization is critical to understanding the impact of crime on political attitudes. Someone whose lawnmower is stolen from the garage is unlikely to despair for the future of democracy. But someone who has been the victim of an armed robbery, a car jacking, rape or a politically motivated assault may view the government and political system with considerably more doubt. Additionally, this simple yes/no report of victimization may be misleading if whites are more likely to be victims of minor property crimes but blacks are disproportionately the victims of violent crimes. It may even understate the impact of some types of crime on a range of political attitudes, while overstating the impact of others.

Similarly, if blacks are more likely to be victims of multiple crimes than whites, this analysis is incomplete. The fact that in this survey, crime victimization has more of an impact on African attitudes than on white views hints that a more complete set of questions might tell a clearer and even more compelling story about the relationship between crime and attitudes toward democracy.

The measure of political knowledge and awareness also was statistically significant (p=.0017), suggesting a positive relationship between knowledge and optimism. One other variable—victim of racism—should be briefly mentioned. Experience with racism, like crime victimization, reduced the probability that an individual would be optimistic about the future of democracy. But this variable came close (p<.0758) but did not meet the traditional .05 threshold.

All the demographic variables that were significant in Stage 1 remained significant, as Table V indicates.

Table V here

Step 3: Political Attitudes

We now examine how political attitudes combine with experiences and demographic characteristics to predict attitudes toward the future of democracy in South Africa.

Where to begin? More than 50 questions in the Independent Newspapers-Kaiser survey would appear to tap some politically relevant attitude. Often, several questions addressed the same critical issue, such as views on the economy or confidence in the government institutions. Such repetition is neither wasteful nor unwise.

That's because related questions that track a single underlying attitude can be combined to yield a single summary measure more powerful than any individual question. For example, a statistical technique called factor analysis revealed that those who expressed high levels of confidence in the Parliament also were highly trusting of provincial and local governments and the civil service. At the same time, those with little confidence in one institution consistently expressed similarly equal mistrust in the others.

Those findings suggest these questions may tap into a broader underlying concept, which I shall call confidence in political institutions, and the questions can be combined into a single summary scale. This new summary variable then can be included in the model to see if individuals with low levels of confidence in political institutions were more or less likely to be optimistic about the future of democracy than those with higher levels of confidence.

The following summary scales were developed to measure other key concepts, attitudes and beliefs that might be expected to predict attitudes toward the future of democracy in South Africa: [The appendix lists the exact wording of question used to create each scale. Cornbach's Alpha statistic for each scale also is reported in the appendix. This statistic is useful in

evaluating whether the questions used to create a scale do measure the same underlying attitude.]

- **Perceptions of the Economy and Economic Performance** A 7-point additive scale that measures overall perceptions of economic performance. It combines the responses to questions that asked whether the respondent's personal financial situation had gotten better, worse or stayed the same in the past five years, and whether the respondent believed that the national and local economies had gotten better, worse or stayed the same.

- **Confidence in Major Institutions** A scale that ranged from 0-11 measures overall confidence in 11 major institutions, ranging from Parliament to the churches to the media.

- **Confidence in Political Institutions** A 17-point additive scale that measures how much confidence respondents had in four political institutions: the Parliament, their provincial government, the civil service and local government.

- **Confidence in Legal Institutions** A 13-point additive scale summarizes questions that asked respondents how much confidence respondents had in the court system, the police and the Army.

- **Direction of the Country in the Past Five Years** A 9-point additive scale based on responses to questions that asked whether conditions have gotten better, worse or stayed the same in these areas of South African life: education, health care, race relations and the overall quality of life.

- **Direction of the Country in the Next Five Years** An 11-point additive scale based on questions that asked whether conditions in the next five years will get better, worse or remain about the same in these areas: Crime, education, health care, race relations and the overall quality of life.

In addition to these additive scales, the following variables tapping other politically relevant attitudes were included in the model:

- **Confidence in the National Government** Measures level of confidence in the national government to solve problems, measured on a three-point scale ranging from "none" to "a lot of confidence."

- **Confidence in Other Democratic Institutions** Confidence in **trade unions** and **the media** were entered into the model as a separate variables. Degree of confidence was measured on a five-point scale that ranged from a "great deal" to "none at all."

- **Attitudes toward Voting** Agreement with the statement, "Voting is a waste of time," measured on a five-point scale that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

- **Commitment to Democracy** A dichotomous variable in which those who said they would prefer to have "greater financial security" and "fewer political rights" were coded 1, all others 0.

- **Concerns about Personal Finances** Measures level of anxiety that respondent's family will not have enough money to live on in 10 years, measured on a four-point scale ranging from "not at all worried" to "very worried."

- **Income Inequality** A dichotomous variable in which those who believed the gap between rich and poor South Africans had increased in the past five years, and those who did not.

- **Perceptions of Housing** Measures whether respondent believes the housing situation "in their area" has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the past five years.

- **Perceptions of Education** Measures whether respondent believes education "in your community" has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the past five years.
- **Racial Traditionalism/Intolerance** Agreement with the statement, "It would bother me if my children married someone of a different race," measured on a five-point scale that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

In addition to these attitudinal variables, the demographic variables as well as those measuring personal experiences were entered into the final model.

The Results

Our final model suggests that optimism about the future of democracy in South Africa springs from many and sometimes surprising sources.

Perceptions of economic performance are clearly associated with optimistic feelings about democracy ($p<.0001$). The sign on the coefficient is positive, suggesting those with more positive views of the economy are significantly more optimistic about the durability of democracy than those with negative evaluations.

But in South Africa as elsewhere, perceptions of economic performance alone don't shape political attitudes. Consistent with theory and our expectations, confidence in the future of democracy is closely tied to confidence in democratic institutions ($p<.0001$). Those who expressed high levels of confidence in the 10 institutions that comprised our scale also expressed significantly more confidence in the ability of democracy to endure.

A deeper look at institutional trust suggests a more nuanced story. A factor analysis suggests that overall confidence in insititutions is itself composed of two distinct underlying sets of views. This finding argues against using a single variable to measure confidence in institutions. The first factor identifies a set of similar attitudes toward Parliament, the civil service and provincial and local governments, which can be broadly viewed to reflect confidence in political institutions. The second factor suggests that attitudes towards the courts, police and the army are based on a common, underlying concept measuring confidence in judicial and law

enforcement institutions.[14] Additionally, we test whether attitudes toward the media independently influence levels of optimism.

A logistic regression analysis found that confidence in the national government was closely associated with optimistic views (p<.0001). So was confidence in parliament, the civil service as well as provincial and local governments (p=.0007). Confidence in trade unions also was significantly correlated with optimistic views (p=.0172). This association is expected. Trade union leaders and their members were at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid. Today, unions are deeply involved in South African politics. South Africa currently is governed by a tripartite alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of Trade Unions. Confidence in the media was not closely associated with feelings of optimism (p=.9805).

Confidence in judicial/law enforcement institutions also was statistically significant (p=.0181). But the sign was negative, suggesting that as confidence in these institutions declines, optimism about the future of democracy increases. This might seem puzzling, except to those familiar with the bleak history of the police, courts and the army under apartheid. Part of the answer is that the black majority who suffered most at the hands of the police, army and the courts under apartheid also now are among the most optimistic about the future of South Africa. Indeed, one of the major challenges facing South Africa remains to instill public confidence in the judiciary and police. It is a job made more difficult by recent public disclosures of the worst sort of state-sanctioned brutality, as revealed in recent testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Measures of democratic orientation and commitment to democracy also were highly associated with optimism. Consistent with our expectations, those who strongly rejected the statement that “voting is a waste of time” were more likely to be optimists than those with less firmly held convictions (p=.0037). The relationship between commitment to democracy and optimism was even stronger: Those who said they were willing to trade freedoms for increased

financial security were significantly more likely to doubt that democracy would endure than other South Africans (p<.0001).

South Africans look to the future, not to the past, to assess whether democracy will survive. Those who believed that things would get better in the areas of education, race relations, health care and overall quality of live were significantly more likely to be optimistic that those who expected things to stay the same or get worse (p=.0004). The parallel scale that asked respondents whether things had gotten better, gotten worse or stayed about the same in the past five years proved to be unrelated to their views on the prospects of democracy (p=.9919). Because the two scales are moderately correlated, the model was run twice, alternately dropping one or the other scales from the variable list. The substantive finding remained the same: How people viewed the future was significantly related to optimism, the retrospective view was not.

These demographic variables also emerged as significantly related to optimism in the final model, all other factors being equal: Age (p=.0065), economic deprivation (p=.0152), race/black (p<.0001), ethnicity (Zulu and Xhosa, both p<.0001), rural resident (p=.0314), as well as whether the respondent had been a crime victim (p=.0240). The variable measuring political knowledge came close, but did not meat the formal .05 test of significance (p=.059). Party membership dropped out of the model (p=.3531), an unremarkable finding since the attitudes closely associated with party membership were included as independent variables in the third stage of the model.

Table VI here

Table VII here

Which of these factors matter most in shaping attitudes toward the future of democracy? Statistical significance identifies relationships between variables. It is an unreliable measure of a

variable's substantive impact. Do judgements about the economy matter more—or less—than attitudes toward political institutions?

One way to answer these questions is to standardize the coefficients of all the statistically significant variables in the model and then rank order them by size, as in Table V. While the coefficients remain uninterpretable except to those acquainted with such mathematical arcania as log notation and odds ratios, the ranking easily conveys two critical pieces of information.

The relative size of the coefficient suggests the overall predictive power of that variable, relative to the other variables in the model. The sign (+ or -) indicates whether a change in that variable is positively or negatively related to a change in the overall likelihood that a South African was an optimist about the chances of democracy in the post-Mandela era.

Thus being the victim of a crime diminished optimistic feelings. An increase in confidence in trade unions increased the probabilities that a South African would be an optimist. But the impact of these variables paled in comparison to the negative impact of being a Xhosa, or the positive impact of being an black South African who was not a Xhosa or Zulu.

Coefficients Table VIII here

Coefficients Bar Chart Table IX here

Respondent 1,173

The distinct advantage of logistic regression is that it reveals how multiple factors combine together to predict an outcome. In this instance, our model computes the probability that a person with a specific set of demographic characteristics, life experiences and political attitudes is optimistic about democracy surviving in the post-Mandela era.

The distinct disadvantage of logistic regression is that the estimate of each variable's impact is incomprehensible, except to the statistically savvy. Thus table VIII, which ranks the variables

by their standardized coefficients, suggests the relative predictive power of each variable. But it does little to help us understand what the impact is.

There is, however, a way to render these results more comprehensible, if not more meaningful. We first select a single case and compute the probability that this individual is an optimist using the variables in our model. Then we will change one of the variables in our model but leave the others untouched. Then we re-compute the probability of being an optimist, and compare this adjusted probability to the original. The difference is the impact of this single variable in response to this single change, holding all others constant (unchanged). Doing similar manipulations to the other variables allows us to show the relative impact of each statistically significant variable in our model.

Case 1,173 was chosen at random to illustrate these effects; any of the 3,000 respondents in the sample could have been selected and the results would have been the same.

Respondent 1,173 is a 33-yearold Xhosa woman who lives in the Eastern Cape Province. She has little faith in the national government but somewhat more confidence in local and provincial leaders. She believes the South African economy has declined in recent years, and thinks the gap between the rich and poor in South Africa is widening. She's not been a victim of a crime in the past five years. She thinks that the quality of life in South Africa will improve, and says she would not be bothered if her children married someone of a different race. She said she's uncertain about the future democracy in South Africa, and our model captures that uncertainty. Overall, the model estimates there is a 46 percent probability that she is an optimist and a 54 percent probability that she's not, nearly a toss-up.

Table X illustrates the how this probability changes, often substantially, in response to changes in the value of a single variable. For example, Respondent 1,173 said she was "very worried" about whether her family would have enough money to survive over the next 10 years. But what about a person similar to Respondent 1,173 in every way but one: Instead of being concerned about her family's finances, she said she was not worried? As the table shows, the

chances she was an optimist would increase from 46 percent to 62 percent—a 16-percentage point increase and a clear illustration of the powerful relationship between pocketbook worries and political optimism.

As Table X indicates, the corrosive impact of mistrust on optimism also is considerable. Respondent 1,173 said she little or no confidence in the ability of the national government to solve problems. Respondents who were like her in every way except that they expressed a "lot" of confidence in the Pretoria government had a 59 percent probability of being an optimist, a 13-point increase in positive feelings.

It should be no surprise that race and ethnicity matter. Zulus were 18 percentage points less likely to be optimists than other Africans. The decline in optimism associated with being a Xhosa was even more stunning: a net drop of 28 percentage points, all other factors held constant. Expressed another way, our model suggests that the probability that an African who was not a Xhosa or a Zulu and was identical to Respondent 1,173 in all other ways would be 74 percent, not 46 percent. Even more surprising, this model suggests that a white South African who was identical to Respondent 1,173 in all other ways would be nearly 10 percentage points more likely to believe that democracy will survive.

This last result suggests this question: Is this overall model generally applicable to whites and to black South Africans? Or do very different factors shape attitudes of whites and blacks as they look to the future? The next section addresses these questions.

Table X here

White and Black South Africans

Looking at black and white South Africans separately confirms much of what we already have learned from the general model while adding important details.[15] Perceptions of the national government, the willingness to trade rights for financial security, their own economic situation

and concerns about their family's economic future are associated with the views of both black and white South Africans about the future of democracy in their country.

The small number of whites in the total sample--581 whites and 2,018 blacks were interviewed—makes analysis difficult and comparisons incomplete. However, these analyses do identify some telling differences. Perceptions of economic performance were a consistent and strong predictor of optimism for blacks (p=.0030), but not for whites (p=.8810). Party membership was of little use in directly predicting optimism among blacks (p=.7394), but significant in the white sample (p=.0338). Conversely, confidence in trade unions was significant for blacks (p=.0267) but not for whites (p=.9027).

As indicated earlier, the impact of age on optimism differed by race. For blacks, optimism diminishes with age, with younger blacks significantly more hopeful than their elders. For whites, the pattern is more complex. Optimistic feelings ran relatively high among older South Africans (61+) and those younger than 26. But whites between the ages of 25 and 45—and particularly those 36 to 45 years old—were significantly more pessimistic (p=.0059).

Some variables that tested as insignificant in the general model emerged as significant when blacks and whites were analyzed separately. Whether a South African lived in the city, the suburbs or in a rural area appeared to be largely unrelated to attitudes toward the future of democracy. In fact, the race analysis suggests locale does matter--though in precisely opposite ways for blacks and white South Africans. Whites living in cities are more optimistic about the future than those in rural or suburban areas. The contrary is true for blacks: Those living in the city are more pessimistic about the future than those living in the suburbs or country.

Likewise, political knowledge, which just failed to achieve statistical significance in the general model, is clearly a predictor of optimism among blacks (p=.0088) but not among whites (p=.2794). The signs also are reversed: Higher levels of political knowledge and awareness among blacks were associated with higher levels of optimism. The sign of the coefficient among whites was negative, albeit statistically insignificant.

Other findings were even more unexpected. These data suggest that personal experience with crime directly and profoundly affects the attitudes of Africans toward the future of democracy--but not of whites, who were more likely to report being crime victims. Among blacks, the relationship between optimism and being the victim of a crime was statistically significant (p=.0009) and substantively meaningful. The coefficient on the crime variable for blacks was nearly twice as large as in our general model (-.4306 versus -.2289) . Translated into a more intelligible form, this result suggests that an African who had been the victim of a crime was about ten percentage points less likely to be an optimist than other blacks. Among whites, the crime variable was statistically insignificant (p=.9245) and the estimated coefficient was trivial: -.0214.

The race analysis revealed other surprises. Africans look to the future, with expectations more than past performance shaping their views on whether democracy will survive, these data suggest. The story among whites is not so straightforward, though the data hint that white South Africans look to the past and not to the future to inform their judgements.

As described in detail earlier, two variables captured those contrasting perspectives. The first variable measured whether respondents thought that education, health care, race relations and overall "quality of life" had gotten better, worse or stayed the same in the past five years. The second measure whether respondents believed that things would get better, get worse or stay the same in the same four areas, plus crime, over the next five years.

The prospective view was highly significant for Africans (p<.0001), but not for whites (p=.8889) . While the retrospective view failed neither to achieving statistical significance for either blacks or whites, it came closest among whites (p=.1388) than blacks (p=.8016). While such speculation is risky, these numbers suggest that if the white sample been as large as the black sample, these numbers might tell a story that ran something like this: Whites judge the stability of democracy by looking to the past while blacks look to the future.

One final note. Analyses suggest that economically disadvantaged Xhosa are significantly more pessimistic than similarly poor South Africans. An interaction variable was created to model this difference, and it proved to be statistically significant (p=.0292) and negatively associated with optimism. At the same time, the overall economic disparity variable ceased to be significant (p=.4598) when the interaction variable (poor and Xhosa) was included in the black model.

This suggests that economic disadvantage is strongly and negatively associated with political optimism among Xhosa. But among other black South Africans, the link is, at best, weak; in fact, the poor of other tribes are generally optimistic about democracy, the survey found.

This finding is revealing. Xhosa are among the poorest of the poor in South Africa. In this sample, 42 percent of all Xhosa languished in the bottom quartile in terms of economic deprivation. In comparison, only 21 percent of all Zulus and 28 percent of all blacks were similarly impoverished.

These numbers also help explain why Xhosa are so pessimistic about the future of democracy in South Africa. Expectations for a better life surged among the Xhosa after Mandela, himself a Xhosa, was elected president in 1994. Five years later, many Xhosa remain desperately poor.

Discussion

Taken together, these three statistical models tell a complex and nuanced story underscoring the challenges South Africans confront in the post-Mandela era.
More importantly, they suggest some of the ways that politicians and policymakers can attempt to nurture and deepen democracy in South Africa.

Not surprisingly, these data strongly suggest a robust national economy and feelings of financial wellbeing nourish optimism about the future of democracy.[16] Unfortunately, some scholars suggest that the South African economy is too fragile to sustain democracy. Adam

Przeworski and his colleagues studied the birth-and-death cycles of political regimes in 135 countries between 1950 and 1990. This remarkable study broadly quantified how rich a country must be to support democracy. The numbers do not augur well for South Africa.

Przeworski estimated that a democracy could be estimated to last about 8.5 years in a country with an annual per-capita income of less than $1,000. They predicted an average "life span" of 16 years in a country with a per-capita income between $1,000 and $2,000; 33 years between $2,000 and $4,000 and 100 years between $4,000 and $6,000.[17]

With a per-capita income of about $3,200—actually less than in 1985--democracy in South Africa would seem to have less than four decades to live. Other data tell a similarly ominous story. Przeworski found that democracy typically persists for little more three decades in countries that shared South Africa's current annual growth rate of about 2 percent.

Economic inequality clearly threatens the consolidation of democracy in South Africa, apart from overall perceptions of the economy. Those who believed the gap between rich and poor had increased were significantly more likely to be uncertain or pessimistic about the future of democracy in South Africa, the Independent Newspapers-Kaiser survey results found.

South African survey researchers Robert Mattes and Hermann Thiel explain why this is so. "In a poor and grossly unequal society, it is difficult to preach about the value of democracy for realizing individual dignity and freedom. People struggling to meet basic needs have little time or energy to spend worrying about the survival of democracy. They may see little value in the formal political equality delivered by democracy if their lives continue to be dominated by extreme inequality or grinding poverty."[18]

South African economists report some progress closing the income gap, though not between the rich and the poor—the gap that really matters--but between the rich and the middle class. Julian May of the University of Natal told Reality Check reporter Karen MacGregor that income redistribution "has been from the richest to middle-income households, not to the very poor."

Overall, the poorest 40 percent of households still account for 11 percent of total income, while the richest 10 percent earned more than 40 percent of the income.[19]

Thus pressures are predicted to build for some form of redistribution of wealth, a decidedly risky move that could scare off international investment and a policy that Mandela and the ANC abandoned in the mid-1990s. The survey found little support for taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, but great appetite for less biting and more popular forms of wealth transfer.

"The demands of the majority are of the population are far more modest," wrote Reality Check reporter Judith Soal. "Compensation for land taken under apartheid; subsidized services for poor suburbs; free water for the very poor; a stretch of land for people who have worked on farms all their lives."[20] Mbeki has charted an economically conservative economic course to keep favor with the world's investors. Yet the troubling persistence of great poverty grinding against great wealth may renew demands for more overt kinds of redistributive schemes.

Democracy in South African faces other daunting challenges. The survey results suggest that crime is killing democracy in South Africa, or at least it is dampening the expectations that democracy will survive. A notable result of this analysis has been to quantify the direct impact of crime on political attitudes. Experience with crime directly affects black attitudes. But that doesn't necessarily mean that whites are unaffected, though it does suggest that the impact of crime on whites may be more indirect, perhaps working to erode confidence in government and other institutions.

Complicating efforts to combat crime is the distinct lack of confidence that South Africans have in their courts and police. Even more troublesome is the willingness of many South Africans to believe that the law should be ignored if it does not "produce the desired outcome," report James L. Gibson and Amanda Gouws—a fact of political life that they note with academic understatement "may be ominous for the future of South African democracy."[21] Indeed, they claim on the basis of an analysis of recent survey data that "support for the rule of law among South Africans is not particularly widespread." Only half of all South Africans surveyed in 1996,

for example, disagreed with the statement, “Sometimes it might be better to ignore the law and solve problems immediately rather than wait for a legal solution.” And only a third rejected the belief that “It’s all right to get around the law as long as you don’t actually break it.” [22]

Policymakers also should note that tough anti-crime measures, even if successful, would be useless if they are not part of an overall package to strengthen the economy and boost confidence in government and democratic institutions. This analysis suggests there is a clear payoff to crime reduction. However the overall impact of crime on optimism pales when compared to the potential benefits from economic and political reforms.

Other findings of this analysis raise cautionary notes. Zulus and Xhosas, the two largest and politically influential tribes in South Africa, both remain deeply uncertain about the future of democracy. Such pessimism may not surprise students of South African politics and culture. The impact of this uncertainty is more unexpected. Our statistical model suggests that tribal affiliations have a greater negative impact on optimism than any other single variable. This suggests the future of democracy in South Africa may depend, at least in part, on bringing real peace to these traditional rivals and generally avoiding a tailspin into tribalism that has plagued other emerging African democracies. (Several South African journalists have suggested another potent source of inter-tribal conflict. While the Xhosa and Zulu command the political stage, they occupy parts of the country largely bereft of mineral resources. Tribes in the diamond, gold and platinum producing regions may come to resent a government dominated by Xhosa and Zulu.)

Democracy also faces challenges from unexpected fronts. Expectations for the future run high in the new South Africa, both among blacks and whites--perhaps too high. Among blacks, these positive expectations are directly tied to their feelings about democracy. The danger is that these high expectations are merely setting the stage for a backlash, if and when these hopes are unfulfilled.

Patience, not rosy predictions of better future, may be key to deepening democracy. Richard Rose, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer have studied former communist regimes. They

found that countries where the people believed it would take years for government to deal with the problems inherited from communist rule were twice as likely to reject all authoritarian options than those who were "definitely" impatient. Significantly, they found that their "patience" variable was about as strong as any economic variable in predicting a desire to abandon democracy.[23]

Other forces initially helpful to democracy may, in time, work against it. The ANC claimed 66.3 percent of the vote in the last election and came within a hair of winning the two-thirds majority that would have allowed it to amend the constitution and, some feared, insert provisions to solidify further—and perhaps forever—ANC's hold on power. Even without a constitutional rewrite, the continued success of the ANC could transform South Africa into just another one-party African democracy that is a democracy in name only.

Political scientist Pippa Norris has reviewed survey data from dozens of countries and found that one-party domination erodes democratic values. "Evaluations of the political regime reflect our experiences of whether we are winners or losers over successive elections," further noting that "cynicism is highest in countries which produce many persistent losers over successive elections, for example, systems governed by one-party predominant parties facing a fragmented opposition."[24]

Even before the June election, surveys of South Africans hint at the corrosive effect described by Norris. In 1995 and 1997, national polls in conducted in South Africa by the Institute for Democracy found that "[t]hose who support parties that are out of power not only have especially negatives views of government performance, but also take a negative view of the representativeness of government, according it less legitimacy and are less satisfied with the way in which democracy works."[25]

Thus signs of instability within the ANC perhaps may be a positive sign, if the result is the birth of a loyal opposition party--and if that birth is not attended by the bloodshed that too often has been a feature of South African partisan politics. Currently the ANC occupies the political middle ground, facing a gaggle of small parties to its right, but no credible threat from the left.

Some observers speculate that the powerful trade unions, increasingly unhappy with ANC economic policies that produced massive unemployment and layoffs but anemic economic growth, may break away to fill the void on the left. Others, however, caution, that the ANC has shown an historic willingness to reward its political allies while freezing out its enemies, a fact that may keep unionists from straying from the fold.

Certainly, the lop-sided majorities of South Africans who express support for fundamental democratic values are a persuasive argument to be optimistic about democracy's future. These promising findings, however, must be interpreted with great caution. That's because what researchers call "unconditional commitment" to these values is far from universal: When asked if they would trade fewer freedoms for greater financial security, a majority of South Africans took the money.

Similarly, when support for a range of democratic values were tested, only one—the principle that voting must be a "secret and private matter— evoked "strong" support from a majority of South Africans. Even here, only 57 percent indicated unconditional commitment to the secret ballot. Smaller proportions said they strongly agreed that "the right to vote…is the essence of democracy" (48 percent) or unequivocally supported the belief that a "strong opposition" was "necessary for good government" (39 percent). Perhaps more troublesome, not even half—45 percent—strongly disagreed that "voting is a waste of time."[26]

Other results also reveal a still-fragile commitment to democracy, particularly when idealized values collide with realpolitik. Three in 10 agreed that "if a community supports one political party, other parties should not be allowed to campaign in that area." It is a view likely born of the chronic and extreme violence—most recently, between Xhosa and Zulus--that has historically defined South African politics. Today, tensions between blacks and whites are not the only tears in South Africa's social and political fabric. Again, inter-tribal rivalries continue to complicate the transition to democracy.

Other surveys have tested South Africans' commitment to democracy norms, with somewhat unsettling results. In 1995 and 1997, surveys conducted by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa asked respondents this question to measure levels of "steadfast commitment to democracy": *"Sometimes democracy does not work. When that happens, some people say we need a strong leader that does not have to bother with elections. Others say that even when things don't work, democracy is always best. Which do you think?"*

The results were at once encouraging and dismaying. The proportion of South Africans who believed democracy was always best increased from 47 percent to 56 percent. Among blacks, commitment soared, rising from 47 percent to 61 percent while among coloured South Africans, the increase was more modest, from 46 percent to 53 percent.[27]

At the same time, unconditional support of democracy plummeted among the white and Indian minorities, falling from 45 percent to 39 percent among whites and from 55 percent to 27 percent among Indians. While equal proportions of blacks and whites expressed commitment to democracy in 1995, they appeared to have broken ranks and heading in opposite directions just two years later.

It's much too early to bury democracy--even though a casual reading of the scholarly literature suggests that many academics already have dug the grave. Yale historian Leonard Thompson noted in Foreign Affairs that Mbeki must overcome "stupendous odds" to navigate South Africa to safe harbor.[28] South African researchers Mattes and Thiel agree: "South African democrats may need to start working on a second miracle."[29]

Perhaps. Despite those ominous pronouncements, South Africa remains the most successful economy on the continent and is Africa's most industrialized nation (though the International Monetary Fund still classes it as being in a stage somewhere between "developing" and "developed"). It has in place a well-trained and functioning professional and managerial class. Much wealth still remains locked deep in the dry earth of the Veldt; at the same time, new high-tech industries are beginning to rise out of the old economic order.

In June, South Africa conducted its second free presidential election, the capstone to a campaign season marked by far less violence than the first. Today, the "politics of charisma" that characterized the Mandela era has given way to "the politics of management and governance" under Mbeki.[30] Already, Mbeki has taken steps to strengthen the criminal justice system to combat crime, root out corruption and generally improve delivery of basic government services to the people. Finally, South Africa still commands the attention and admiration of the world. Western powers have invested too much in democracy in South Africa to stand by and watch it fail.

It is demonstrably true that the Mandela government failed to deliver on many of its economic promises, notably his pledge in 1994 to build a million new houses in five years for the country's seven million homeless. Still, as Roger Friedman of the Cape Times noted, nearly 800,000 new houses will have been built by the end of 1999. Similarly, school doors now open to black children as well as whites, the necessary first step in creating a multiracial pool of skilled workers. Wells were dug. And electricity came to Buntingville.

"Well, today I can push a button to light my house," Ethel Mzinjana, 80, told Reality Check reporter Eric Ntabazalila. "To me, electricity was a dream. No one here ever thought of having electricity in their houses. Today, children can go to the clinic free of change. There are more schools being built . . . ."[31]

Mzinjana is not alone: Between 1994 and 1998, the government estimates that 2 million South African households were linked to the power grid.[32]

The economy also has grown, albeit slowly. This year the government insists that growth will reach 3.5 percent.[33] Any growth might be remarkable, given the twin challenges Mandela and his government faced. While leaders in Pretoria battled to control inflation (successfully) and unemployment (unsuccessfully), the government also faced the potentially explosive challenge of transforming the economy from one designed to funnel wealth to a select few into an engine of prosperity for all.

Expectations do remain high, perhaps dangerously high. But there is evidence that the past five years may have forced people to ratchet down their expectations. “I can see a lot of things aren’t being delivered,” said Asha Sanparsad of KwaZulu-Natal’s Dolphin Coast. We were told that after the last elections we would be in a bed of roses. We now realize this takes time, nothing happens overnight.”[34]

There may be a consensus forming that real change will happen slowly. More than six in 10—63 percent—in the ING-Kaiser survey said “it will take a long time, but we will eventually become a united nation” while one in five said “South Africans will always be divided.”

As South Africans look to the future, either with optimism or trepidation, they should remember the recent past. “Looking back at the perils of 1994, there can be no doubt that we are through the worst,” wrote South African journalist Allister Sparks. “And when you have escaped Armageddon, it is no time to become a pessimist.”[35]

As for those who say it will take a second miracle to firmly root democracy in South Africa, former President Nelson Mandela might only smile and say, just wait.

“We can and shall build the country of our dreams,” Mandela said in his last major address to Parliament in February. ”As we confounded the prophets of doom, we shall defy today’s merchants of cynicism and despair.”

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Appendix

Question wording and marginal results of questions entered as variables in the model or used to construct summary scales. The question number refers to the number in the original Kaiser Political Survey. Response categories are listed in the order in which they appear in the final summary report of survey findings.

Demographics

Standard language was used for questions asking the respondent's age, sex, level of education, language spoken in the home and number of children under the age of 18 living in the household. In addition to these standard demographics, an additive scale measuring **Economic Deprivation** was created using the following questions:

Q9 What type of toilet does your household mainly use? (If "flush toilet inside dwelling," add 1)

Flush toilet inside dwelling	48%
Flush toilet outside dwelling	17
Bucket	4
Pit latrine	28
Other	1
None/bush	1

Q10 Where do you mainly get water for household use? (If "tap inside the dwelling," add 1)

Tap inside the dwelling	50%
Tap outside but on the plot	25
Tap in the area	15
Tanker	1
River/stream/dam	6
Bore-hole	1
Buy from private person	1
No regular source	1

14a/b What power does this household mainly use for lighting/mainly use for cooking? (If electricity or gas add 1 for each, else 0)

	Lighting	Cooking
Candles	16%	0%
Coal/wood	1	11
Electricity	78	67
Gas	0	4
Paraffin/Primus Stove	5	17
Power from generator/battery	1	0
Other	0	1

Q87 How often, if ever, do people in your household go hungry because of a shortage of food? (If "never" add 1, else 0)

Every day	3%
Few times a week	6
Once a week	2
Few times in a month	14
Seldom	24
Never	51

Q90 What is your current employment status? (If not "unemployed" add 1, else 0)

Working full-time	33%
Working part-time	7
Casual/piece jobs	5
Self-employed	1
Unemployed	26
Disabled	2
Housewife	7
Student	10
Pensioner	9

Q2 Area and type of dwelling (coded by interviewer): (If not "informal" or "housing on commercial farm" add 1, else 0)

Metropolitan: formal	39%
Metropolitan: backyard	1
Metropolitan: hostel	3
Metropolitan:Informal/squatter	5
Urban: formal	19
Urban: Informal/squatter	4
Rural: Farm homestead/kraal/hut	26
Rural: Housing on a commercial farm	5

Each respondent was assigned a score based on their responses that ranged from zero (maximum disadvantage) to 7 (maxium advantage). The scale was then collapsed to four categories.

0-2	20%
3-4	26
5-6	29
7	25

Life Experiences

Civic Engagement

Q32 Which of the following clubs, societies and organizations are you a member of, if any?

Burial Society	25%
Civic	3
Community Police Forum	1
Community development committee	3
Cultural organization	2
Environmental organizations	1
Political organizations	8
Religious organizations/churches	32
Sports clubs	11
Stokvel/savings clubs	11
Student organizations	3
Trade Union	5
Women's groups	4
Youth groups	5
None	34

Individual mentions were tallied and collapsed into these categories:

Number of memberships	Percentage
None	34%
1-7	33
8 or more	33

Party Membership

Q33 Please, could you tell me if you are a signed-up member of any political party? I don't mean a supporter, but a paid-up member? I don't want to know which party you may belong to, just whether you belong to one or not. (If yes code 1, else 0)

Yes	19%
No	75
Refused/DK	6

Political Knowledge/Awareness

Q28 As far as you know, who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not—in other words, if the law is in line with the rules in the constitution? Is it: (correct answer in **bold**)

President Mandela	29%
Parliament	41
Public Prosecutor	4
Constitutional Court	**22**
Other/DK	4

Q29 As far as you know, what is the most important function of Parliament? Is it to:

Pass laws	**44%**
Debate government policy	42
Impose taxes	3
Don't know	11

Q30 As far as you know, who elects the President? Is it:

Voters	70%
Parliament	**6**
The party with the most seats in Parliament	20
Other/DK	4

Q27 Which of the following institutions have you heard of:

Public Protector	21%
Commission on Gender Equality	30
Human Rights Commission	62
Health Commission	27
None of the above	27

The number of correct answers/"heard of" mentions were tallied for each respondent. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Political Knowledge**.

Experience with Crime

Q52 Have you been a victim of crime in the past five years? (If yes, code = 1; else 0)

Yes	25%
No	75

Experience with Racism

Q86a In the past five years, have you been the victim of racism? (If yes, code = 1; else 0)

Yes	26%
No	72
Don't know	2

Confidence in the National Government

Q38 When the government in Pretoria decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem will actually be solved—a lot, a little, or none at all?

Lot of confidence	27%
Little confidence	45
None at all	17
Don't know	11

Attitude toward Voting

Q45e I am going to tell you some things which people have said about political rights. Please listen to the statements and tell me whether you strong agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree or don't know with each statement: "Voting is a waste of time."

Strongly agree	3%
Agree	5
Neither	12
Disagree	31
Strongly disagree	45
Don't know	4

Commitment to Democracy

Q64 Two friends are arguing about life in the new South Africa and how life was under apartheid. The first one says: "Even though I am not richer, I am happier now because I have freedom." The second one says: "No, it is more important to have greater financial security and fewer political rights." (Code 1 if "greater financial security," else 0)

Freedom	42%
Financial security	57
Don't know	1

Concerns about Personal Finances

Q93 Thinking about South African in the next 10 years. How worried are you that you and your family won't have enough money to live on—very worried, a bit worried, not very worried, or not at all worried?

Very worried	45%
A bit worried	27
Not very worried	14
Not at all worried	9
Don't know	5

Income Inequality

Q55 Compared to five years ago, do you think the difference between rich and poor in South Africans is bigger, about the same, or not as big? (Code 1 if "bigger", else 0)

Bigger gap	53%
Same	32
Not as big	15

Perceptions of Housing

Q76 How, if at all, has the overall housing situation in your area changed during the past five years?

Got better	38%
Stayed same	44
Got worse	14
Don't know	4

Perceptions of Education

Q78 Since 1994, has the quality of education in your community:

Got better	43%
Stayed the same	26
Got worse	25
Don't know	6

Racial Traditionalism/Intolerance

Q85e I am going to tell you some things which people have said about race relations in South Africa at the moment. Please listen to the statements and tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree or don't know with each statement: "It would not bother me if my children married someone of a different race."

Strongly agree	17%
Agree	28
Neither	18
Disagree	15
Strongly disagree	17
Don't know	6

Variables Based on Summary Scales

The following questions were used to construct summary scales. A factor analysis was first conducted to test whether the questions measured one underlying concept. Then an additive scale was constructed and collapsed into a three- or four-point scaled variable.

Perceptions of the Economy and Economic Performance

Q58 Do you think the South African economy is getting better, worse or staying the same:

Better	15%
Same	22
Worse	63

Q59 And do you think your personal financial situation is getting better, worse or staying the same?

Better	14%
Same	29
Worse	57

Q81f I will read out an issue, and would like to know from you how, if at all, has the overall situation in your area changed During the past 5 years for that issue: The economy.

Better	13%
Same	21
Worse	64

A 7-point additive scale was created. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Economic Performance**.

Alpha = .76

Confidence in Major Institutions

Q56 I am going to read to you the names of some important institutions in South Africa. Please tell me how much confidence you have in each one—a great deal, quite a lot, some, not much or none at all? (Percent with no opinion not shown.)

	Great Deal	Quite a lot	Some	Not Much	None
Parliament	31%	25%	22%	14%	7%
Provincial govt	19	29	28	16	8
The Civil Service	13	24	34	19	9
Local government	17	27	29	18	9
SAPS (Police)	12	21	33	23	11
Churches	29	35	24	8	3
Trade unions	16	26	29	18	11
The courts	17	26	31	17	8
SANDF (Army)	12	22	30	23	11
The media	22	32	28	10	

Based on a factor analysis, "churches" was excluded from the scale. A 46-point additive scale was created. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Democratic Institutions**.

Alpha = .88

Note: The variables **Trust Media** and **Trust Trade Unions** also were based on Q56.

Confidence in Political Institutions

Based on a factor analysis and using Q56, a 17-point scale was created that summarized attitudes toward Parliament, provincial government, local government and the civil service. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Trust Political Institutions**.

Alpha = .88

Confidence in Legal Institutions

Based on a factor analysis and using q56, a separate 13-point additive scale was created that summarized attitudes toward the courts, police and the army. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Trust Legal Institutions**.

Alpha = .74

Direction of Country in Past Five Years

Q81 I will read out an issue, and would like to know from you how, if at all, has the overall situation in your area changed during the past five years for that issue? (Percent with no opinion not shown)

	Got Better	Stayed Same	Got Worse
Education	48%	23%	29%
Crime	4	11	85
Health care	29	36	34
Race relations	37	41	19
Quality of life	30	36	33
The economy	13	21	64

Based on a factor analysis, education, health care, race relations and quality of life were combined into a 9-point additive scale. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Past Direction of Country**.

Alpha = .75

Direction of Country in Next Five Years

Q82 I will read out the same list, and would like to know whether you think in the next five years things will improve, stay the same or get worse? (Percent with no opinion not shown)

	Get Better	Stay Same	Get Worse
Education	65%	13%	20%
Crime	37	18	42
Health care	55	21	22
Race relations	58	25	15
Quality of life	55	22	21
The economy	49	17	3

Based on a factor analysis, crime, education, health care, race relations and quality of life were combined into an 11-point additive scale. Each respondent's score was entered into the model as the variable **Future Direction of Country**

Alpha = .90

Table I

Who Do You Trust?

Trust in National, Provincial and Local Governments*

Q. How much of the time do you expect the government in Pretoria to do the right thing?

	Total	Black	White
Almost always	41%	45%	30%
Most of the time	38	40	28
Hardly ever	17	11	35
Never	4	3	6

Q How much of the time do you expect your provincial government to do the right thing?

	Total	Black	White
Almost always	42%	47%	30%
Most of the time	38	39	34
Hardly ever	15	11	30
Never	4	4	5

Q. How much of the time do you expect your local council to do the right thing?

	Total	Black	White
Almost always	45%	49%	33%
Most of the time	36	36	37
Hardly ever	14	11	25
Never	4	4	5

*Columns may not total to 100 because percentage with no opinion not shown

Confidence in Democratic Institutions

Pecentage who expressed "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in:

	Total	Black	White
The Church	64%	65%	60%
Parliament	56	70	16
The media	54	63	29
Their Provincial government	48	60	14
Local Government	44	52	18
The courts	43	50	24
Trade Unions	42	52	13
The Civil Service	37	45	13
The SANDF (Army)	34	39	19
The SAPS (Police)	33	35	31

Table II

Demographics

Q. Thinking ahead to when President Mandela leaves office. Will South Africa remain a democratic country?

Optimists	**54%**
Uncertains	**46**

*Those who answered "yes" to the question were classified as optimists. Those who answered "no" (8 percent) or "don't know" (38 percent) were classified as uncertains.

% of Sample	*Demographic Group*	*Optimists*	*Uncertains*
	Sex		
42%	Men	54%	46%
58	Women	53	47
	Race		
71%	African	58%	42%
18	White	43	57
8	Coloured	46	54
3	Indian	36	64
	Language Spoken in Home		
21%	IsiZulu	50%	50%
18	IsiXhosa	39	61
18	Afrikaans	44	56
12	English	42	58
31	Other languages	74	26
	Age		
25%	18-25	61	39
26	26-35	56	44
22	36-45	48	52
17	46-60	51	49
10	61+	48	52
	Region		
30%	Rural	58%	42%
19	Suburban	54	46
41	Urban	50	50
10	Informal Settlement	54	46
	Education		
32%	0-9	54%	46%
32	10-12	54	46
22	13	55	45
14	14 or more	50	50
	Children Under 18 in Home		
28%	Yes	55%	45%

72	No	50	50
	Social Deprivation*		
20%	Most Disadvantaged	50%	50%
26	Disadvantaged	62	38
29	Advantaged	52	48
25	Most Advantaged	50	50

* This variable is a scale composed of questions about quality and characteristics of shelter, experience with hunger and employment status. The scale runs from 1 (most disadvantaged) to 4 (most advantaged). For specific details, see appendix.

Table III

Stage I: Demographic Variables
Variables in bold were statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > ChiSq	Standardized Estimate
Black	**1.2768**	**0.1576**	**<.0001**	**0.3180**
Xhosa	**-1.3548**	**0.1169**	**<.0001**	**-0.2831**
Zulu	**-0.9728**	**0.1096**	**<.0001**	**-0.2189**
Economic Deprivation	**0.2248**	**0.0581**	**0.0001**	**0.1319**
Age	**-0.1109**	**0.0322**	**0.0006**	**-0.0790**
Rural Resident	**0.2612**	**0.1134**	**0.0213**	**0.0659**
Indian	-0.4539	0.2783	0.1028	-0.0391
Resident of informal Settlement	0.2220	0.1613	0.1686	0.0349
White	-0.2023	0.2030	0.3191	-0.0429
Sex	-0.0734	0.0790	0.3528	-0.0199
Afrikaans	0.1055	0.1799	0.5577	0.0179
Children under 18	0.0492	0.0940	0.6008	0.0120
Education	-0.0141	0.0441	0.7487	-0.00805
Suburban Resident	0.0352	0.1104	0.7500	0.00752

Association of Predicted Probabilities with Actual Responses: .67

Likelihood Ratio	<.0001	Somers' D	0.341
Score	<.0001	Gamma	0.343
Wald	<.0001		
		Tau-a	0.170
		c	0.670

Table IV

Stage Two: Life Experiences

Total	Value	Optimist	Uncertain
Crime			
25%	Victim of crime past 5 years	44%	56%
75	Not a crime victim	57	43
Party Membership			
19%	Dues-paying member of party	61%	39%
81	Not a dues-paying member	52	48
Racism			
26%	Victim of racism past 5 years	50%	50%
74	Not victim of racism	55	45
Civic Engagement			
34%	Low/few associations	49%	51%
33	Medium	60	40
32	High/many associations	53	47
Political Knowledge			
18%	Two/Three Correct	52%	48%
82	Not All Correct	54	46

Table V

Stage II: Demographics and Life Experiences
Variables in bold were statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > ChiSq	Standardized Estimate
Black	**1.2551**	**0.1594**	**<.0001**	**0.3126**
Xhosa	**-1.3443**	**0.1181**	**<.0001**	**-0.2809**
Zulu	**-0.9235**	**0.1105**	**<.0001**	**-0.2078**
Age	**-0.1123**	**0.0325**	**0.0006**	**-0.0800**
Economic Deprivation	**0.2133**	**0.0587**	**0.0003**	**0.1252**
Indian	-0.4189	0.2804	0.1352	-0.0361
Education	-0.0541	0.0467	0.2463	-0.0308
Resident of Informal Settlement	0.1864	0.1624	0.2510	0.0293
Sex	-0.0745	0.0804	0.3541	-0.0202
White	-0.1291	0.2071	0.5330	-0.0274
Children under 18	0.0534	0.0947	0.5728	0.0131
Afrikaans	0.0745	0.1820	0.6822	0.0127
Resident of Suburbs	0.0158	0.1117	0.8873	0.00338
Crime Victim	**-0.3795**	**0.0947**	**<.0001**	**-0.0898**
Political Knowledge	**0.0935**	**0.0298**	**0.0017**	**0.0769**
Party Member	**0.3036**	**0.1027**	**0.0031**	**0.0657**
Rural Resident	**0.2648**	**0.1147**	**0.0210**	**0.0669**
Victim of Racism	-0.1609	0.0906	0.0758	-0.0388
Civic Engagement	0.0692	0.0482	0.1510	0.0311

Association of Predicted Probabilities and Actual Responses: .69

Likelihood Ratio	<.0001	Somers' D	0.373
Score	<.0001	Gamma	0.374
Wald	<.0001	Tau-a	0.186
		c	0.686

Table VI

Total		Optimist	Uncertain
	Attitudes and Optimism		
	Perceptions of Economic Performance		
41%	Low	43%	57%
32	Medium	53	47
27	High	70	30
	Gap Between the Rich and Poor		
53%	Got bigger in past five years	48%	52%
32	Stayed the same	59	41
15	Got Smaller	60	40
	Worried Won't Have Enough to Live on in 10 Years		
45%	Very worried	46%	54%
32	A Bit worried	54	46
14	Not very worried	67	33
9	Not at all worried	73	27
	Confidence in Political Institutions		
28%	Low	39%	615
39	Medium	52	48
34	High	67	33
	Confidence in Courts/Law Enforcement		
33%	Low	48%	52%
39	Medium	53	47
28	High	62	38
	Confidence in Trade Unions		
16%	Great deal	70%	30%
26	Quite a lot	61	39
29	Some	48	52
18	Not much	45	55
11	None	42	58
1	Don't know	61	39
	Confidence in the Media		
22%	Great deal	62%	38%
32	Quite a lot	58	42
30	Some	49	51
10	Not much	45	55
6	None	39	61
	Perceptions of Past Direction of Country		
36%	Most negative	43%	57%
31	Mixed	56	44
33	Most positive	64	36
	Perceptions of Future Direction of Country		
38%	Most negative	40%	60%
31	Mixed	56	44
31	Most positive	68	32
31	Disagree	55	45

45	Strongly disagree	61	39
	Agree or Disagree: "It would <u>Not</u> Bother Me if My Children Married Someone of a Different Race"		
17%	Strongly agree	67%	33%
28	Agree	58	42
24	Neither agree nor disagree	48	52
15	Disagree	51	49
17	Strongly disagree	44	56
	Change in Housing Situation in Past Five Years		
38%	Got better	64%	36%
48	Stayed same	49	51
14	Got worse	43	57
	Worried Won't Have Enough to Live on in 10 Years		
45%	Very Worried	46%	54%
32	A Bit Worried	54	46
14	Not Very Worried	67	33
9	Not at All Worried	73	27
	Give Up Rights For More Financial Security		
57%	Yes	47%	53%
42	No	38	62

Table VII

The Final Model: Demographics, Life Experiences and Political Attitudes

Variables in bold were statistically significant at the p<.05 level.

Variable	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Pr > ChiSq	Standardized Estimate
Xhosa	**-1.2538**	**0.1251**	**<.0001**	**-0.2620**
Zulu	**-0.8297**	**0.1181**	**<.0001**	**-0.1867**
Black	**0.7999**	**0.1739**	**<.0001**	**0.1992**
Age	**-0.0940**	**0.0345**	**0.0065**	**-0.0670**
Rural Resident	**0.2643**	**0.1228**	**0.0314**	**0.0667**
White	0.4158	0.2292	0.0696	0.0881
Afrikaans	0.3096	0.1918	0.1064	0.0526
Education	-0.0645	0.0493	0.1907	-0.0367
Sex	-0.0328	0.0849	0.6989	-0.00891
Resident of Suburbs	-0.0378	0.1185	0.7494	-0.00809
Children under 18	0.0806	0.1000	0.4201	0.0197
Indian	0.1875	0.2996	0.5313	0.0162
Resident of Informal Settlement	0.0826	0.1723	0.6319	0.0130
Crime Victim	**-0.2289**	**0.1014**	**0.0240**	**-0.0542**
Political Knowledge	0.0597	0.0317	0.0594	0.0491
Party Member	0.1013	0.1091	0.3531	0.0219
Civic Engagement	0.0394	0.0508	0.4377	0.0177
Victim of Racism	0.0261	0.0965	0.7870	0.00629
Trade Rights for Economic Security	**-0.3630**	**0.0858**	**<.0001**	**-0.0990**
Economic Performance	**0.1138**	**0.0292**	**<.0001**	**0.1119**
Money Worries	**0.2232**	**0.0459**	**<.0001**	**0.1195**
Trust National Government	**0.5174**	**0.1029**	**<.0001**	**0.1267**
Future Direction of Country	**0.0625**	**0.0175**	**0.0004**	**0.1169**
Trust Political Institutions	**0.0498**	**0.0147**	**0.0007**	**0.1105**
Income Inequality	**-0.2561**	**0.0852**	**0.0027**	**-0.0703**
Attitude toward Voting	**0.1194**	**0.0411**	**0.0037**	**0.0689**
Economic Deprivation	**0.1506**	**0.0621**	**0.0152**	**0.0884**
Trust Trade Unions	**0.1017**	**0.0427**	**0.0172**	**0.0678**
Trust Legal Institutions	**-0.0478**	**0.0202**	**0.0181**	**-0.0738**
Racial Tolerance	-0.0682	0.0363	0.0605	-0.0494
Housing Problem	-0.0270	0.0675	0.6895	-0.0102
Trust Media	0.00114	0.0465	0.9805	0.000697
Past Direction of County	-0.00026	0.0251	0.9919	-0.00033

Association of Predicted Probabilities and Actual Responses: .75

Likelihood Ratio	<.0001	Somers' D	.507
Score	<.0001	Gamma	.508
Wald	<.0001	Tau-a	.253
		c	.753

Table VIII

Standardized Coefficients	
Variable	Standardized Estimate
Black	**0.1992**
Trust National Government	**0.1267**
Money Worries	**0.1195**
Future Direction of Country	**0.1169**
Economic Performance	**0.1119**
Trust Political Institutions	**0.1105**
Economic Deprivation	**0.0884**
Attitude toward Voting	**0.0689**
Trust Trade Unions	**0.0678**
Rural Resident	**0.0667**
Crime Victim	**-0.0542**
Age	**-0.0670**
Income Inequality	**-0.0703**
Trust Legal Institutions	**-0.0738**
Trade Rights for Economic Security	**-0.0990**
Zulu	**-0.1867**
Xhosa	**-0.2620**

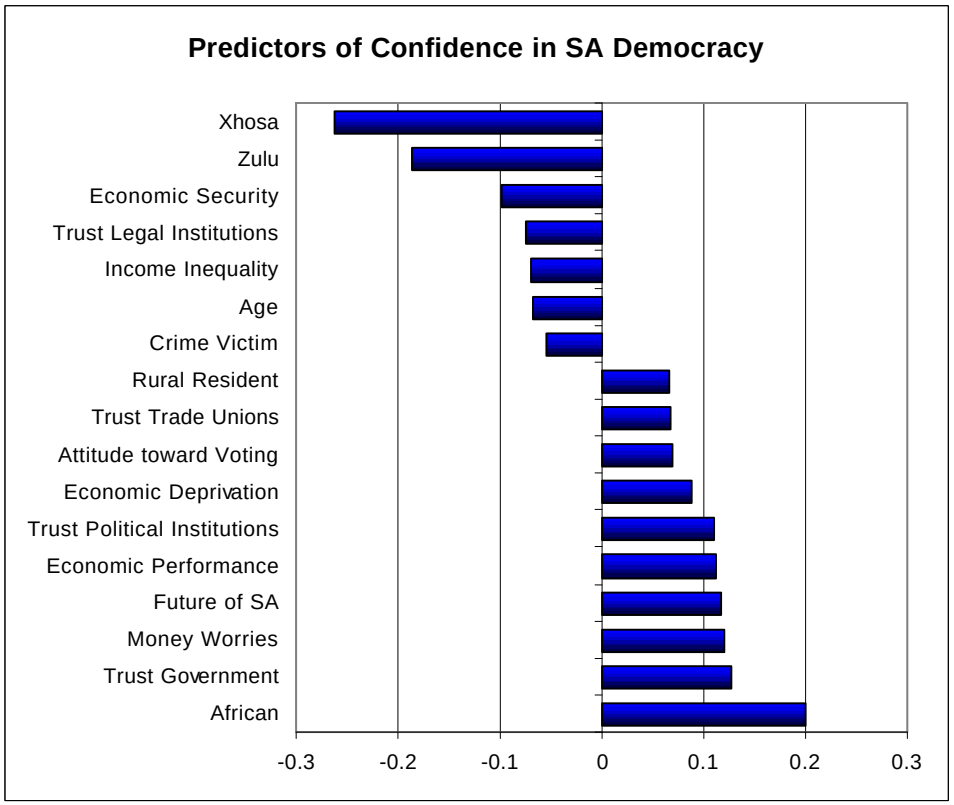
Predictors of Confidence in SA Democracy
Xhosa
Zulu
Economic Security
Trust Legal Institutions
Income Inequality
Age
Crime Victim
Rural Resident
Trust Trade Unions
Attitude toward Voting
Economic Deprivation
Trust Political Institutions
Economic Performance
Future of SA
Money Worries
Trust Government
African
-0.3
-0.2
-0.1
0
0.1
0.2
0.3

Table X

TABLE VI MAKING SENSE OF THE MODEL: RESPONDENT 1,173

One way to estimate the impact of each variable in our model contribute to feelings of optimism is to see what happens when a single independent variable is altered while the other independent variables are left unchanged. The size of the resulting change, expressed as percentage points, is the contribution that variable makes to the overall probability that a person is optimistic about the future of democracy in South Africa.

Our starting point is Respondent 1,173, a 33-year old Xhosa woman living in the Eastern Cape Province. The model estimates there is a 46 percent chance—less than 50-50—that she is an optimist, based on her demographic characteristics, her life experiences and her political attitudes. In fact, she answered that she was "unsure" when asked if she expected democracy to continue after Mandela. This chart shows how the estimate of 46 percent changes in response to changes in a single independent variable, all other variables held constant.

For example, Respondent 1,173 reported that she was "very worried" that her family would not have enough to live on in 10 years. To estimate the effect of money worries on optimism, we compute what the probability would have been had she responded that she was "not at all worried" about her family's finances. The result: The probability that she is an optimist rises to 62 percent--a 16 percentage-point increase, which is our estimate of the impact of this variable alone on optimism.

This 16-point estimate is not specific to Respondent 1,173; we would have obtained the same estimate if we had picked any other respondent in our sample. Thus this result suggests that South Africans with no money worries were about 16 percentage points more likely to be optimistic about the future of democracy after Mandela than those who were deeply concerned about their family's financial future, controlling for all other variables in the model.

(Note: To estimate the maximum effect of each variable, the probabilities estimated using the highest and the lowest values of each variable are shown.)

Independent Variable	Probability of Being an Optimist	Change
Xhosa		
Yes	46%	28 percentage points
No	74	
Confidence in Political Institutions		
Most	50%	19 percentage points
Least	31	
Zulu		
Yes	56%	18 percentage points
No	74%	
Worried Won't Have Enough to Live on in 10 Years		
Very Worried	46%	16 percentage points
Not Worried	62	
Economic Performance		
Most Positive	51%	16 percentage points
Most Negative	35	
Perceptions of Future Direction of the Country		
Most Positive	50%	15 percentage points
Most Negative	35	
Confidence in Legal Institutions		
Most	38%	14 percentage points
Least	52	
Confidence in National Government		
Most	59%	13 percentage points

Least	46	
Agree or Disagree: "Voting is a Waste of Time"		
Strongly Agree	40%	12 percentage points
Strongly Disagree	52	
Economic Deprivation		
Least Severe	39%	11 percentage points
Most Severe	50	
Confidence in Trade Unions		
Great Deal	51%	10 percentage points
None	41	
Give Up Rights for Financial Security		
Yes	37%	9 percentage points
No	46	
Age		
18-25	48%	8 percentage points
61+	39	
Agree or Disagree: "It would <u>Not</u> Bother Me if My Children Married Someone of a Different Race"		
Strongly Agree	41%	7 percentage points
Strongly Disagree	48	
Income Gap		
Larger	46%	6 percentage points
Not larger	52	
Crime Victim Past Five Years		
Yes	46%	6 percentage points
No	40	
Rural Resident		
Yes	52%	6 percentage points
No	46	

Endnotes

[1] Brodie, Mollyann, Altman, Drew, Sinclair, Michael*, Reality Check: South Africans' Views of the New South Africa*,A report on a national survey of the South African People. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Independent Newspapers. 1999 p. 1

[2] "After Mandela—Will Our Democracy Survive?" Simon Zwane " *Reality Check* (a reprint of news stories published by Independent Newspapers of South Africa) April 28, 1999. P. 5

[3] This analysis largely focuses on blacks and whites because the subsamples of Indians and Coloured South Africans were too small to report findings with statistical confidence.

[4] Brodie, Mollyann, Altman, Drew, Sinclair, Michael, op cit., p. 23

[5] An analysis using an uncollapsed three-level dependent variable--optimists, uncertains, and pessimists--produced substantively identical results, with only marginal changes in the size of coefficients and associated significance levels. Similarly, a model in which pessimists were excluded from the sample also produced generally comparable findings, though fewer independent variables achieved statistical significance. The model described in this paper, which used the collapsed dichotomous dependent variable, correctly categorized a slightly larger percentage of the respondents than analyses using other formulations of the dependent variable.

[6] Nye, Joseph S., Jr. (1999) "Foreward" in Norris, Pippa (ed.), *Critical Citizens*, p. vi New York: Oxford University Press

[7] Pye, Lucian, quoted in Diamond, Larry (1999), *Developing Democracy* p. 163 Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press

[8] Haller, H. Brandon and Norpoth, Helmut, "Let the Good Times Roll: The Economic Expectations of U.S. Voters" *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 38. No. 3 August, 1994, p. 648. Haller and Norpoth conclude their article by cautioning policymakers not to take these expectations lightly. "The electoral weapon gives the public a good reason to hope, not just wish, for better times ahead when the economy is ailing. The electorate has reason to be hopeful since its 'desire [is] accompanied by…belief in fulfillment' (Webster's definition of hope.)"

[9] Diamond, op cit p. 76

[10] Przeworski, Adam, Alvarez, Michael, Cheibub, Jose Antonio and Limongi, Fernando "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 7 No. 1 January, 1996. p. 43

[11] Diamond, op cit. p. 90-91

[12] Careful readers might question why income was not included as a variable in this analysis, or at least included in the scale used to measure economic deprivation. Income was not used in this analysis because one in five respondents did not answer the income question. Eleven percent simply refused to disclose their incomes, while 9 percent said they did not know. Such a high refusal rate is, in fact, quite common: about one in six respondents typically refuse to give their income on Washington Post monthly surveys. This high refusal rate poses problems, since the multivariate technique used to model these results excludes cases with missing data on any of the variables. That means including income would have effectively eliminated 20 percent of the respondents from the analysis, or about 600 people. A comparison of income and the economic deprivation scale found that the two were correlated. Significantly, the majority of people who refused to answer the income question rated as the most affluent in the economic deprivation scale. This suggests that wealthier South Africans were disproportionately likely to refuse to give their income.

[13] Robert Mattes and Herman Thiel "Consolidation and Public Opinion in South Africa," *Journal of Democracy* v. 9, no. 1 (1998) p. 101

[14] The fact that a single underlying attitude seems to color thinking about the courts, police and the army is not as unusual as it may seem. Other researchers use the label "Institutions of Control" to describe this particular grouping. The army also fought the ANC outside South Africa's borders and inside the country as well. In particular, army intelligence kept close watch on ANC activities within South Africa, working to identify and target activists for harassment or death, according to testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[15] Because of the small sample sizes, the Indian (n=75) and Coloured subsamples (n=243) were not modeled separately.

[16] Together these findings suggest that the economy clearly helps to shape optimistic feelings about the future of democracy. But which matters more: perceptions of how the national economy is doing, or how the individual has fared over the past five years? Perhaps counter-intuitively, Donald Kinder and Rod Kiewiet found that in the United States, perceptions of how the country is doing appear to trump our own financial experience. People who see the national economy doing well are more likely to support an incumbent president or the incumbent's party, even if their own economic situations have declined. To compare sociotropic versus egocentric perceptions of economic performance, the scale variable was dropped from the model. It was replaced with the question asking whether the national economy had gotten better, worse or stayed the same in the past five years. Then this variable was dropped, and in its place was entered the question asking how their "own personal financial situation" had changed since 1994. By comparing the coefficients, we can make some generalizations about the relative strength of the two variables in predicting optimism.

South Africa clearly is not the United States: Perceptions of an individual's recent financial experience were as strongly related to optimism (beta=.2555, p<.0001) as were perceptions of the national economy (beta=.2581, p<.0001).

[17] Przeworski, Adam, Alvarez, Michael, Cheibub, Jose Antonio and Limongi, Fernando op cit p. 41

[18] Robert Mattes and Herman Thiel "Consolidation and Public Opinion in South Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 1 (1998) p. 100.

[19] "Growing African middle-class is politically savvy and optimistic about the future of the country" Karen MacGregor *Reality Check* April 29, 1999 P. 4

[20] Soal, Judith "Reconciliation, race relations and redistribution" Cape Times, April 22, 1999 p. 11.

[21] Gibson, James L. and Gouws, Amanda "Support for the rule of law in the emerging South African Democracy" *International Social Science Journal* v. 49 n. 2 June, 1997 p. 188.

[22] Ibid, p.185.

[23] Diamond, op cit. p. 194

[24] Norris, Pippa (1999), "Institutional Explanations for Political Support" in Norris (ed.) *Critical Citizens* p. 234.

[25] Helen Taylor and Robert Mattes, "Political Parties, Supporters, and Democratic Citizenship," (paper presented at a workshop on Democracy and Social Capital in Segmented Societies," Pretoria, October 9-12,1997.

[26] It should be noted that even in the United States, polls show that large numbers of citizens express discomfort with such quintessentially democratic ideas such as free speech and the right to assemble.

[27] Robert Mattes and Herman Thiel "Consolidation and Public Opinion in South Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 1 (1998) p.100.

[28] Thompson, Leonard, "Mbeki's Uphill Challenge" *Foreign Affairs* November/December 1999 p.94

[29] Robert Mattes and Herman Thiel, op cit. p.109

[30] Van Zyl Slabbert, Frederik, (1999) "South Africa under Thabo Mbeki: The challenge of Democratic Stability" in *Election '99 South Africa* Andrew Reynolds (ed.), New York: St. Martin's Press p. 212

[31] "Optimism survives in out-of-the-way places: Eric Ntabazalila "Reality Check" April 28, 1999. p. 6

[32] "The Electric Blues" Roger Friedman *Reality Check* April 28, 1999 P. 6

[33] Nevin, Tom "South Africa's Second Industrial Revolution," *African Business*; London; Nov 1999. P.15.

[34] "It's still a case of different strokes for different folks" *Reality Check* April 28, 1999. p. 3

[35] Sparks, Allister, "The Status of the Dream" *The Wilson Quarterly* Spring 1999 p. 92.