

Race Relations
in South Africa
**REASONS
FOR HOPE
2019**

**UNITE
THE MIDDLE**



IRR

South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

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April 2019

Published by the South African Institute of Race Relations (IRR)
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Telephone: (011) 482-7221
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ISSN: 2311-7591

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Cover design by InkDesign

HARMONY TRUMPS HOSTILITY

Race relations in South Africa held up surprisingly well during 2018. Racial tensions could easily have risen strongly in a year characterised by increasingly harsh racial rhetoric from both the ANC and the EFF. Much of this invective was aimed at securing a constitutional amendment that would allow land expropriation without compensation (EWC). Now that Parliament has recommended this EWC amendment, racial accusations have declined again. Increasingly, they have been replaced by reassurances, from the ANC especially, that EWC will be carefully and sparingly used. However, invective against whites is likely to accelerate again once the government begins using its EWC powers and must justify its uncompensated takings.

Racial rhetoric in the run-up to the EWC decision was persistent and hostile. Whites were repeatedly accused of having ‘looted’ and ‘stolen’ the land (Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, December 2017), of having ‘destroyed the asset base of the African people’ and thereby caused ‘the impoverishment of the black nation’ (Cyril Ramaphosa, November 2017), of having engaged in ‘the ruthless plunder of land and livestock’ (Ace Magashule, September 2018) and of having committed ‘a full-blown colonial genocide’ against black people through their ‘criminal’ land ‘dispossession project’ (Julius Malema, February 2018). Mr Malema’s rhetoric was particularly vituperative: ‘We are cutting the throats of whiteness.’ ‘Whites committed genocide.’ ‘No white person is the rightful owner of land here in South Africa.’ ‘Whites are the enemy who stole our land.’¹

Race relations in South Africa held up surprisingly well during 2018. Racial tensions could easily have risen strongly in a year characterised by increasingly harsh racial rhetoric from both the ANC and the EFF. Much of this invective was aimed at securing land expropriation without compensation (EWC).

Social media remained a key vehicle for racial invective and sometimes for racial threats. In June 2018, for instance, police officer Chris Gumotso said on Facebook that ‘all white men...deserve to die’. In March an army major, Mageti Mohlala, in commenting on an assault by robbers on an 80-year-old white priest, said that ‘the attackers should also have stabbed out his eyes and tongue so that the last people he would ever see were the killers and he could go to his grave with the nightmare’. Mr Mohlala was dismissed from the SANDF for this hate speech.²

In March 2018 the Labour Court upheld the dismissal of a former policeman, Juda Phonyogo Dagané, who had posted in 2011 (on Mr Malema’s Facebook page) that he ‘hated whites’ and that blacks would in time ‘commit a genocide on them’. The Labour Court agreed that Mr Dagané’s conduct warranted his dismissal, saying he had used ‘disgraceful and racist language constituting hate speech’. Moreover, he had done so in his capacity as a police officer and on a platform accessible to potentially thousands of Facebook users.³

Also in 2018, the Johannesburg Equality Court found Velaphi Khumalo, a Gauteng provincial employee, guilty of hate speech. Two years earlier, Mr Khumalo had called for ‘the country to be cleansed of all white people’, who ‘deserved to be hacked and killed like Jews’ (he later added). The ANC brought an Equality Court claim against Mr Khumalo, but this was settled on the basis that Mr Khumalo would apologise and pay R30 000 to a charity. The South African Human Rights Commission (HRC) was unaware of this agreement when it lodged its own claim against him in the Johannesburg Equality

Court. Here, Judge Roland Sutherland found Velaphi Khumalo guilty of hate speech, instructed him to apologise to the nation, and ordered him to pay the HRC's legal costs.⁴

A significantly harsher punishment was imposed on estate agent Vicki Momberg, who had hurled the 'k-' word 48 times at black police officers trying to help her after she suffered a 'smash-and-grab' robbery. Ms Momberg, who seemed beset by psychological problems, was convicted of *crimen injuria* in the Randburg magistrate's court in April 2018 and sentenced to three years in prison, one of which was suspended. The presiding magistrate also denied her applications for bail and for leave to appeal. Ms Momberg was immediately taken into custody, where she remained for four months before both bail and an appeal were allowed. Her effective two-year jail term was an extraordinarily harsh punishment, especially as she had already been fined R100 000 by an Equality Court. Her prison sentence was also *prima facie* inconsistent with the Constitution, which requires hate speech to include 'incitement to cause harm'.⁵

Judge Roland Sutherland found Velaphi Khumalo guilty of hate speech for having called for whites to be "hacked and killed like Jews". The court instructed him to apologise to the nation, and ordered him to pay the HRC's legal costs.

In Coligny – where the death of 16-year-old Matlhomola Mosweu had sparked several days of arson and looting in 2017– the two men accused of the teenager's murder were convicted in October 2018. Both Pieter Doorewaard and Philip Schutte were farm employees, who had apprehended Mr Mosweu as he was reportedly stealing sunflower seeds on their employer's farm. During their trial, the two testified that Mr Mosweu had jumped off the back of their *bakkie*, as they were driving him to the police station, and so broken his neck. But a single witness, Bonakele Pakisi, gave a different account, saying he had seen the accused throw Mr Mosweu off the vehicle. Mr Pakisi's testimony was often contradictory, raising questions as to whether he was telling the truth. Judge Ronnie Hendricks nevertheless accepted his evidence, finding that 'there was no practical reason' why he should have invented it. However, this assessment overlooked the enormous public interest the case had generated and the way in which Mr Pakisi's accusations had catapulted him into the public eye. The EFF welcomed the conviction, saying that 'a "not guilty" verdict would likely have reignited simmering tensions' and seen 'Coligny burn again'. Messrs Doorewaard and Schutte were sentenced to 18 and 23 years in jail respectively. They have appealed the sentence. Gabriel Crouse, an associate at the IRR, along with James Myburgh and Rian Malan, have written further on the problems with the sentence and the investigation, and serious questions must be asked about how and why the two men were convicted.⁶

In December 2018 the HRC published its *Trends Analysis Report* on the various complaints referred to it in 2016/17. The report highlighted the prevalence of racism, saying that 'derogatory comments' against black people were 'rife', that 'the use of the K-word was endemic', and that 'incidents of racial discrimination' took place 'at schools, universities, and businesses'. Moreover, such incidents were 'not limited to verbal abuse but often entailed physical violence, intimidation,...and being physically excluded or removed from establishments'. The commission added that 'racism had been an integral feature of Western society for centuries [and] continued to be the dominant world view, shaping South Africa since the colonial era'.⁷

However, the commission's data seemed inconsistent with these conclusions. In 2016/17, the HRC received 486 'race-related' complaints, these amounting to 10% of all the complaints about rights violations reported to it that year. This number was slightly down on the 505 race-related complaints the HRC had received in 2015/16.⁸ Commented IRR policy fellow John Kane-Berman:⁹

An annual figure of 486 works out at 1.33 complaints a day, hardly a sign of ubiquitous anti-black racism. [But] perhaps targets of racism do not always report it to the commission. Let us therefore assume that only 10% of racist treatment is reported. That would push the daily number of incidents up to 13.3. Against this, 5 816 serious crimes are reported daily to the police. So even a tenfold inflated number of racist incidents pales into insignificance when measured against crime.

How does racism compare with population? Our population is almost 58 million. Nearly all these people engage every day in several inter-racial transactions, in the workplace, in shops, on campuses, in parking lots, over the telephone and even at home. On this measure, the (inflated) figure of 13.3 racist incidents a day almost disappears.

That racism complaints were so limited in number provides important reason for hope. So too does the universal condemnation that the use of the ‘k-’ word now elicits. Adam Catzevelos, for instance, who praised a beach in Greece where ‘not one “k-” was in sight’, was swiftly condemned by his family, excluded from the family business, and ostracised by his son’s school. The limited number of race-related complaints, coupled with society’s evident capacity to take effective corrective action against racist incidents, cast doubt on whether the HRC is correct in claiming that ‘concerted interventions by all sectors of society to eradicate racism are “most urgent”’.¹⁰

Against this background, the IRR in 2018 commissioned another opinion poll to find out how South Africans themselves view race relations. This field survey was carried out by Victory Research, from 8th to 19th December 2018. It generated 1 010 telephone interviews with adults (aged 18 or more) across the country. Of these respondents, 771 were black, 97 were coloured people, 25 were Indian, and 115 were white. Two respondents declined to identify themselves by race. All respondents were interviewed by experienced field workers and in the languages of their own choice.

A single frame, random digit-dialling sampling design was used. The sampling frame consists of every potential cell phone number in existence in South Africa, from which a probability sample is drawn. This approach ensures that every number stands an equal chance of being included in the study. The margin of error is 3.1% (except among the small Indian sample, where it is 23.9%). The confidence level is 95%. A fuller explanation of the methodology is available on request.

The 2018 field survey was the fifth in a series of opinion polls on race relations commissioned by the IRR since 2001. The outcomes of these opinion polls are not strictly comparable, as the methodologies used have changed to some extent over the years and some of the questions posed in 2017 were somewhat different. Broad trends can nevertheless be discerned. Where this is feasible, various shifts or similarities over time are thus highlighted in the analysis which follows.

The top priority for the government

Respondents in the 2018 survey were asked to choose, from a list of possible answers supplied to them, ‘which one of the following issues should be the top priority for the government’. Their answers are shown in *Table 1*. (Proportions exceed 100% because more than one such issue could be mentioned.)

The three top issues identified were ‘creating more jobs’, ‘fighting corruption’ and ‘improving education’. In total, 26% of South Africans – and 27% of black respondents – identified ‘creating more jobs’ as the key issue for the government to tackle. Other key concerns were ‘fighting corruption’ (cited by 14% of all respondents and by 10% of black interviewees) and ‘improving education’ (mentioned by

11% of all respondents and by 10% of black people). Other important concerns were ‘fighting crime’ (mentioned by 10% of all respondents), ‘building more RDP houses’ (cited also by 10% of those interviewed), ‘fighting drugs and drug abuse’ (cited by 9%), and ‘fighting illegal immigration’ (mentioned by 7%).

Table 1, 2018 IRR field survey

The top priority for the Government (from list supplied by the interviewer)	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Creating more jobs	26%	27%	32%	19%	13%
Fighting corruption	14%	10%	19%	31%	34%
Improving education	11%	10%	9%	19%	18%
Fighting crime	10%	9%	18%	0%	11%
Building more RDP housing	10%	11%	10%	6%	1%
Fighting drugs, drug abuse	9%	11%	3%	6%	0%
Fighting illegal immigration	7%	8%	0%	0%	4%
Improving healthcare	4%	4%	3%	12%	5%
Speeding up service delivery	3%	3%	5%	0%	3%
Fighting racism	2%	2%	0%	6%	5%
Speeding up land reform	2%	2%	0%	0%	4%
Speeding up affirmative action	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

By contrast, only 2% of all respondents (and 2% of black interviewees) wanted the government to focus on ‘fighting racism’. In addition, a mere 2% of black respondents wanted the government to focus on ‘speeding up land reform’, while only 1% of black interviewees wanted it to concentrate on ‘speeding up affirmative action’. These results show that relatively few black South Africans want the government to focus its efforts on ‘fighting racism’ or accelerating the pace of land reform, while fewer still think the state’s emphasis should be on faster affirmative action.

Unemployment has been the concern most often cited by South Africans in all five of the IRR’s opinion polls on race relations since 2001. In each of these polls, by contrast, only a very small proportion of respondents identified the need to counter racism as a pressing priority. In addition, when ‘speeding up affirmative action’ was put to interviewees as a possible ‘top priority’ for the government (in the 2017 and 2018 field surveys), only 1% of black respondents flagged this as an issue of primary importance. ‘Speeding up land reform’ was also rarely cited as a key need, with 1% of black respondents seeing this as a top priority in 2017 and 2% of black people identifying it as such in 2018.

Have race relations improved?

Respondents were asked whether they thought that ‘relations between people of different races’ had improved, stayed the same, or become worse since 1994. Their answers are provided in *Table 2*. Close on two thirds (64%) of black respondents thought race relations had improved since the political transition, while 13% of blacks said they had stayed the same. The percentage of blacks who thought race relations had ‘gotten worse’ since 1994 was very much smaller, at 20%.

Among respondents as a whole, 57% saw an improvement in race relations and 26% a deterioration. Only among minority groups were concerns about deterioration stronger, with 51% of so-called ‘coloured’ people, 44% of Indian respondents, and 47% of whites saying that race relations have become worse since 1994.

Table 2, 2018 IRR field survey

Race relations since 1994	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Improved	57%	64%	26%	37%	39%
Stayed the same	14%	13%	23%	19%	10%
Became worse	26%	20%	51%	44%	47%
Don't know or refused	2%	3%	0%	0%	4%

The long-term trends paint a generally positive picture. In 2001, seven years after the political transition, 49% of black respondents thought race relations had improved since 1994, while 23% thought they had become worse. In 2018, by contrast, 64% of black people thought race relations had improved, which is well up on the 2001 figure.

The proportion of whites who thought that race relations had improved, at 39% in 2018, was much the same (38%) as it had been in 2001. However, whereas 45% of coloured people thought race relations had improved in 2001, that figure was down to 26% in 2018. The picture among Indian respondents was similar, though more marked, for the belief that race relations had improved had stood at 61% in 2001 but was down to 37% in 2018. However, this shift, wide as it is, falls within the margin of error (23.9%) applicable to the Indian group of respondents.

The best way to improve people's lives

The 2018 field survey also asked respondents how people's lives could best be improved. This time, it gave them four options to choose from, as set out in *Table 3*. Most people saw 'more jobs and better education' as the most important way to improve people's lives, with 59% of all respondents endorsing this option. Broadly similar proportions of black and white South Africans (57% of blacks and 72% of whites) shared this perspective. Other people – 24% of all respondents – saw the key solution as lying in better service delivery. Only 8% of all respondents (and 9% of the black people interviewed) thought individuals' lives could best be improved through 'more BEE and affirmative action in employment policies', or via 'more land reform'.

These four options were ranked in the same order in previous polls. In 2016, for example, 73% of black respondents identified 'more jobs and better education' as the best way to improve lives, while 23% identified 'better service delivery' as the solution. By contrast, 3% of black respondents identified 'more BEE and affirmative action' as the best way to improve lives, while 1% saw 'more land reform' as the key need. The overall pattern evident in 2018 is still the same as in earlier years. However, there now seems to be less faith in the value of 'more jobs and better education' and more interest in BEE and land reform, at least among black South Africans. This shift in interest may reflect rising unemployment rates (which make it harder to find jobs), as well as the ANC's tightening up of BEE rules and repeated claims that increased access to land is the key to overcoming poverty.

Table 3, 2018 IRR field survey

How best to improve people's lives	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
More jobs and better education	59%	57%	65%	62%	72%
Better delivery of services such as electricity, water, sanitation	24%	24%	31%	25%	24%
More black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action in employment (AA) policies	8%	9%	0%	12%	0%
More land reform	8%	9%	5%	0%	2%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

How do South Africans want job appointments to be made?

The basis on which people should be appointed to jobs is often a controversial issue. Government policy, under the Employment Equity Act of 1998, seeks to bring about demographic representivity at every level of the workforce – even though the poor quality of schooling and a still limited skills pool makes this objective difficult to fulfil. The government nevertheless seems willing to sacrifice the principle of merit-based job appointments to the attainment of what it considers the ‘right’ racial balance. Whites, by contrast, are often accused of overlooking the importance of providing redress for apartheid wrongs.

The IRR thus probed these issues by asking on what basis people should be appointed to jobs and giving respondents a series of options to choose from. Some 10% of all respondents (and 13% of black people) supported the first option: that ‘only blacks should be appointed for a long time ahead’. Only 7% of all respondents (and 9% of black interviewees) supported our second option: that ‘only black people should be appointed until those in employment are demographically representative’. Since this is essentially what the Employment Equity Act requires, it is striking that the proportion in its favour is so limited. Though support for this option was strongest among black South Africans, it is nevertheless evident that only 9% of black respondents – fewer than one in ten people – endorsed it.

The majority view, endorsed by nearly 60% of respondents, was that ‘appointments should be based on merit, with special training for the disadvantaged’. This option was supported by 55% of blacks, 67% of coloured people, 69% of Indians, and 68% of whites, as set out in *Table 4*.

Table 4, 2018 IRR field survey

Who do you think should be appointed to jobs in South Africa?	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Only blacks for a long time ahead	10%	13%	0%	6%	1%
Only blacks till demographically representative	7%	9%	1%	0%	0%
Appointments should be made on merit, with special training for the disadvantaged	58%	55%	67%	69%	68%
All appointments should be made on merit alone, without such training	22%	20%	31%	25%	28%

When the same questions were posed in 2015, support for the Employment Equity Act’s position – that only blacks should be appointed to jobs until demographic representivity has been reached – was lower still, at 7%. In the 2016 field survey, this proportion went up to 13%, but in 2018 it was down again at 9%. Support for merit-based appointments, with special training for the disadvantaged, has always been strong among black respondents – standing at 71% in 2015, at 63% in 2016, and at 55% in 2018 (though this last figure is, of course, significantly below the 2015 one).

How should sports teams be selected?

We then explored further by asking people whether the selection of sports teams should be based strictly on merit or should put more emphasis on demographic representivity. Part of the background here was ex-Springbok rugby player Ashwin Willemse’s walkout from a live TV broadcast in May 2018. Willemse said he had been ‘labelled a quota player for a long time’ and was not ‘going to be patronised’ by his fellow rugby analysts, Nick Mallett and Naas Botha. An inquiry by Advocate Vincent Maleka found no evidence of racism, but recommended that the issue be referred to the HRC for a final decision, as Willemse had declined to take part in his probe. The HRC announced its decision to hold a full and public inquiry into the incident in December 2018. In commenting on the Willemse case, sports

minister Tokozile Xasa has stressed that national quotas remain vital. By contrast, Archbishop Desmond Tutu had earlier suggested that the focus should instead be placed on developing ‘adequate facilities’ in schools and clubs in township areas ‘to develop the talent’ there.

Against this background, respondents were asked whether South African sports teams should be selected ‘only on merit and ability and not by racial quotas’. Some 83% of all respondents – and 82% of black people – agreed that players should be chosen on merit, not quotas. Though support for this view was particularly pronounced among whites (96%), there was strong endorsement of it across all racial groups, as set out in *Table 5*.

Table 5, 2018 IRR field survey

Sports teams should be selected on merit, not quotas	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Yes	83%	82%	81%	75%	96%
No	15%	17%	16%	25%	3%

Despite the minister’s support for racial quotas, the proportion of black respondents who reject this option is significantly greater now than it was in 2015 (74%) and 2016 (70%). This rejection of racial quotas in sport is also broadly shared across all racial groups – an outcome evident in IRR polls going back to 2015.

How important to parents is the race of their children’s teachers?

Since most people naturally want the best for their offspring, asking how they feel about the race of their children’s teacher is a good basis for assessing their real beliefs about race relations. We thus probed to find out how important it is to people to have their children taught by a school teacher of the same race as themselves. In response, 84% of respondents in general (and 81% of black people) said it did not matter to them what race their children’s teachers were, provided they taught well (see *Table 6*). Some 95% of coloured people took the same view, as did 94% of Indians and 92% of whites.

Table 6, 2018 IRR field survey

Would you prefer your child’s teachers to be:	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
The same race as you	15%	18%	5%	6%	7%
Doesn’t matter as long as teacher is good	84%	81%	95%	94%	92%

These results are broadly similar to those obtained in the 2015 and 2016 field surveys. In those years, however, the proportion of black respondents who saw the race of their children’s teachers as irrelevant was higher still, at around 90%. By contrast, the proportion of whites who think the race of their teachers’ children is unimportant has gone up in equal measure, from around 80% in 2015 and 2016 to over 90% in 2018.

How much do people experience racism?

We also asked people to tell us whether they had ‘ever personally experienced racism that was directed at them’. The answers are striking, for 58% of respondents said they had never personally experienced racism (see *Table 7*). The proportion of black respondents who said they had not personally experienced racism was higher, at 64%. Personal experience of racism was highest among coloureds (70%), Indians (56%), and whites (52%), as set out in *Table 7*.

Table 7, 2018 IRR field survey

Have you ever personally experienced racism that was directed at you?	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Yes	42%	36%	70%	56%	52%
No	58%	64%	30%	44%	48%

These results show a marked shift from those obtained in earlier years. In 2001, by contrast, fewer than half of black respondents (46%) said they had no personal experience of racism. By 2015, however, the proportion of black respondents saying they had no such experience was sharply up at 79%. That proportion dropped slightly to 77% in 2017. The 2018 figure, at 64%, is well down on these numbers, which is a disturbing outcome. However, it is still well above the 2001 figure.

As regards minority groups, the proportion of coloured people reporting no personal experience of racism stood at 51% in 2001. The equivalent proportion in 2018 was very much lower (30%) and may reflect a sense of increased marginalisation within this group. The equivalent figures within the Indian group show a decline from 61% in 2001 to 44% in 2018, but this decrease falls within the margin of error applicable to this group and is difficult to assess. In 2001, 77% of English-speaking whites reported no personal experience of racism, whereas the equivalent proportion among Afrikaans-speaking whites – who were presumably more affected by affirmative action in the public service – was 56%. The 2018 survey did not distinguish on language in this way, but found that the overall proportion of whites reporting no personal experience of racism was down to 48%.

Do black people see whites as ‘second-class’ citizens?

Some of the comments made by the ANC and the EFF during the past year to buttress their demands for an EWC amendment to the Constitution may have encouraged black South Africans to turn the tables on whites and relegate them to the status of second-class citizens. The IRR field survey thus asked respondents whether they agreed that ‘South Africa today is a country for black Africans, and white people must learn to take second place’. The results obtained are shown in *Table 8*:

Table 8, 2018 IRR field survey

SA is now a country for black Africans and whites must take second place	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Disagree	44%	37%	63%	75%	75%
Agree	54%	62%	36%	25%	23%

Among respondents in general, 54% agreed that South Africa is a country for black people in which whites must take second place, while 44% disagreed. Among black respondents, support for this perspective was stronger still, with 62% endorsing it and 37% disagreeing. By contrast, minority groups strongly disagreed with the idea that whites must take second place, with 63% of coloured people rejecting it, along with 75% of both Indians and whites.

These results suggest that ANC and EFF rhetoric strongly criticising whites has had a significant polarising impact over time. Black opinion on this issue has changed very little in the past year, with 61% of black respondents saying in 2017 that whites should take second place (as opposed to 62% in 2018). There is, however, a marked change in the perspectives of black South Africans since 2001, when the proportion of black people saying whites should take second place stood at 53%. The difference between the 2018 outcome and the 2015 one is particularly great, however, for in 2015 a very much smaller proportion of black respondents (29%) endorsed this view.

Racism and the role of politicians

The ruling party often blames South Africa's current problems of poverty, inequality, unemployment, low growth, and poor education on 'racism' and 'colonialism'. The IRR's 2018 survey thus wanted to know if people agreed that 'all this talk about racism and colonialism is by politicians trying to find excuses for their own failures'. The results are set out in *Table 9*.

Table 9, 2018 IRR field survey

Talk of racism/colonialism is from politicians seeking excuses for own failures	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Agree	64%	60%	66%	75%	89%
Disagree	34%	38%	33%	25%	10%

Almost two thirds of all respondents (64%) agree that politicians are exaggerating the problems posed by racism and colonialism in order to excuse their own shortcomings. A high proportion of black respondents (60%) also agree with this statement. Indians and whites see such talk as a particular problem, with 75% of Indians and 89% of whites effectively agreeing that politicians are playing the race card for their own ends.

Despite the recent upsurge in racial rhetoric in support of the EWC amendment, longer-term trends show little change in the views of black respondents. In 2001, 58% of black respondents thought politicians were talking up racism to excuse their own failures. This is much the same as the 2018 proportion (60%) and also the 2017 one (62%).

The route to sound future race relations

We also wanted to know what South Africans think should be done to promote sound race relations in the future. We therefore asked respondents whether better education and more jobs – the well-established building blocks for upward mobility in most societies – would in time 'make the present inequality between the races steadily disappear'. More than three quarters (76%) of all respondents agreed with this perspective, as did 74% of blacks (see *Table 10*). Politicians may seek to play up racial differences for their own purposes, but most South Africans are well aware of the key role of better skills and increased earnings in reducing racial inequalities and building inclusive prosperity.

Table 10, 2018 IRR field survey

With better education and more jobs, inequality between races will disappear	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Agree	76%	74%	84%	75%	86%
Disagree	22%	24%	15%	25%	12%

Again, the long-term trends are interesting. In 2016 and 2017, the proportions of black respondents endorsing this perspective stood at 73% and 77%, respectively, which is very much the same as the 2018 figure of 74%. There does, however, seem to be a downward trend since 2001, when 81% of black respondents supported this view. Again, this may reflect a growing pessimism among black interviewees about the prospects of their obtaining employment in the current economic climate.

Do black and white South Africans want to work together for progress?

Lastly, the IRR wanted to know whether South Africans understand and value their mutual inter-dependence and want full opportunities for all. As *Table 11* shows, 88% of all South Africans – and 86% of black respondents – agree that 'the different races need each other for progress and there should be full opportunity for people of all races'. These are very significant majorities.

Table 11, 2018 IRR field survey

Different races need each other for progress, there should be full opportunities for all	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
Agree	88%	86%	96%	100%	98%
Disagree	10%	12%	4%	0%	1%

The views expressed by black respondents in earlier years were again broadly similar. The proportions of black respondents agreeing that the different races need each other for progress stood at 85% in 2015 and 84% in 2016, which is much the same as the 86% recorded in 2018. These proportions are, however, somewhat lower than the equivalent figures in 2001 (93%) and 2017 (90%).

Overall outcomes of the 2018 field survey

The results of the IRR’s 2018 field survey are mainly positive and should once again fill the country with hope. According to the data gathered, 64% of black respondents think that race relations have improved since 1994, while the same proportion say that they have never personally experienced racism directed against them. This is consistent with the HRC data earlier described, which shows the commission as having received 486 ‘race-related’ complaints in a year, or 1.33 a day, from among a population numbering close on 58 million.

It is also not surprising, thus, that only 2% of black respondents identify ‘fighting racism’ as a key priority for the government. By contrast, most respondents – and most black South Africans, in particular – want the government to concentrate on creating more jobs, fighting corruption, improving education, fighting crime, and building more RDP houses. At the same time, 74% of black respondents believe that, ‘with better education and more jobs, inequality between the races will disappear’. Moreover, 86% of black respondents agree that ‘the different races need each other and there should be equal opportunities for all’.

The results of the IRR’s 2018 field survey are mainly positive and should once again fill the country with hope. According to the data gathered, 64% of black respondents think that race relations have improved since 1994, while the same proportion say that they have never personally experienced racism directed against them.

At the same time, there is little popular support for many of the ‘anti-racist’ measures that are supposed to be providing redress for apartheid injustices. Hence, only 2% of black South Africans think the government should focus on ‘speeding up land reform’, while a mere 1% think it should concentrate on ‘speeding up affirmative action’. In addition, only 9% of black respondents think that people’s lives will best be improved by ‘more BEE and affirmative action in employment’, or by ‘more land reform’. The same small proportion (9%) endorses the view that ‘only black people should be appointed until those in employment are demographically representative’. Since this is what the Employment Equity Act of 1998 requires, it is striking (as earlier noted) that the proportion of black people supporting this policy is so small.

More than 80% of South Africans from all racial groups are also opposed to quotas in sport, wanting players to be selected on merit instead. Similar proportions, again across the colour line, regard the race of their children’s teachers as unimportant, wanting only that these teachers should do a good job.

Despite all the polarising racial rhetoric used by the ANC and EFF to whip up support for an EWC

amendment, most South Africans have retained their capacity to see through this invective. In 2018, 60% of black respondents agreed that ‘all this talk about racism and colonialism is by politicians trying to find excuses for their own failures’. This is very similar to the 58% of black respondents who took this view back in 2001. It is also very similar to the proportion (62%) that endorsed it in 2017, before the EWC rhetoric intensified in 2018.

However, a notable change has taken place as regards the proportion of black respondents who agree that ‘South Africa is now a country for black Africans and whites must take second place’. In 2018, 62% of black interviewees endorsed this view. This is more than double the proportion (29%) of black respondents who agreed with this perspective in 2015. It is also well up on the 53% of black respondents who supported this perspective back in 2001. These shifts highlight the risk of racial divisions intensifying over time if politicians persist in trying to pit one racial group against another.

The 2018 field survey results are generally positive in terms of race relations. They also confirm the sound good sense of most South Africans, who rightly identify the key problems confronting the country as unemployment, corruption, and poor education. Joblessness is the main reason for persistent poverty, as well as for high rates of inter-racial and inter-black inequality. It has also been flagged as the main concern of most South Africans in all five of the IRR’s field surveys, going back to 2001.

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Public concern about unemployment goes back much further, of course, which is why the ANC chose ‘Jobs, jobs, jobs’ as its main election manifesto promise in 1994, some 25 years ago. Since then, however, the unemployment crisis has become far worse. The reasons for this include low rates of economic growth, poor education and vocational training, and labour laws that discourage job creation and often price the unskilled and inexperienced out of entry-level posts. Also relevant are diminished business and consumer confidence, and a number of damaging policies – including the proposed EWC amendment – that undermine property rights, restrict business autonomy, and reduce the country’s international competitiveness.

These key impediments to growth and jobs are given far too little attention by the ruling party, while necessary reforms are repeatedly rejected or deferred. In the interim, unemployment increases and poverty grows worse, creating fertile conditions for populist demands and polarising racial rhetoric. In these circumstances, politicians can more easily take the hurtful views and actions of a small minority of individuals and project them as the pervasive views of entire racial groups.

Unchecked conduct of this kind could in time stir up racial animosities and have an increasingly negative impact on race relations. The good news, however, is that ordinary people have as yet retained their capacity to see through such damaging racial invective.

The IRR’s 2018 field survey once again cuts through the increasing political ‘noise’ around race to provide vital insights into what ordinary South Africans think on race-related issues. Contrary to mainstream media perceptions and the hostile accusations often aired on Twitter and other social media, racism is not a major issue for most South Africans. This is not to say that racism does not exist, or that harmful racial utterances and racial violence do not occur. However, racism needs to be seen in its

proper context – and is clearly less acute and less intractable than many politicians and other commentators assert.

Despite the racial rhetoric so evident in 2018, especially around the EWC demand, most ordinary South Africans still think that politicians are using racial stigmatisation to distract attention from their own failings, that the different races need each other to make progress, and that better education and more jobs – rather than racial quotas in employment and elsewhere – are the keys to upward mobility for all.

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At the same time, however, racial invective has increased minority fears and encouraged black people to see South Africa as a country in which whites must now take second place. Hence, if the ANC, the EFF, and various other commentators persist in blaming white racism for complex socio-economic problems – which, in fact, stem primarily from the government's own damaging policies – then ordinary South Africans will in time find it more difficult to see through this racial rhetoric. Race relations will then suffer.

As yet, however, racial goodwill remains strong, as the IRR's 2018 field survey confirms. This is an important and very positive phenomenon. It is also a tribute to the perceptiveness and sound common sense of most South Africans. Despite the urgings of politicians and many other commentators, most ordinary people have avoided over-simplifying complex issues by blaming them on race. This provides important reason for hope – and a vital foundation for building an increasingly stable and prosperous society.

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