

Over half (52%) of the respondents in the study said police in their area were doing a good job, while 45% disagreed. The main reasons behind the positive response included: a committed police force, the arrest of criminals and timely response. On the other hand, corruption was one of the main reasons for the opposite view. Notably, over half of those who had actually visited a police station said their opinions about the police had improved.

Over half (59%) of South Africans who had been to court felt that courts were adequately performing their duties. Just over half (51%) of all respondents said they were generally satisfied with the court performance while 45% were dissatisfied.

Other studies also revealed that the high intensity operations conducted by the SAPS in various crime hot spots left the public feeling safe in those areas. In this regard, 76% of people who had come into contact with the police during these operations expressed satisfaction with their service.

The study indicated high public access to the police. Nearly all respondents (97% of the 3 000 people interviewed) knew where their nearest police station was and two thirds of these were able to reach the police station within 30 minutes or less using their mode of transport.

The study also showed that access to courts was also generally good. Over three quarters (84%) of the respondents knew where their nearest magistrate court was located in their area. Access to courts was much easier for urban dwellers than for people living in rural areas.

## **VII ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL LIFE AND SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Cohesion in a society such as ours is determined by the social structure in terms of such categories as class, race, language and nationality. But social networks extend beyond these socio-economic issues, and are impacted on by factors that can define a trajectory of their own.



What then are the trends in respect of the family and broad social networks?

## 26 Trends in households and families

As stated in the TYR (2003), the number of households increased by approximately 30% between 1996 and 2001, compared with a population growth of 11%. Inversely, household size declined from an average of 4,5 to 3,8 persons per household in the same period. This, among other factors, reflects both migration and a decline in fertility rates.

Four household types have been identified: single-person households; nuclear families consisting of parents and children only; extended family households, which include relatives; and 'others', which include non-family members living in one household. The following trends manifested themselves in the period 1996 – 2001 between urban and rural areas:

**Table 23: Percentage of household types**

Type of household	Urban		Non-urban		Total	
	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001
Single	18,1%	20,1%	13,4%	15,9%	16,2%	18,5%
Nuclear	49,5%	45,1%	41,5%	34,4%	46,3%	41,1%
Extended	17,9%	22,4%	25,5%	34,8%	20,9%	27,0%
Other	11,7%	12,4%	12,6%	15,0%	12,0%	13,4%
Unspecified	2,9%	-	7,0%	-	4,6%	-

*Source: Census (1996 and 2001)*

In essence, there has been an increase in the proportion of both single and extended households in urban and rural areas, while there has been a decline in the nuclear-type households. This confirms the results of migration studies. In extended household families, there is a higher dependency ratio, with more of such households having more young children and elderly women.

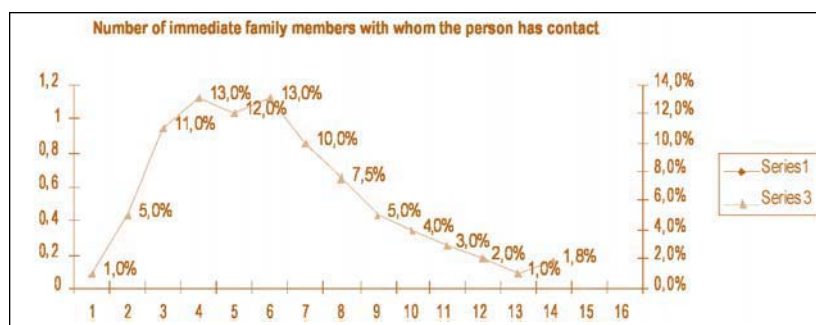
On marriage (and divorce) in particular, the following trends can be discerned in the past few years: marriage rates have declined, especially among the African population. As a result of the declining marriage rates, divorce rates are also declining.

It is a matter of conjecture whether all these dynamics affect the social upbringing of children and quality of family life in general. But the large increase in extended households (7%) and the corresponding decrease in the nuclear family (5%), as well as the fact that the number of households living in three or fewer rooms has not changed much in this period (46% in 1996 and 47% in 2001), would tend to give a negative commentary on the quality of family life. This is besides issues of migration and single households as well as the role that young children have to play in families in which the very old are guardians.

Critical in family life are the networks among relatives, in this instance measured by the relative frequency of contact between various immediate family members (parents, siblings, adult children and life partners).

Although the number of immediate family members ranged from 0 to 28, the most common responses were between three and five.

**Figure 35: Contact with immediate family members**



Source: HSRC (2002)

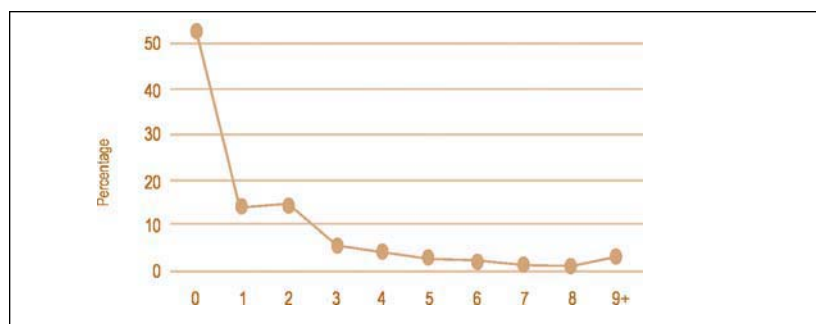
In terms of contact with extended family members such as uncles and aunts, cousins, parents-in-law and other in-laws, nieces and nephews, Indian respondents had the most contact, while white respondents had the least.

On frequency of face-to-face contact, white South Africans spend the least time with a favourite sibling, at half the score of that for Indians and Africans and a third of that for coloureds. This may reflect geographic proximity, extended family households and access to telecommunications.

## 27 Social networks and social capital

Responding to a question regarding the number of friends individuals had in their communities or neighbourhoods, the following trends emerge:

**Figure 36: Number of close friends (% of respondents)**



Source: HSRC (2002)

- urban communities have more close friends than rural communities
- black people tend to have fewer friends in their neighbourhoods
- the better resourced a respondent's community, the more friends they indicated to have (with Indians and whites scoring more than three times the figure for African respondents)

- women have fewer friends within and outside their communities and in the workplace than men while young adults tend to have less friends within their community, perhaps mainly due to mobility.

Overall, in terms of the composite social capital score a person's living standard level (in terms of LSM) does have an impact, but like African respondents, whites tend to have a low composite score. With the latter, the low score on family relationships may pull the score down.

The most critical conclusion from this is that Africans, assumed to experience a better sense of community, in fact not only have a low composite score, but also belong to networks with meagre resources with very little to offer one another. What has also been established is that social networks, even among the poor, do have some influence on an individual's access to resources, opportunities for employment and so on.

## **28 Community and social organisation**

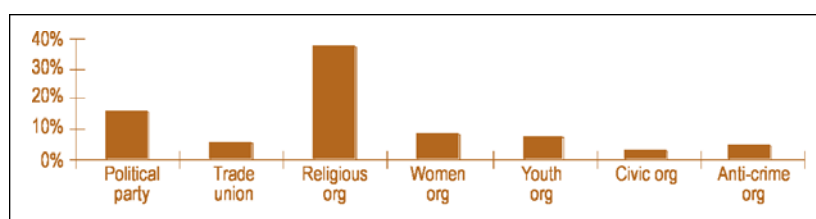
As argued above, social networks are critical in defining the possibilities that individuals may have in accessing opportunities. They are also an important measure of social consciousness and preparedness to take part in both community and general national programmes.

The trend in South Africa since 1994 has been contradictory, with ebbs and flows. Membership in this period has remained highest in political parties. After the 1994 elections, there was a general decline in membership of all organisations except for political parties. Excluding political parties, a sudden increase occurred in 1997, reaching its peak in 1998 and then declining again in 1999 and 2000. In 2001, there was a large increase, with youth organisations experiencing the greatest surge (75%), followed by anti-crime organisations (67%), women's organisations (60%) and trade unions (50%).



The highest percentage of South Africans belongs to religious organisations, followed by political parties, women’s organisations, youth organisations, trade unions, anti-crime organisations and civic organisations.

**Figure 37: Membership of civil-society organisations**



Source: HSRC (2002)

Compared by province, the Eastern Cape had the highest proportion (22%) of people active in political parties, while the Western Cape had the lowest (8,9%). North West and Mpumalanga had the highest percentage (10,7%) in trade unions while Limpopo had the lowest (2,3%).

**Figure 38: Civil-society organisation by province**



Source: HSRC (2002)



Broken down by race, Africans are most active (in this order) in political parties, youth organisations and civic organisations; while in the coloured community youth, religious and anti-crime organisations have the highest proportion; among Indians, women's organisations, trade unions and anti-crime organisations have the highest proportion; and among whites, anti-crime organisations, religious groups and political parties have the highest proportions.

From a different perspective, given the racial demographics, there seems to be a better level of social involvement among Indians, whites and coloureds than within African communities. However, it needs to be noted that structures such as stokvels and burial societies which are quite preponderant within the African community, are not reflected in this research. It also does not include sports organisations.

In terms of age, the most active are in the 35 – 49 years age bracket, followed by 25 – 34 years and 50 years and over.

## **29 Religion and social organisation**

Religious organisation is an important element of social capital in many respects: as a repository of social values, an important element of social networking, a formal system of social organisation and, in some instances, an instrument of socio-economic opportunity and status.

According to Census 2001 (table 24), the vast majority of South Africans (about 80%) identify with the Christian religion; about 5% belong to Islam, Hinduism, Jewish and other religions, and 15,1% do not belong to any religion. Of the Christian churches, the Zion Christian Church (11%) is the largest, followed by the Methodist Church (6,8%) and so on. A significant proportion of Christians (+26%) belong to churches that infuse their practices with African custom; while about 12% belong to charismatic churches. Further, the practise of African traditional beliefs, in their own right asserted as a religion, enjoys support among about 0,3% of the population.



**Table 24: Religious affiliation**

Religious group	Number	Percent
African traditional beliefs	125 898	0,3
Anglican churches	1 722 076	3,8
Apostolic Faith Mission	246 193	0,5
Bandla Lama Nazaretha	248 825	0,5
Baptist churches	691 235	1,5
Congregational churches	508 826	1,1
Dutch Reformed churches	3 005 697	6,7
Ethiopian type churches	1 150 102	2,6
Hinduism	551 668	1,2
Islam	654 064	1,5
Judaism	75 549	0,2
Lutheran churches	1 130 983	2,5
Methodist churches	3 035 719	6,8
No religion	6 767 165	15,1
Orthodox churches	42 253	0,1
Other African independent churches	656 644	1,5
Other Apostolic churches	5 627 320	12,6
Other beliefs	283 815	0,6
Other Christian churches	2 890 151	6,4
Other Reformed churches	226 499	0,5
Other Zionist churches	1 887 147	4,2
Pentecostal/charismatic churches	3 695 211	8,2
Presbyterian churches	832 497	1,9
Roman Catholic Church	3 181 332	7,1
Undetermined	610 974	1,4
Zion Christian Church	4 971 931	11,1

*Note: The Judaism number includes an estimated 11 978 Africans who indicated in the Census that they were Jewish.*

*This figure has been questioned by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and Stats SA is aware of the anomaly.*

*Source: Stats SA(2001)*



### 30 Attitudes among Christians in South Africa

In an SAIRR survey (2000), 50% of the population indicated that they attended religious meetings at least once a week. In 2001, the proportion was 46%, with a further 6% attending twice to four times a year, 3% once a year or less and 21% not attending at all.

The official positions of most of the religious groups do reflect the broad aspirations of society as articulated in the Constitution. Most of the religious groups profess concern for the conditions of the poor, and at the same time broadly support a market-based system of private property.

On most of the major social issues, Christians reflect views that are consonant with the average opinions of society, with practising Christians showing a mild leaning towards conservatism on such issues as involvement in political activities, control over flow of information on 'issues of national importance', trade unionism and xenophobia.

**Table 25: Religious affiliation and views on social issues**

	Pract	Laps	Intent	Nom	All
Active members of a political party	11	13	15	14	13
Active members of a trade union	7	9	5	5	6
Active member of a church	66	42	58	32	53
Active member of a civic organisation	3	4	2	2	3
Spent time talking with depressed person in last year	76	67	78	71	74
Adult children have duty to look after elderly parents	86	84	91	80	86
OK to develop friendships with people	44	46	47	44	45
Most South African whites have racist attitudes	61	60	65	62	62
Church has contributed to reducing racism	67	56	61	53	61

**Table 25: Religious affiliation and views on social issues (continue)**

	Pract	Laps	Intent	Nom	All
Race relations improved since 1994	43	43	42	42	43
Are you generally happy	74	72	72	67	72
People like me have no say in government	48	50	46	44	47
Will vote ANC in next elections	45	52	49	45	47
Will vote DA in the next elections	13	8	6	8	9
Will vote IFP in the next elections	5	3	5	2	4
Will not vote in next elections	8	9	10	9	9

Source: SAIRR (2000)

While the African National Congress enjoys the support of the majority of Christians, comparatively it is supported by a smaller proportion of practising Christians compared with lapsed ones; with the inverse for the Democratic Alliance and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The African Christian Democratic Party, which uses religious conservatism as a party political platform, has not had a significant impact on political contestation, though it has shown a slight increase in support in the three democratic elections since 1994.

### 31 Social organisation and the human rights regime

How does the organisation of society relate to the actual exercise of human rights, and to what extent is there awareness of these rights in the first instance?

Compared to most other societies, South Africa is characterised by vibrant discourse, and a population that is relatively well-informed about the basic issues of public policy and its implementation. Over 37 political parties as well as independent groups contest elections across the three spheres of government; and as was elaborated on above, many citizens do take some part in civil-society structures.

Registration for participation in the 2004 national and provincial elections, compared to the voting age demographics of each group can be broken down as follows (estimates from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and Stats SA figures):

**Table 26: Voting by gender**

Proportions	Male	Female
% of voting population	48,86%	51,14%
% of registered voters	45,18%	54,82%

Source: Stats SA and IEC (2004)

**Table 27: Voting by age**

Proportions	18 – 35 years	36 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50+
% of voting population	55,81%	9,50%	15,63%	19,05%
% of registered voters	44,47%	9,21%	19,63%	26,70%

Source: Stats SA and IEC (2004)

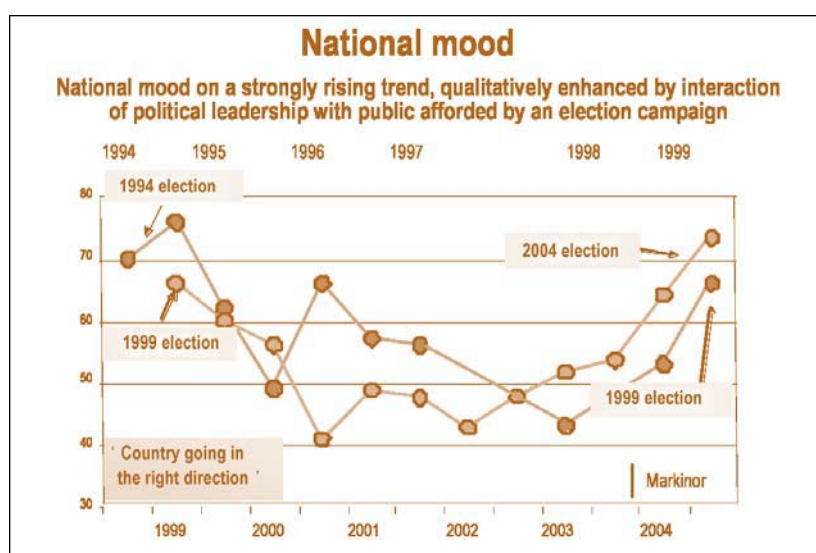
In brief, what these figures show is that female registered voters were disproportionately higher than their distribution in the population and that men were underregistered. In addition, the age group 18 – 35 were decidedly underrepresented as a proportion of their distribution in the population, with the 40 – 49 and 50+ age groups decidedly overrepresented.

More significant, though, with regard to women's participation in political life are the conclusions arising from the study on the electoral system itself. Arising from the 1995 local government elections, it was noted that a constituency-based system (the ward vote in the local government elections) disadvantages women, while a proportional representation (PR) system means that political parties that adhere to ensuring that a certain quota of candidates on the list are women, have women elected more easily as local government representatives. The 2000 elections confirmed this trend, although there was a significant increase in the number of women elected both to ward seats and on PR lists (Commission on Gender Equality

[CGE], 2001:11). The CGE's analysis of the election results concluded that these figures 'reflect the potential of the ward system to undermine the gains women make on the PR list'.

Does citizens' involvement with public policy issues reflect a steady pattern?

**Figure 39: National mood and electoral cycle**



Source: Markinor (2004)

What figure 39 demonstrates is that in periods of serious and intense interaction and discourse around public policy issues – as during election campaigns – there is better appreciation among the public of the substance of serious issues of transformation and a stronger sense of the direction the country is taking. What is quite striking about the current trend is that the election campaign, combined with the 10th anniversary celebrations, lifted the mood to the same levels as during the 1994 immediate post-election transition, the period of the 'political miracle'.

Public engagement with policy issues and in exercising their human rights does not necessarily translate into knowledge, and consequently utilisation, of the Constitution and institutions specifically set up to address issues of equity.

In a survey about knowledge of the Bill of Rights, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the CGE and the Public Protector's Office, over half of respondents had not heard of these institutions and consequently did not understand their functions, namely to identify and combat discrimination of various kinds.

**Table 28: Percentages who have not heard of/do not know the purpose of these institutions by race and gender**

Institution	Race				Gender	
	Afri	Col	Ind	Whi	Male	Female
Public Protector's Office	73,3	74,2	68,6	53,6	68,8	72,6
Bill of Rights	72,4	77,1	76,1	44,2	65,6	72,9
SAHRC	63,6	68,0	56,5	34,9	54,5	65,3
Constitutional Court	62,8	68,8	57,7	39,4	57,3	63,2
CGE	56,6	72,8	37,9	42,4	59,5	66,6

Source: HSRC (2002)

This illustrates that lack of knowledge is linked to social status – reflecting education, class, variety of sources of information, gender and so on – as well as the extent of political and social engagement which would explain the dissonance in the trend between coloured and African respondents against their relative social status.

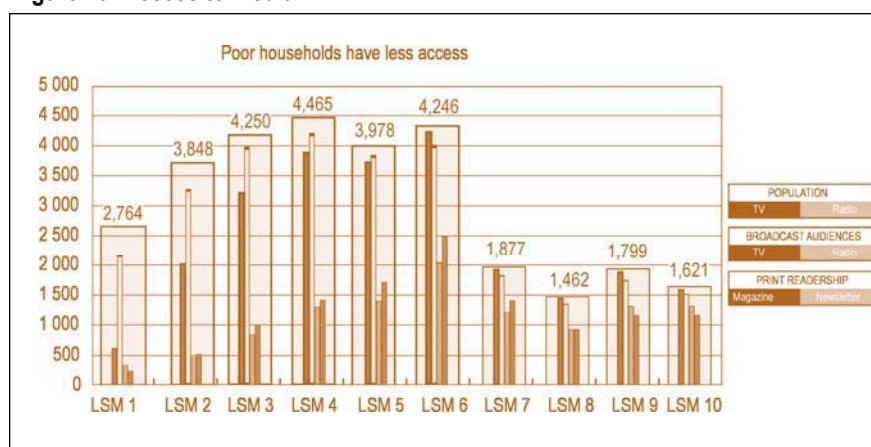
In terms of the public's access to 'information-they-can-use' (which is directly relevant to their life conditions), a variety of sources are quoted in surveys: schools and hospitals, interaction with other citizens through individuals' social networks, media, direct interaction with public representatives or government officials, and so on.

Forty-eight percent of those surveyed (by Government Communications) indicated that they 'recalled' hearing of the State of the Nation Address presented in May 2004.

Of these, 66% got the information from TV, 24% by word of mouth from friends/family/colleagues, 20% from national radio and 11% from newspapers. This emphasises the critical importance and impact of TV as a medium, but it may also have to do with the fact that those who have access to TV are more engaged with public policy issues.

Overall, research points to less access to media on the part of poor households, with higher income earners enjoying access to a variety of platforms.

**Figure 40: Access to media**



Source: SAARF (2005)

From their own point of view, citizens prefer direct interaction, which in actual practice has not been the pre-eminent form of government communication.

Public interaction with legislative institutions is mainly through organised formations, besides the political parties themselves. As a result, it is mainly resourced individuals and advocates of specific sectoral causes – not seldom with little mandating from communities they purport to represent – who are able actively to interact with the policy-making process.

While the introduction of multi-purpose community centres, with one-stop government centres and community development workers has started to improve direct contact between citizens and government service-providers, the numbers are still too few to make any significant impact. Similarly, community media – and even community radio which has mushroomed in the past decade, with over 80 radio stations set up since 1994 – are too few and far between to become effective platforms for community social intercourse.

Improving the capacity of civil society to interact with the new terrain of constructive engagement rather than just resistance is one of the central challenges of the current period. This is borne out by the inability of communities and their organisations effectively to utilise ward committees, the trade unions in relation to workplace fora and proactive interventions in the restructuring of sectors of the economy, and small business organisations and individual entrepreneurs in terms of taking advantage of assistance programmes in place.

A question has also been raised as to whether freedoms can be abused in instances where the State is hesitant to assert its authority, where legal loopholes can be exploited to protect anti-social activities, or where local legitimacy is undermined by irresponsible public representatives and state organs.

In the recent period, isolated violent demonstrations, conduct of sections of the medical profession in relation to efforts to bring down the price of medicines and, generally, vigilantism in the face of crime, difficulties in regulating informal trading in town centres as well as tax evasion and avoidance techniques honed into a fine art are instances which point to challenges of popular compliance with regulation of social life. Although these can be characterised as exceptions that prove the rule of popular compliance, they can have the effect of chipping at the hardiness of the democratic polity as whole.

