

South Africa's "Rainbow People", national pride and happiness

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Abstract

Since the first free elections were held in April 1994, South Africans are popularly known as the "rainbow people". The paper inquires whether South Africans who experienced pride in their nation in the first years of democracy also perceived a greater sense of subjective well-being. It is proposed that national pride in post-apartheid South Africa might be fused with or work through self-esteem to lift levels of happiness. The paper traces the history of the new integrating civil religion of the rainbow people and the acceptance of the rainbow as a political symbol of unity among the diverse people of South Africa immediately after the 1994 elections and two years later. The proposed link between national pride and happiness was explored with data from two independent national surveys, the 1995 South African World Values Survey conducted by Markinor and a June 1996 MarkData syndicated omnibus survey. The study found that the appeal of the rainbow as political symbol was inclusive of all groups in society and that feelings of national pride and support for the rainbow ideal were positively associated with subjective well-being. As indicated by intensity and frequency measures, the majority of South Africans were proud of their country and could name a national achievement that inspired pride. Better-off South Africans tended to be happier and more satisfied with life but less proud, while the poor were less happy but fiercely proud of their country. Results suggest that belief in South Africa's "rainbow nation" ideal may have assisted in boosting happiness during the transition to a stable democracy, thereby preventing alienation among the losers under the new political dispensation. Supporters of the ideal of the rainbow nation were more optimistic than others about the future of their country.

Introduction

South Africans have been "walking tall" since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. A surge of national pride caught firsttime voters already in the run-up to the elections (Johnson and Schlemmer, 1996). When the new government of national unity came into power, it appealed to citizens' sense of common purpose to forge a unified nation. Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a celebration commemorating the new nation introduced the rainbow over South Africa as a symbol of reconciliation and unity among all the diverse people in the nation. This spirit of unity is captured in the new identity adopted by South Africa as the nation of the "rainbow people". In the three years since the rainbow ceremony took place, South Africans have made the symbol of the rainbow their own. The rainbow is ubiquitous and competes with the flag as a national symbol which signifies pride. The "rainbow nation" has popular appeal as a catch phrase, political slogan and source of inspiration for group enterprise. The rainbow symbol has been exploited for commercial purposes as well as political ends. It features in the title of business and community enterprises and adorns products boasting South African origin from clothing to coffee cups to band-aids.

Research question. This study explores the link between national pride and happiness among South Africans, taking into account the role of the national symbol of unity of the rainbow. The key question posed in the study is whether South Africans who experienced pride in their nation in the first years of democracy also perceived a greater sense of subjective well-being.

Theoretical Considerations

The rationale for the study came from considerations of South Africa's happiness deficit. People living in democratic societies, who generally enjoy a higher standard of living, tend to express higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction than people living in poorer countries and in circumstances of oppression. In South Africa under apartheid the majority of disenfranchised blacks expressed unhappiness while whites expressed contentment in happiness surveys. In the aftermath of the first democratic elections, levels of happiness and life satisfaction of formerly disenfranchised South Africans peaked, completely eliminating the happiness deficit of blacks (Møller, 1994; Møller and Hanf, 1995). The elation proved to be short-lived. Nevertheless, post-election euphoria – however fleeting – might be interpreted as an expression of pride as well as happiness, especially among first-time voters. There are few studies which have researched national pride in relation to happiness; a reflection possibly of the fact that under normal conditions national issues tend to have little impact on subjective well-being. Andrews and Withey's (1976) pioneering study found that personal issues were more central for subjective well-being than peripheral issues of the state. Earlier studies of quality of life in South Africa (Møller, 1988, 1995) confirmed that peripheral issues concerning community and national affairs tended to be evaluated much less positively than the more central domains of the family and the self. Central issues relating to family and the self were also more closely associated with overall personal wellbeing. At the same time, it was observed that apartheid impacted on virtually every aspect of life to depress black quality of life including self worth ("yourself as a person") (Møller and Schlemmer, 1989; Møller, 1998).

Veenhoven's World Database on Happiness (1997) reports only a small number of studies which include attitudes to the nation, including satisfaction with life in one's country and its socioeconomic status. Correlations between these factors and happiness were for the most part positive. Of particular significance for this study is that the 14-country study undertaken by Cantril in the 1960s found higher positive correlations between national factors and happiness in societies which had recently undergone political upheavals. This finding suggests that under conditions of major political change, national agendas become fused with the personal. In short, national issues become personal ones.

Arguing along these lines, it is proposed that national pride in post-apartheid South Africa might have a personal dimension akin to self-esteem: the phenomenon of "walking tall" referred to at the outset. The working hypothesis put forward here is that in democratic South Africa national pride is positively correlated with happiness. Either national pride is fused with self-esteem or works through self-esteem to boost levels of happiness. Self-esteem, unlike attitudes to the nation, is regularly cited in the literature as a correlate of subjective well-being (Diener, 1994: 115).

While some might contend that national pride among first-time voters is an extension of personal pride, others might argue that national pride is displaced self-esteem. No matter which viewpoint is adopted, the anecdotal evidence is so strong there can be no doubt that black South Africans perceived the "election miracle" as personal as well as collective triumph after years of oppression. The argument that the national is fused with the personal is particularly cogent when applied to a collectivist society. Fundamental to collectivism is that individuals are bound together in interdependent entities (Triandis, 1995). The individual and the group derive their meaning from coexistence with each other. People are expected to place the common good before their personal interests. In individualistic societies, by contrast, individuals are loosely connected and expected to look after themselves. The African philosophy of ubuntu fits the definition of collectivism; its morality emphasises mutual respect and support as well as group cohesiveness. As will be outlined in greater detail below, the rainbow over South Africa is essentially a strong collectivist symbol which defines the group as the entire nation in contrast to the racial groups defined by apartheid society. One might expect the rainbow symbolism to have a stronger appeal to collectivists than individualists.

The Report

The organisation of the report reflects the progression of the study. The first section traces the symbol of the rainbow back to its religious roots. Dickow (1997) describes the emergence of a new integrating civil religion of the rainbow nation and its following. Dickow, an eyewitness to the Thanksgiving Service which gave birth to the "rainbow nation" in 1994, placed a special item to determine the level of acceptance of the new civil religion. The second and third sections of the paper present results from nationwide surveys conducted in 1995 and 1996 which

surveyed popular views on the rainbow symbol, happiness, national pride and sources of national pride. The fourth section of the paper establishes the link between national pride and happiness in the survey findings. A brief discussion of the main findings and recurrent themes concludes the paper.

Origins of the Civil Religion of the “Rainbow People”

By way of introduction to the study, it may be useful to trace some of the roots of South Africa’s new civil religion of the “rainbow people”. Civil religions exist in many parts of the world. Robert N. Bellah, the “discoverer” of the American civil religion defines civil religion as “a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the . . . people” (Bellah, 1967: 12). Dunbar Moodie, the premier analyst of Afrikaner civil religion, defines it more simply as the “religious dimension of the state” (1975: 296). Civil religions lend a religious aura to attempts to justify the existence of the state and legitimise the nation or, as in South Africa under apartheid, ethnic domination. Civil religions serve to integrate or segregate. In some instances the doctrines of a civil religion are very broad so as to enable people from diverse backgrounds to identify with it. In contrast, Afrikaner civil religion segregated by excluding all other groups. All forms of civil religion draw inspiration from the Old Testament, adapting its accounts to the situation of the country in question. Pivotal events are the exodus and the arrival in the promised land. The people who have survived the exodus typically regard themselves as God’s Chosen People. Like any other religion, civil religion makes use of ritual and symbols to maintain and strengthen the group’s sense of community. Collective memories are used to mobilise people. Civil religion blurs the separation between religion and politics in that religion is used to implement political goals.

In her thesis on the rainbow people, Dickow (1996a) traces the roots of two distinct traditions of civil religions in South Africa: the Afrikaner civil religion which justified apartheid and the domination of one ethnic group over another and the civil religion of the struggle to end apartheid. There are striking parallels between the “National Party at prayer” and the “African National Congress at prayer” in the use of religious archetypes to legitimate existing domination and the establishment of a new political order. The non-ethnic civil religion of the “rainbow people” of the post-apartheid era embraces elements from both of these traditions. A brief description of the two earlier traditions and the birth of the new civil religion of the post-apartheid era follows.

The Afrikaner civil religion. Afrikaner civil religion emerged from the traumatic experience of the Second South African War (1899– 1902) and defeat by the English. The Afrikaner nation had been crushed in its own country. Thousands had lost their lives, either on the battlefield or in English concentration camps. Initially, the Afrikaner civil religion sought to segregate Afrikaners from their English-speaking compatriots to prepare the groundwork for gaining power for the Afrikaners. This goal was achieved with the victory of the National Party in the 1948 elections. The emphasis then shifted from segregation against the “English” to segregation against “non-white” South Africans. Afrikaner civil religion teaches that the Afrikaners are God’s Chosen People on the “black” continent. Every year on the 16th of December Afrikaners gather to renew their covenant with God. A unique characteristic of the Afrikaner civil religion is the almost complete coincidence between institutionalised religion and politics. Sunday sermons are political discourse just as political meetings resemble religious gatherings. An impressive summary of the principles of the Afrikaner civil religion is found in a quotation from an interview with Willem J. Lubbe, founder of the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk, conducted by Dickow on September 11, 1991:

We believe that God created differences between nations. We remain true to what God has created. He created diversity among peoples and nations, which remains to the end of days. This is the path to heaven. We do not believe it is a coincidence that we are Afrikaners. We were created Afrikaners by God. And we remain what we were created. If God had wanted something else, he would have made something else. There are Xhosas, Zulus, etc., all with different political and cultural identities. We don’t agree with all people being one. Our eyes tell us that people are different. We believe in an own church for each people as part of God’s diversity.

In the Afrikaner civil religion, legitimacy of white rule is strengthened by appealing to a higher moral order. The sense of a divine mission and receipt of land from God opens the preamble to the 1983 constitution (Boullé, 1984: 231).

The anti-apartheid civil religion. The African National Congress was founded in 1912 as a movement of civil protest against restrictions on the rights of blacks. Until well into the 1950s, all ANC leaders had attended Christian mission schools, at that time the only schools open to blacks. The language of protest had a clear Christian and biblical tone (Hanf, Weiland and Vierdag, 1981: 248). This did not change after the ANC formed an alliance with the South African Communist Party in 1950.

When apartheid became official policy, leaders of churches who did not support the Afrikaner civil religion protested against exclusion. In 1957 the Catholic bishops wrote a pastoral letter pointing out that apartheid was incompatible with the teachings of Christ. As the Black Consciousness movement awoke in the 1960s, Christians were asked to follow Christ's example and practise civil disobedience. In 1968 the South African Council of Churches which represented all Protestant churches with the exception of the reformed churches, issued a Message to the People that there was a higher authority than the state.

After the banning of all political opposition movements in 1988, prohibited organisations took to using funerals as political rallies, above all the burials of the numerous young political activists who paid for their resistance with their lives. The anniversaries of the Sharpeville and Soweto massacres were recalled annually by the churches and the liberation movements while the National Party was in power and have since been declared national holidays. In South Africa, the churches opposed to apartheid found themselves playing a critical role precisely because there was no formal opposition. By assuming what they saw as a prophetic role, church leaders identified themselves more closely with the political demands of the African National Congress, and with the organisation itself. When the anti-apartheid political organisations were banned in 1988, the churches were the only institutions in the country free to act and with the infrastructure to do so. Supporters of apartheid accused the South African Council of Churches and its member churches of interfering with politics – of being the “ANC at prayer” just as opponents of apartheid viewed the Reformed Churches as the “National Party at prayer”.

The release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 and the unbanning of political parties ushered in a new era in South African history. Church leaders, such as Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, withdrew from politics. However, like many other leading clergymen and politicians, he saw no problem in using religious symbolism to mobilise people and to further the new politics of integration.

The new integrating civil religion of the “rainbow nation”. It was Archbishop Desmond Tutu who rediscovered the Old Testament symbol of peace, the rainbow as a symbol of unity for South African people. He used the rainbow symbol for the first time at the march of church leaders to Parliament in Cape Town in 1988, and again at ANC leader Chris Hani's funeral in 1993. However, the rainbow symbol only gained widespread popularity after the National Thanksgiving Service held on May 8, 1994. The gathering celebrated the peaceful elections and the birth of a new nation. Thousands of people from very different religious and political backgrounds gathered in solemn confession, mutual forgiveness and common reconciliation. In front of the crowd with the television cameras of the world trained on him, Archbishop Tutu announced: “*We are the rainbow people of God. We are free – all of us, black and white together!*” This was the birth of a new syncretistic civil religion to which all South Africans could subscribe.

The new civil religion of the post-apartheid era combines elements of the Afrikaner civil religion with the one developed in the years of the struggle against apartheid. Like any other civil religion it uses a certain set of biblical quotations, rituals and symbols to achieve the political goals of national unity and reconciliation. The symbol of the new civil religion, the rainbow, is borrowed from the Old Testament. Archbishop Tutu used the motif that expresses a covenant between God and humankind and all living creatures. The rainbow is the biblical symbol of reconciliation which affirms God's covenant with Noah after the flood. At the Thanksgiving ceremony referred to earlier, Tutu spoke not of a covenant with a Chosen People, but of a covenant with all South Africans, irrespective of origin, religion or colour. A few days later, Nelson Mandela again referred to the symbol of the rainbow at his inauguration as President of South Africa on 10 May, 1994. Since that day, South Africans have become known as the “rainbow people” at home and abroad.

Method

Data from two nationally representative sample surveys were used to explore the relationships between the political significance of the rainbow symbol, and national pride and happiness. The international World Values Study, in which some 50 countries participated in 1995, includes items on subjective well-being, national pride and identity

which were extracted for this study. The South African survey for the World Values Study was conducted by Markinor. With no prior knowledge of the results of the World Values Study, author Dickow placed an item on the political significance of the rainbow in the syndicated June 1996 MarkData Omnibus survey. Møller placed items on happiness and national pride for the Quality of Life Trends Study in the same omnibus survey. Both the World Values Study and the MarkData datasets feature a large number of social background items including socio-economic factors, political party affiliation and value orientation. The survey designs are described in greater detail in the endnotes[1].

Data analysis proceeded in two stages. The items on the significance of the rainbow symbol, happiness, and national pride were correlated with social background factors and values to compile the profiles of supporters and opponents of the political interpretation of the rainbow symbol, and happy and proud South Africans. The second stage explored the linkage between pride-related factors and happiness.

Results

I. *Popular Support for the New Civil Religion of the “Rainbow People”*

The question designed to probe the political significance of the rainbow symbol was put to South Africans one month after the April 27 1994 elections and repeated two years later in June 1996. The item read:

A lot[2] has been said by religious and political leaders about the rainbow, symbol of peace, and about a new covenant with God as a sign for the future of South Africa. People differ in what they think about this. Which of the following opinions is closest to yours?

1. For me, it has no meaning at all.
2. For me, the covenant is a religious matter only and should not be used in politics.
3. I believe, that God has offered to all South Africans, black and white, a new covenant for a peaceful life in a common nation.

The third option, which refers to a new covenant offered to all South Africans, was taken as acceptance of the new civil religion. Respondents in this group were called the “political rainbow supporters” for easy reference. Respondents who believed the covenant was a religious matter only (option two) were referred to as “political rainbow opponents”, and the remainder as “non-believers” (option one).

In 1994, a majority of 65% of South Africans were political rainbow supporters who accepted the new civil religion of the rainbow nation (see Table I). Two years later, in June 1996, the political rainbow supporters had dropped to slightly less than half (48%), with the greatest loss of support among Indians, formerly the staunchest supporters of the covenant. In 1996, the idea of a new covenant symbolised by the rainbow still found its greatest acceptance among coloured people and blacks – a far less enthusiastic acceptance, however, than two years earlier. Among whites, who in 1994 were already less supportive than other groups, the loss of political rainbow supporters was less dramatic. Results indicated that substantial proportions of South Africans had shifted their interpretation of the rainbow from the political to the religious sphere over the two-year period. The symbol had not suffered secularisation but had reverted to the religious sphere. Choice of the religious option, that is the “opponents” of the political interpretation of the rainbow, increased among all groups; most noticeably among Indians who were the strongest supporters of the political rainbow in 1994. The percentage of “non-believers”, who saw no meaning in the symbol of the rainbow, increased most among blacks.

As discussed earlier, politics and religion are very closely linked in South Africa. The 1996 data show that there is a strong link between religious beliefs, religiosity and the acceptance of the new civil religion of the rainbow. On average, political rainbow supporters are those who believe in life after death, who feel they cannot live happily without believing in God, and who state that they try to live according to the teachings of their religion. Using a scale based on these items as well as a religious practice item, Dickow divided the total sample into four categories of religiosity: the very religious (comprising 40% of the total sample), the religious (47%), the inactive religious (5%), and the not religious (8%). Religiosity and support for the rainbow nation were significantly positively correlated. Over half (51%) of the “very religious” and the “religious” were rainbow supporters compared to only 24% of the “not religious”. At the same time, the “very religious” were more likely than others to oppose the political use of the rainbow concept (41% versus 34% average), in that they believed the covenant was a religious

matter only. Noteworthy is that support for the political meaning of the rainbow tended to be higher in regions where Christianity had been introduced first. A large pocket of non-believers was found among the Zulus (26% versus 18% average), who were more likely than others to be religious traditionalists. In contrast, only very small percentages of “non-believers” were affiliated to the Dutch Reformed Church (5%) and Islam (6%), both religious groups who regard the Old Testament as their holy book.

Support for the idea of the rainbow nation is associated with political affiliation. In 1996, as was the case two years earlier, African National Congress and National Party supporters were most likely to be political rainbow supporters. However, by 1996 the National Party was split between supporters and opponents of the rainbow concept. Opponents were most likely to be found in the ranks of the Freedom Front and to a lesser extent among National Party and Democratic Party supporters. “Non-believers” were most prominent among the Inkatha Freedom Party and Democratic Party supporters (see Table I).

TABLE I

Acceptance of the new civil religion of the rainbow people by race group and political party affiliation, 1994 and 1996

	Supporters		Opponents		“Non-believers”	
	1996 (%)	1994 ² (%)	1996 (%)	1994 (%)	1996 (%)	1994 (%)
<i>Average</i>	49	65	34	24	18	11
Black	48	67	31	20	21	12
Coloured	60	68	30	25	10	6
Indian	40	75	44	16	16	9
White	44	50	49	41	7	9
ANC ³	51	71	30	17	19	12
NP	49	57	41	36	10	7
FF	46	40	51	57	4	3
IFP	43	48	28	42	30	10
DP	38	36	41	27	21	37

MarkData surveys June 1994, June 1996

Rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.

¹ See text for exact wording of item

² 1994 distributions taken from Dickow (1996a: 263)

³ ANC African National Congress (n1201 in 1996), NP National Party (n367), FF Freedom Front (n40), IFP Inkatha Freedom Party (n222), DP Democratic Party (n30).

Support for the new covenant might be an indication that people have made their peace with the new South Africa. The reserve exhibited by the small group of Democratic Party members in 1996 may be motivated by other than religious considerations. In 1996, 41% of DP supporters endorsed the religious option compared to only 27% in 1994. Commenting on the 1994 findings, Dickow (1996a: 263) interpreted the lack of support for the rainbow

nation (37% “nonbelievers”) among DP voters as resistance by secularised democrats to the legitimisation of the state by a new civil religion. This interpretation may still hold in spite of the shift of opposition to the religious sphere. The opposition of mainly black Inkatha Freedom Party members may stem from their traditional beliefs as well as resentment of political domination by the ruling African National Congress. Among whites, opponents may resent the rainbow and the new covenant, and therefore opt for the religious use of the symbol only. Members of the Dutch Reformed Church and Conservative Party are overrepresented in this group.

The new spirit of reconciliation is perhaps best captured in the responses in the same survey to an item which probed feelings of socio-political integration versus alienation. A significantly higher percentage of supporters of the rainbow covenant (74%) than all others (67%) in the survey stated that they felt “closer to and more united with fellow South Africans” from diverse backgrounds since the 1994 elections rather than “dominated and pushed aside”[3]. It was also observed that political rainbow supporters leaned towards amore positive outlook on the future. For example, political rainbow supporters indicated greater confidence in their political leaders and their party. They were of the opinion that political leaders could improve the lives of ordinary people. Political rainbow supporters gave their vote to a political party in the belief that it would “work to improve the living conditions of the people”.

Particularly important for this study is that the political rainbow supporters indicated that they were happier and more often proud than other South Africans. The results on happiness and national pride are discussed in the next sections of the paper.

II. Happiness and National Pride

Happiness in the 1995 South African World Values Study. The 1995 World Values Study included two happiness indicators: life-as-a-whole measured on a ten-point scale ranging from “dissatisfied” to “satisfied” and a global happiness indicator that read: “Taking all things together, would you say you are “very happy”, “quite happy”, “not very happy”, or “not happy at all”.

The 1995 World Values Study found that 35% were “very happy” and a further 37% were “quite happy” and that 48% were satisfied.

TABLE II

Percentages happy, satisfied and proud to be South African by racial and income groups: World Values Study – 1995 Markinor survey

	Total	Race				Household income			
		B	C	I	W	L	M	H	R/dk
<i>Global happiness</i>									
Very happy	35	28	58	50	54	27	37	53	41
Quite happy	37	37	29	37	41	35	41	41	32
Not very/not at all happy	28	35	13	13	5	38	22	6	27
<i>Life satisfaction</i>									
Satisfied	48	37	64	72	84	32	54	83	50
Dissatisfied	52	63	36	28	16	68	46	17	50
<i>Proud to be South African</i>									
Very proud	83	86	83	82	64	87	85	71	78
Quite proud	14	10	16	15	31	10	13	24	16
Not very/not at all proud	3	4	1	3	5	3	2	5	6
N (unweighted)	2935	1618	392	196	729	911	926	619	479

B – Black, C – Coloured, I – Indian, W – White, L – Low, M – Medium, H – High, R/dk – Refusal, don’t know.

Weighted data. Columns add to 100%

Income categories are: Low R0–R999, Medium R1000–R3999, High R4000 and higher.

Table II shows that blacks were least happy and satisfied, whites most happy and satisfied, with the levels of happiness among coloured people and Indians falling in between. Lower income earners were less happy and satisfied, while higher income groups were happier and more satisfied. This pattern of subjective wellbeing apportioned according to position of privilege, a legacy of apartheid society, corresponds with that found in earlier studies of happiness in South Africa.

Further results showed that contentment with life was consistently higher among the advantaged sectors of society. Respondents indicating higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction were better educated and came from upper class households and ones with access to a larger number of services and modern conveniences. Happiness and life satisfaction were more concentrated in urban than rural areas and among white, Indian and coloured South Africans, and supporters of the National Party, Democratic Party, Freedom Front, and the Conservative Party, all parties which attract white voters. Happier respondents were more likely to identify themselves as citizens of the world rather than local citizens.

National pride in the 1995 South African World Values Study. The 1995 World Values Study inquired: “How proud are you to be South African?” Responses were recorded on a four point scale: “very proud”, “quite proud”, “not very proud”, or “not at all proud.”

The vast majority of South Africans, 83%, indicated they were “very proud” to be South African in 1995 (see Table II). Expressions of national pride were more pronounced among the survey categories: black, lower class, and ANC supporter. Persons expressing a higher degree of pride were more likely to see themselves as South African rather than a member of an ethnic group defined in terms of race, tribe, or language. Similarly, proud South Africans were more likely than others to choose a geographical identity which indicated they were citizens of South Africa or Africa rather than citizens of their local community, province or of global society.

Other findings from the 1995 World Values Study suggest that national pride and optimism for the future are closely associated. A survey item inquired whether respondents thought humanity had a “bright” or a “bleak” future. Between 19% and 20% expressing happiness and satisfaction saw the future as bleak compared to only 14% among the “very proud”. In contrast, 75% of the “very proud” but only 69% and 70% of the “very happy” and satisfied, respectively, anticipated a bright future.

To sum up, results of the 1995 World Values Study indicate that better off South Africans were happier and satisfied than others but less proud to be South African. The poor were less inclined to be happy and satisfied than the better-off but were fiercely proud of their country.

TABLE III

Percentages happy, satisfied and proud to be South African by racial and income groups: Quality of Life Trends Study – 1996 MarkData survey

	Total	Race				Household income		
		B	C	I	W	L	M	H
<i>Global happiness</i>								
Very happy, happy	57	59	55	70	49	60	54	59
Neither/nor	21	21	26	20	18	18	25	18
Unhappy, very unhappy	22	20	19	10	33	22	21	23
<i>Proud to be South African</i>								
Very often/fairly often	65	66	59	68	63	65	63	67
Sometimes/sometimes not	16	14	26	24	20	16	16	18
Seldom/never	19	20	15	8	17	19	21	15
N (weighted)	2259	1593	211	66	389	654	944	636

B – Black, C – Coloured, I – Indian, W – White, L – Low, M – Medium, H – High.

Weighted data. Columns add to 100%

Income categories are: Low R0–R579, Medium R580–R1249, High R1250+, refusals and don't knows in middle category.

Happiness in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study. The measure of happiness applied in the second survey was the standard five-point scale item used in the Quality of Life Trends Study since 1983 which reads: Taking all things together in your life, how would you say things are these days: Would you say you are “very happy”, “happy”, “neither/nor”, “unhappy”, or “very unhappy?”

In the total sample, 57% indicated that they were happy (“very happy” or “happy”) (see Table III). The 1996 level of happiness was higher than in 1995 but lower than in the month after the 1994 elections when 84% of South Africans stated they were happy. The 1996 survey results suggest that happiness may on the rise again among blacks.

The pattern of happiness results obtained from the 1996 survey among racial and income groups was different from earlier ones. In 1996, for the first time ever, the black level of happiness surpassed that of whites although falling short of the highest level of happiness which was recorded among Indians. Happiness did not appear to be consistently related to income and standard of living variables as was the case in all earlier surveys conducted for the Quality of Life Trends study – including the post-election survey.

TABLE IV
Quality of Life Trends Study: Percentages “very happy” and “happy”

	1983	1988	1994	1995	1996
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Low income earners	55	56	86	40	60
High income earners	86	85	89	69	59
Happiness gap between high and low earners	11	9	3	29	-1

MarkData surveys

Table IV shows that low income earners scored consistently lower on happiness than high income earners in all the earlier surveys. In the 1996 MarkData survey low income earners scored on par with high income earners. Supporters of the ruling African National Congress party were most likely to indicate happiness with 70% happy. Only one in two supporters of the National Party (52%) and one in five supporters of the Freedom Front (21%) stated they were happy. Among blacks, pockets of unhappiness were found among Inkatha Freedom Party supporters (29% happy, 53% “unhappy” and “very unhappy”). Among whites, Afrikaans speakers were less likely than English speakers to be happy with 48% versus 66%. Happier South Africans were more likely to agree with the statement that they felt closer and more united with fellow South Africans (77% versus 70% average), while unhappy South Africans were more likely to agree that they felt dominated by and alienated from others since the new government had come into power in 1994 (46% versus 30% average).

National pride in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study. The survey question posed in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study focused on the frequency with which South Africans experienced pride in their nation while the 1995 World Values Study had inquired into the intensity of feelings of national pride. The question put to survey respondents in 1996 read: “How often do you feel proud to be South African?” Responses were coded on a five-point scale with the middle category indicating ambiguity: “Very often”, “often”, “sometimes I feel proud, sometimes not”, “seldom”, “never”. Uncertain and don’t know responses were recorded but later regrouped with the ambiguous middle category.

The frequency measure of national pride classified 65% of South Africans as proud (“very often/often”) (see Table III), a much lower proportion than the 83% “very proud” identified by the intensity measure used in the World Values Study shown in Table II above. It is possible that election euphoria was still bolstering levels of national pride at the time when the South African World Values Study was in the field in 1995. Alternatively, the frequency measure of national pride is more discriminating than the intensity measure. Social desirability factors might play a role. Intensity of feelings might be considered a more personal challenge whereas the frequency of experience of such feelings might be attributed to factors beyond personal control. Regardless which interpretation is accepted,

the split between 65% proud and 35% non-proud South Africans produced by the 1996 frequency measure yielded suitable material for exploring further the research questions posed at the outset.

National pride measured in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study tended to cut across the racial, education and income divides while favouring urban dwellers and those with a higher standard of living, a pattern very similar to that found in the South African World Values Study. Above-average levels of pride were found in black townships and shack areas. Supporters of the ruling African National Congress, with 74%, were most likely to feel proud often. Most likely to indicate they were “seldom” or “never” proud were supporters of the Conservative Party (42% versus 19% average), the Freedom Front (42%) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (39%). Lack of pride among blacks was concentrated among a group characterised by the overlapping survey categories of Zulu speaker (27%), hostel dweller (32%), and Inkatha Freedom Party supporter (39%). The Inkatha Freedom Party draws its main support from the rural Zulu of KwaZulu-Natal Province including the residents of hostels for rural migrant workers in metropolitan areas. The fact that the Inkatha Freedom Party had lost the local government elections in the urban areas of KwaZulu-Natal shortly before the survey and was experiencing internal conflict at the time of the survey may partially account for the deficit in pride among its followers. Seventy percent of persons who felt united with and close to other South Africans compared to only 54% of persons who felt dominated indicated that they were often proud. There are signs that national pride is promoted through the media. Among the persons with access to television, regular viewers were more likely than others to express national pride.

III. South Africa’s Achievements and National Pride

Assessments of national achievements in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study. The survey item in the 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study that inquired how often respondents felt proud to be South African was followed by a question that probed the source of national pride: “Which of the following achievements have made you feel particularly proud to be South African?” Seven options were presented to respondents in the following order: Sporting achievements, the national flag/anthem, reconciliation and unity – the “rainbow nation”, the Truth (and Reconciliation) Commission, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and world acceptance.

Only about 2% indicated a source of national pride beyond these options so it can safely be assumed that respondents were familiar with all of the options. Directly or indirectly all achievements could be construed as contributions to nation building. The pariah status attached to South African citizenship was reversed with the advent of democracy. Excluded from international sports during the apartheid era, South African teams returned to the international playing fields and scored a number of victories in their first year back in the world arena. The symbols of the new nation, the flag and national anthems, featured prominently at these sporting events. On returning home, the winners of the 1995 rugby World Cup received a heroes’ welcome from President Mandela. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) had been introduced when the new government came into power to deliver services to the previously disadvantaged. The Constitution, which includes a Bill of Rights, was adopted on 8 May 1996, a month before the survey went into the field, and was amended later in the year. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in the latter part of 1995 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Tutu to deal with investigations into gross human rights violations during the apartheid era. The TRC was holding hearings in many parts of the country at the time of the survey, and the media gave daily reports on the proceedings.

The main reasons for feeling proud to be South Africa are shown in Figure 1. Achievements in sports attracted just under one quarter of responses, and the notion of reconciliation, unity and the “rainbow nation” a further 17%. World acceptance, the new government’s Reconstruction and Development Programme, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission received slightly more than ten percent of votes each. Smaller percentages of respondents voted for the national symbols of the anthem and the flag, and the new Constitution. Only 6% of South Africans could not identify with an achievement which inspired pride.

Generally, the results suggest that South Africans experienced national pride in a number of different ways. As respondents were only allowed to choose one recent achievement that boosted their national pride, choices tended to follow the major divides in South African society. Broad brush sketches of the groupings are as follows: Achievements in sports were nominated by persons belonging to survey categories indicating the social advantages of higher income, education, better material standard of living and urban residence. Whites, males, regular television viewers and persons who felt dominated by other groups since the 1994 elections were overrepresented in this response group.

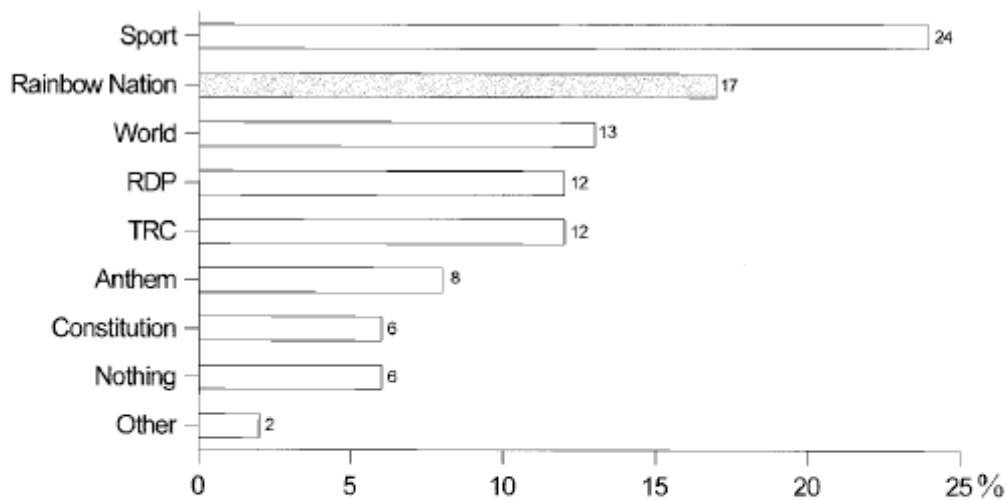


Figure 1. Reasons for being proud to be South African.

Notes: The question read: "Which of the following achievements has made you particularly proud to be South African?" Achievement in sports, the national flag/anthem, reconciliation and unity, the "rainbow nation", the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, world acceptance.

Quality of Life Trends Study, June 1996 MarkData survey. Adjusted weighted n = 2233.

Less affluent groups and blacks were most likely to select the Reconstruction and Development Programme and the symbols of the flag and the anthem as sources of pride. The choice between the two options appeared to be along party political and rural-urban distinctions. The RDP-choice cut across the urban-rural divide while the flag and anthem was mainly a rural choice. The RDP option was particularly attractive to African National Congress voters and to persons with political convictions leaning to the left, including the South African Communist Party and the Pan Africanist Congress, and by those feeling united with fellow South Africans. The flag and the anthem as symbols of national pride appeared to have more appeal to rural persons, particularly women, followers of the Pentecostal and Apostolic faith, and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters. Although only a small proportion of persons who associated the flag and anthem with national pride had access to television, those who did were more likely to be regular viewers.

World acceptance was an important factor boosting national pride among the more affluent, in particular among Indians and urban dwellers.

The Constitution and Bill of Rights option appealed to a minority of predominantly younger people including regular newspaper readers and television viewers.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission option appealed mainly to blacks, the less affluent, and rural dwellers. The thumbnail sketch of the group choosing the second most popular option is the least clear-cut of all which is in itself a significant finding. Reconciliation, unity and the "rainbow nation" was the response category which held the widest appeal and attracted the broadest assortment of survey categories: Indian, coloured and black respondents; both lower and medium income groups; and African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters. Persons choosing the rainbow nation option were more likely to feel closer to fellow South Africans than others. Whites, whose votes went mainly to the sports option, were slightly underrepresented among those opting for the "rainbow nation" as a source of pride.

Table V gives the three most frequently mentioned sources of national pride for racial and political groupings and the percentages voting for each option. As the survey categories vary enormously in size, the number of respondents and the number of seats occupied by political parties in the national parliament are indicated. The "rainbow nation" option is highlighted.

Reconciliation and unity symbolised by the "rainbow nation" concept was a source of pride for all racial groups. The "rainbow nation" option attracted the largest number of black votes, the second largest number of coloured and

TABLE V
Sources of national pride by race and political party affiliation

	Rank 1	(%)	Rank 2	(%)	Rank 3	(%)
Black	<i>Rainbow</i>	19	TRC	16	Sport/RDP	15
Coloured	Sport	26	<i>Rainbow</i>	25	World accept	19
Indian	World accept	31	<i>Rainbow</i>	26	Sport	20
White	Sport	60	World accept	20	<i>Rainbow</i>	6
ANC	<i>Rainbow</i>	20	RDP	16	Sport	16
NP	Sport	47	World accept	22	RDP	11
IFP	<i>Rainbow</i>	22	TRC	17	World accept	14
FF	Sport	59	TRC	15	World accept	15
PAC	TRC	26	<i>Rainbow</i>	21	RDP	18
DP	Sport	41	World accept	25	Constitution	17
CP	Sport	57	Nothing	21	World accept	15

Quality of Life Trends Study, June 1996 MarkData survey

Black (n1593), coloured (n211), Indian (n66), white (n389)

ANC African National Congress (n1201, 252 seats in national parliament), NP National Party (n367, 82 seats), IFP Inkatha Freedom Party (n222, 43 seats), FF Freedom Front (n40, 9seats), PAC Pan Africanist Congress (n39, 5 seats), DP Democratic Party (n30, 7 seats), CP Conservative Party (n26, 0 seats).

Options: Sport (achievement in sports), Rainbow (Reconciliation and unity, the “rainbow nation”) World acceptance, RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme, TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Indian votes and the third largest number of white votes. The idea of the “rainbow nation” also inspired national pride among the supporters of all the major political parties, including the parties of the ANC, NP and IFP which formed the first government of national unity after the elections.

Supporters of the liberal Democratic Party, who were more likely to oppose the rainbow covenant in Dickow’s survey, were also less likely to vote for the rainbow nation as a source of pride. The scepticism of DP supporters with regard to nation building by means of slogans such as the “rainbow nation” appears to be confirmed. DP supporters were more likely than any others to state that they took pride in the foundation of South Africa’s democracy: the new Constitution which encompasses all the basic values of liberals. Freedom Front supporters, on the political right, did not include the rainbow nation among their top three sources of national pride but did opt for the more controversial Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Freedom Front was among the political parties that encouraged its followers to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Only supporters of the Conservative Party, which did not contest the 1994 first open general elections, excluded all factors of national unity other than sports from their top three votes. Although absolute numbers are small, it is telling that one in five Conservative Party supporters, the highest proportion of any constituency, indicated that “nothing” made them feel proud to be South African.

IV. National Pride and Happiness

In this last section we return to the question posed at the outset: Are proud South Africans happier than others? This section draws on results from the June 1996 MarkData survey, which included the items on the rainbow nation, happiness, national pride and the perceptions underpinning feelings of national pride.

The group which indicated acceptance of the “rainbow people” in response to the probe on the deeper meaning of the symbol and the group for whom the rainbow inspired national pride overlapped. However, owing to the choice among seven options of sources of national pride, the overlap accounted for only some 10% of the total sample. It is therefore instructive to inspect the levels of pride and happiness among the various survey categories which allude to national unity and reconciliation.

Table VI shows the percentages happy and proud among three response groups which indicate support for national unity. Further select response groups with extreme scores on national pride and happiness are shown for comparison purposes. Political rainbow supporters and persons who felt closer to and united to fellow Africans[4] scored above average on both national pride and happiness. The smaller number of South Africans who opted for the “rainbow nation” as a source of pride scored close to average on national pride and happiness. Exceptionally high scorers on national pride and happiness were persons who took great pride in the RDP and the national symbols of the flag and anthem. Exceptionally low scorers on national pride and happiness were not prepared to acknowledge any national achievements.

TABLE VI
Percentages indicating pride and happiness in select response groups

	Proud ¹ (%)	Happy ² (%)	Proportion of total sample (%)
<i>Sample average</i>	65	57	
<i>Emphasis on national unity:</i>			
Political rainbow supporters: covenant for all South Africans ³	69 ^c	61 ^b	49
Feel “closer to and united with fellow South Africans”	70 ^c	63 ^c	70
Reconciliation and unity, “rainbow nation” contributes to feelings of national pride	67 ^{ns}	59 ^{ns}	17
<i>Other emphases:</i>			
Nothing contributes to feelings of national pride	24 ^c	31 ^c	6
RDP contributes to feelings of national pride	78 ^c	70 ^c	12
Anthem and flag contribute to feelings of national pride	78 ^c	71 ^c	8

June 1996 MarkData survey

¹ Proud: “very often” and “often” proud

² Happy: “very happy” and “happy”

³ See Table I and text for wording of item

If national pride promotes happiness or, alternatively, happiness radiates from national pride, the association between the two variables must be statistically significant. Tables VII and VIII show the percentages of South Africans who were happy in 1995 and 1996 and the tightness of association between the variables of national pride and happiness for racial and income groups.

In the 1995 South African World Values Study, the association between national pride and happiness is positive but statistically insignificant in most instances (Table VII). The exception is the significantly positive association between national pride and happiness among whites and high income earners, precisely the groups with *below-average* national pride (see Tables II and III above).

TABLE VII

National pride and perceived well-being by race and income: World Values Study – 1995 Markinor survey

	Total	Race				Household income ¹	
		B	C	I	W	L	M
Percentages of proud South Africans who also indicate happiness and life satisfaction							
<i>Percentages happy² among the:</i>							
Very proud ³	43%	32%	60%	45%	63%	32%	59%
Sample average	41%	31%	57%	46%	56%	30%	55%
Spearman's Rho	0.06	0.08	0.14	-0.04	0.19	0.08	0.11
Significance	c	c	b	ns	c	a	b
<i>Percentages satisfied⁴ among the:</i>							
Very proud ³	55%	40%	67%	71%	84%	35%	84%
Sample average	56%	41%	64%	72%	83%	35%	83%
Spearman's Rho	-0.06	-0.01	0.11	-0.07	0.04	0.01	0.01
Significance	c	ns	a	ns	ns	ns	ns

T – Total, B – Black, C – Coloured, I – Indian, W – White, L – Low, H – High.

¹ See Table II for income categories.

² “Very happy” versus “quite”, “not very” and “not at all happy”.

³ “Very proud” versus “quite”, “not very” and “not at all proud”.

⁴ Scores beyond the midpoint of the 10-point scale towards the satisfied pole. Correlations calculated on two category variables of happiness, life satisfaction and pride.

a, b, c, ns Statistically significant difference at the 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001 according to Spearman's Rho; not significant. Unweighted Markinor 1995 survey data were used for this analysis. Average percentages happy and satisfied differ slightly from those shown in Table II in some cases.

The 1996 Quality of Life Trends Study used a measure of national pride which discriminated better for survey purposes. Here the association between national pride and happiness is significantly positive throughout with the single exception of the small subsample of Indians who scored highest on happiness and national pride (See Table VIII).

The analysis this far appears to indicate that national pride and happiness are positively linked, provided that the values of the variables are not saturated as is the case with the Indian category in the 1996 MarkData survey. In the 1995 South African World Values survey national pride was saturated among all groupings except whites and high income earners.

A further detailed analysis of the national unity responses in the survey produced unexpected results. We next correlated national pride and happiness among 12 survey categories: supporters of the rainbow civil religion, religious opponents and “non-believers”, supporters of the seven national achievements which inspire pride in South Africa, and feelings of unity with fellow citizens. Again, support for the two “rainbow” options and feelings of closeness and unity with fellow South Africans emerged as powerful boosters of both pride and happiness – but only among white South Africans.

TABLE VIII

National pride and perceived well-being by race and income
Quality of Life Trends Study – 1996 MarkData survey

	Total	Race				Household income ¹	
		B	C	I	W	L	M
Percentages of proud South Africans who also indicate happiness and life satisfaction							
<i>Percentages happy² among the:</i>							
Proud ³	74%	79%	67%	70%	57%	79%	73%
Sample average	57%	59%	55%	70%	49%	60%	60%
Spearman's Rho	0.45	0.55	0.28	0.01	0.16	0.52	0.38
Significance	c	c	c	ns	c	c	c

T – Total, B – Black, C – Coloured, I – Indian, W – White, L – Low, H – High.

¹ See Table III for income categories.

² “Very happy” and “happy” versus other.

³ “Very/often” proud versus other.

Correlations calculated on two category variables of happiness, life satisfaction and pride.

a, b, c, ns Statistically significant difference at the 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001 level according to Spearman's Rho; not significant.

Among whites, support for the rainbow civil religion increased pride by 16% above the subsample average. Feeling close to and united with fellow South Africans increased both pride and happiness by 13% and 16% above the subsample average, respectively.

Endorsement of the “rainbow nation” as a national achievement, a minority response, pushed up pride by 17% and happiness by a full 44%. The most striking contrast in levels of happiness among whites was between pride in sports and pride in reconciliation, unity and the “rainbow nation”. Only 41% of whites who viewed sports as a major national achievement were happy compared to 93% of those who took pride in the “rainbow nation”.

The “rainbow” factor, as civil religion and national achievement, was the single most effective booster of happiness among coloured people. Among a small group of blacks, the national anthem and flag, and the RDP competed in boosting happiness to the highest levels in the survey. The sample size of Indians was too small for this analysis.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and national pride. It comes as no surprise that national symbols such as the flag and anthem inspire pride; that is their main function. However, the close association between the RDP and subjective well-being raises a number of questions in view of the fact that mainly ANC supporters were among the group choosing the RDP option. Are RDP supporters proud to be among the few beneficiaries of a programme which is known to have been slow to deliver, are they merely hopefuls, or does the RDP inspire patriotism as all political slogans do among loyal party supporters?

The RDP is the new government's ambitious programme to deliver basic services to the poor. Thus, citizens who are beneficiaries of programmes to bring clean water and electricity to rural areas could be proud of a caring government which is seen to deliver on the election promises of “a better life for all”. Results of the 1996 survey generally suggest that access to basic services has a positive influence on pride and happiness. Among fifteen living standard items including modern appliances and basic services, electricity and water in the home were most closely associated with feelings of pride. Access to water was the only living standard item which was positively associated with happiness.

In the total sample, the group which attributed its feelings of national pride to South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme achieved the highest levels of pride and happiness with 78% happy and 70% proud (see Table VI above). The group opting for the RDP included approximately equal proportions of blacks with and without running water in the home. In the sample as a whole only a minority of 43% of blacks had access to piped water in the home. Noteworthy is that 61% of blacks with access to piped water compared to only 46% of those without access expressed both happiness and national pride. This finding suggests that servicing the basic needs of the rural poor may prove to be an important factor in boosting happiness. This idea would be compatible with research conducted cross-nationally which found that basic needs and income were better determinants of happiness in poorer than wealthier countries (Diener and Diener, 1995).

Discussion and conclusions

The study reported here is an exploratory one based on sample survey data which is by design superficial. First results on the significance of the "rainbow nation" concept on personal quality of life from this study provide pointers which might usefully be pursued in further in-depth research. Our examination of two independent datasets lends support to the proposition which guided the study. Results indicate that feelings of national pride are positively linked to happiness. As we cannot be certain of the direction of causality, the notion of national pride boosting happiness used in this report connotes only that political pride is a correlate of happiness. If one accepts that national pride and self-esteem are fused – the measure used in the World Values Study more closely captures national pride as an extension of the self – one might tentatively conclude that national pride is also a constituent part of subjective well-being.

An earlier survey conducted in 1995 for the Quality of Life Trends Study already anticipated that happiness might be influenced by less tangible factors than socio-economic advantage. The present study suggests that in newly democratic South Africa, identification with the unifying civil religion of the "rainbow people" enhances subjective well-being. In 1996, the civil religion of the "rainbow people" had a following among one in two South Africans, in particular among the actively religious. Noteworthy is that even among the least religious, one quarter were supporters and believed in the political significance of the rainbow. The survey underscores the significance of symbols such as the rainbow and the national flag and anthem for an enhanced sense of well-being. Persons subscribing to the civil religion of the "rainbow people" and expressing pride in the rainbow nation found a group identity which encompasses the whole of South Africa. The fact that the rainbow as a political symbol appealed to almost one in two persons across the major racial and political divides in South African society suggests that the civil religion is inclusive. Although individualists, in particular, might shy away from patriotic sloganeering, our study suggests that not only collectivists are susceptible to the influence of symbols of national unity and harmony. Alienated South Africans, who feel excluded from the nation-building process and cannot come to terms with the new political order, appear to be most at risk of experiencing depressed wellbeing during the transition. An important finding is that a minority of alienated South Africans who could not identify with national achievements were unhappy.

Consider that in a newly democratic society the negation of the rainbow as national symbol of unity and social harmony is likely to be judged as politically incorrect. The study showed that when other equally legitimate options were available, not all South Africans were ready to subscribe to a concept that appeared more myth than reality to them. There were indications in the data that the civil religion of the rainbow and the "rainbow nation" as political slogan held less appeal to individualists, such as Democratic Party supporters, as was proposed at the outset.

Among the seven motifs underlying national pride put to the respondents in the survey, world acceptance contains the fewest religious and political connotations, which may explain its greater appeal to secularised liberals, such as Democratic Party supporters, and higher income groups who engage in commerce and industry.

Opposition to the myth of the rainbow may also be a reflection of caution that racial harmony will not occur overnight in South Africa. A quick fix solution such as the rainbow imposed by the politicians may inadvertently compromise the achievement of a nonracial society and threaten the potential goodwill that the new order has brought. Schlemmer in an essay on the prospects for racial reconciliation in South Africa warned: ". . . the compelling depiction of the spirit of our transition is that of a rainbow over the South African battlefield, symbolising unity in a multi-coloured diversity and a sacred covenant binding us to a new harmony. Rainbows, however, are up in the sky" (1997: 21).[5]

Contrary to popular opinion, world acceptance and sports – the latter in particular – do not appear to promote a sense of national pride and personal well-being to the extent that one would expect. Results from our study show that belief in the civil religion of the rainbow and feelings of fellowship constituted the more powerful means of enhancing personal quality of life. For political and religious conservatives among whites, the transition from the Afrikaner to the rainbow civil religion was indicative of acceptance of the new political order. It is particularly among whites, whose happiness has been on the decline in the nineties, that belief in the new civil religion of the rainbow and a sense of unity with fellow South Africans seemed to protect from pessimism and alienation. It might be expected that the colourful and popular new South African flag and the new anthem would compete with the rainbow symbol of unity in promoting national pride and happiness among small segments of the population. It was not anticipated that “bread and butter” issues such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) would compete with an emotional one, such as the rainbow symbol of unity, in inspiring pride, happiness and optimism for the future. The finding that basic needs, such as clean water, signifies happiness among voters is of significance for the next round of national elections to be held in 1999. The appreciative attitude of beneficiaries of the reconstruction programme cannot be taken for granted. Rising expectations tend to dull positive reactions to government interventions to improve the lives of ordinary citizens. However, our finding that support for the RDP and happiness are linked may not be an isolated one. An earlier national Mark- Data attitude survey commissioned by Information Update also found that perceptions of better service delivery were correlated with short-term happiness gains (Møller and Jackson, 1997).

A recurrent theme in the study is that optimism is associated with national pride and belief in the ideal society of the rainbow. Findings from the present study which relate belief in the rainbow and national pride with optimism are consistent with other South African research. There are a number of recent socio-political surveys which indicate that optimism and confidence in the future are in limited supply among increasing numbers of alienated white South Africans but have gained strength mainly among black South Africans. Post-election results from Markinor’s Socio-political Trends Study indicated that higher proportions of blacks than all other racial groups felt that their families were better off economically after 1994 and expected that their families would fare better in future (Harris, 1997). A study conducted for the Quality of Life Trends Study in 1995 found that white South Africans rated their current level of satisfaction lower than five years ago and anticipated life would get worse in future. Conversely, black South Africans rated current satisfaction low as in the past but anticipated that life would get better in future (Møller, 1995).

The Markinor Socio-political Trends Study referred to above found that racial harmony indicated by confidence in a happy future for all races was at an all-time high in the months after the 1994 elections among all population groups. Thereafter, levels of confidence declined most among whites and least among blacks with the other groups falling in between (Harris, 1997). A recent political survey reported that the majority of every racial group believed South Africans would become one nation over time, with almost one in five blacks insisting that they were already one nation now. However, 47% of whites averred that this would in fact never happen (Johnson, 1997).

Another recurrent theme which is related to that of optimism concerns the identity of proud South Africans. National pride and belief in the rainbow people appear to go hand in hand with strong feelings of South Africanness. Clearly the rainbow encourages national identity before ethnic identity. In some instances, South African identity tied with African identity suggesting that national pride might be extended to embrace the entire continent of Africa. This broader identity is in tune with the idea of an African renaissance which would inspire pride throughout Africa. South Africa is in the forefront of the movement which negates “Afropessimism” and seeks to encourage African countries to prove Africa’s economic worth to the outside world.

Conclusion. This study of national pride and happiness suggests that belief in national unity may be a vital ingredient of personal wellbeing which also inspires confidence in the future. Perhaps the most important finding to emerge from the study is that two years after the first democratic elections, most South Africans could point to a national achievement in which they take pride. If national pride is able to further the cause of national unity and at the same time enhance well-being during the difficult years of the transition to a stable democracy, South Africa and its people will be well served. The study showed that the unifying civil religion of the “rainbow people” is more than a superb feat of social engineering; it has captured the public imagination. It has promoted national unity and harmony, inspires happiness as well as pride, and commands a wide following among diverse groups in South African society. Moreover, supporters of the rainbow symbol of peace are also optimistic about the future. Even

sceptics will have to concede that the new civil religion has played a special role in guiding a new nation to stability and prosperity.

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Notes

[1] The South African World Values Study was conducted during October 1995 by Markinor. A total of 2935 adult South Africans were interviewed face to face in the language of their choice. The survey used a probability sample, stratified by province, population group and community size. Random sampling points and selection procedures were applied at each stage of sampling. Provision was made for replacement if the selected person was not available. Quality controls were applied. The weighted sample is representative of adult South Africans 16 years and older. The sample was weighted according to population group, province, region, age, gender, income and language and projected onto the universe. The MarkData Omnibus survey conducted in June 1996 was fielded between 3 June to 28 June. The Omnibus is a quarterly survey which allows researchers to participate in a national survey of n2200 at low cost. The survey was administered to a probability sample of South Africans 18 years and older. Face to face interviews were conducted in the language of the respondent's choice. Provision was made for substitution if the respondent was not available and for quality controls. The survey used a multi-stage cluster probability sample stratified by province and socio-economic classification. Census enumerator areas were used as the clusters which, with few exceptions, were drawn with probability proportional to size. Households were drawn with equal probability; respondents within households randomly from all qualifying members. The sample was essentially self-weighting. The unweighted/weighted sample of n2259 included 1476/1593 blacks, 226/211 coloureds, 140/66 Indians, and 417/389 whites.

[2] The item used in the earlier survey added a time reference: "*These weeks* a lot has been said . . ." (emphasis added).

[3] The authors are grateful to Professor Theodor Hanf, Director of the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, Freiburg, Germany, for permission to include in their analysis this item from his study of political change in South Africa.

[4] On the day after the adoption of the new constitutional text on 8th May 1996, the leader of the National Party and executive deputy president from the largest minority party, Mr F W de Klerk, announced that his party had decided to withdraw

from the government of national unity on the 30th June 1996 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1997: 544–555). The announcement was made before the 1996 MarkData survey went into the field.

[5] Since the time of writing in mid-1997, this viewpoint has been aired more openly in public debate. Negative reviews in the press refer variously to divisive elements in the rainbow nation or even to its "demise". Alternatively, the concept is dismissed as a political sham or "advertising gimmick" (e.g. *Business Day*, 21 April 1998, "Crises show up demise of rainbow nation", p. 13).

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