How we become a society

Taking the notion of "social cohesion" out of the academic field and into the real world is not as tricky as it seems

Comment
Iwan Pienaar

One of the biggest questions about how to effectively champion social cohesion relates to the level of violence a country experiences.

"Several research studies have been completed that look at the various causes of the levels of violence experienced in countries. There seems to be a common thread in many of them, with factors ranging from the role of violent content in the media to ethnographic issues that are highlighting poverty, unemployment and other socio-economic conditions," says Innocent Nkata, executive for social mobilisation at the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication.

Poverty and unemployment have become the two most cited causes for violent crime. One only needs to look at crime reporting in developing countries such as Brazil, India, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa to see that this is almost always taken as gospel.

Inequality breeds contempt
A January 2013 Oxfam report rated South Africa as the most financially unequal place on earth. The report states that it is now widely accepted that rapidly growing extreme wealth and inequality are harmful to human progress.

"Extreme wealth and inequality undermines societies. It leads to far less social mobility. If you are born poor in a very unequal society you are much more likely to end your life in poverty," states the report.

"Inequality has been linked to many different social ills, including violence, mental health, crime and obesity.

"Crucially, inequality has been shown to be not only bad for the poor in unequal societies but also the rich. Richer people are happier and healthier if they live in more equal societies."

Such is the extent of this division that Oxfam is calling for a new global goal to end extreme wealth by 2025 to reverse the increase in inequality seen in the majority of countries over the last 20 years.

Nkata says that although the social and economic divisiveness of inequality places a significant strain on social cohesion, it is interesting to note that Mozambique does not have the same rate of violent crime as the other countries that contend with high poverty and unemployment rates (see table).

"Could it be that poverty and unemployment might not be such a significant cause of violent crime? One can even take a step back and look at it from a country-specific perspective.

"For example, in South Africa the Northern Cape is one of the country's poorest provinces but when it comes to violent crime, Gauteng has significantly higher statistics," he says.

Deeper issues
For Nkata, this means that the cause of a lack of social cohesion goes much deeper than just poverty and unemployment.

Dr Malose Langa, a community psychologist at Wits University, investigated the collective violence that accompany many service delivery protests in South Africa. He used the Azania township in Mpumalanga as a focus point. Protests took place there between July 2009 and February 2010.

Langa found that commentators and government officials dismiss protestors as criminals or hooligans, it remains important to understand the violent nature of the protestors in the context of every community.

"Causes of collective violence for each community are unique. In Azania, our research revealed that the protestors explored non-violent methods for a period of four years, but still nothing happened. It seems violence was used as the last resort to send the message to the top.

"It is important for the state and relevant stakeholders to be proactive rather than reactive when dealing with service delivery complaints," he wrote.

Langa cites the community of Bokfontein in the North West Province as an example of how social cohesion can exist when projects are driven by community members, rather than relying on those outside the community.

"Community members play a significant role in identifying problems, priorities and projects that need to be initiated to solve all community problems. This has helped give them a sense of ownership over all their community projects. Community leaders also feel empowered to network and mobilise more resources to achieve their ideal future goals."

The culture of consumerism
David Bruce, an independent researcher who spent more than 14 years working at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, says that there are powerful factors that contribute to a breakdown of social cohesion.

"High levels of inequality can be associated to a prominent culture of active consumerism and also to what extent the advertising industry is contributing to this.

"Investment in advertising in South Africa is massive when compared to countries like Mozambique. The consumerist consciousness and the associated consumption and way it is equated with status is very powerful in South Africa," he says.

In South Africa, he says, the aggressive promotion of consumption might be healthy to promote economic growth, but it does nothing to promote social cohesion.

He believes that the standard entry point should be to focus on the issue of inequality that underlines the potential for the promotion of central social cohesion.

"Mozambique recently had a revolution but the trajectory to South Africa is quite different. Our revolution or transition here is based on the context of racialised inequality.

"Many black people interpret 'transformation' as achieving a lifestyle which is the equivalent of that enjoyed by white people.

"This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the levels of inequality in black South Africans associated with the economic elite and the culture of consumption."

Bruce says that although countries like Brazil, Nigeria and India share many similarities with South Africa, there are other elements at play that impact social cohesion. India, for example, is also impacted by an increasing inequality but the people there do not share the same psychological legacy as South Africa.

"We come from the legacy of apartheid but India and Brazil have totally different dynamics when it comes to their consumer culture," he says.

Looking to the future
Nkata believes that by studying the relationship between economic growth and the associated issues of each of the countries, one will be able to see the contribution to the levels of violence and crime.

"We are aiming to find out if there is an inkling of a relationship between emerging and economic growth, levels of gross domestic product, unemployment, levels of violence and which segment of society it impacts on the most.

"If the lack of social cohesion happens as a result of disenfranchisement of a younger population segment, then more jobs need to be created.

"However, if the issues are focused on a more mature part of the population, then other solutions need to be found."

Oxfam recommends that, although there are many steps that need to be taken to improve social cohesion, the most important one is recognising that the inequality gap between the super wealthy and poor needs to be reduced.

Inequality cannot be left unchecked. In a world of increasingly scarce resources, reducing inequality and promoting social cohesion becomes more important than ever before.

Innocent Nkata, social mobilisation executive at Soul City

What is social cohesion?

Chief director of social cohesion at the department of arts and culture, Dudu Nchoba, believes that social cohesion is how South Africans unite and work towards a common goal. She says it comes down to recognising our common humanity in meaningful ways, which involves meeting basic human needs such as having access to decent shelter, food, meaningful work, family and friendships.

However, one cannot discuss social cohesion without examining the importance of diversity, because it forms the cornerstone of any society.

Innocent Nkata, executive for social mobilisation at the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, says that diversity comes with many different implications and complexities. "It is only natural that when diverse groups come together that conflict will happen at one time or another. People interpret things differently and this interpretation could give rise to unhappiness. This leads one to question if it is even possible to have an entity that can approach the issues from a collective viewpoint and resolve those conflict situations," he says.

He says there needs to be a common vision and shared values, aspirations and dreams for social cohesion to work. "It is the things that we have in common that can unite us despite our differences. We can work together to reconcile our differences. For me, social cohesion becomes about us as a collective that acknowledges our diversity and recognises our shared visions and the things we have in common to work together," says Nkata.

To help achieve this, Soul City comes in as a catalyst to facilitate and enable dialogue between community members to identify their difference as well as their shared values and dreams.

Nkata cites the example of the Kwakwatsi community near Sasolburg in the Free State. The community won the Kwanda development-oriented competition in 2009 and received R1.8-million in prizes. Unfortunately, this resulted in conflict between the community members and how best to use the resources.

"We went to assist the community last year and were involved in extensive mediation efforts to help them resolve their issues. There has been significant progress made and we are happy to report that they have resolved many of the disagreements that gave rise to the conflict," concludes Nkata.

How South Africa measures up

Country	Gross domestic product *	Gross national income per capita in purchasing power parity*	Poverty head-count ratio at national poverty line (% of population)*	Unemployment rates **	Violent crime statistics (homicides per 100 000)***
South Africa	$408.24-billion (2011)	$10 790 (2011)	23% (2006)	24.9%	31.8 (2010)
Nigeria	$235.92-billion (2011)	$2 300 (2011)	62.6% (2010)	21%	12.2 (2008)
Mozambique	$12.8-billion (2011)	$980 (2011)	54.7% (2008)	21%	8.8 (2007)
India	$1.85-trillion (2011)	$3 620 (2011)	29.8% (2010)	9.8%	3.4 (2010)
Brazil	$2.48-trillion (2011)	$11 500 (2011)	21.4% (2009)	6%	21 (2010)

SOURCES: *= WORLD BANK; **=INDEX MUNDI; ***=UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME   GRAPHIC: BRENDAN DOUGLAS-HENRY

Debating social cohesion

The media inadvertantly promotes violence

The media must report responsibly on violence

COMMENT
William Bird

The effect of violence as depicted in the media tends to divide people into opposing camps.

Some believe that there is a causal link between the media's portrayal of violence and violence in society. Others argue that there are a multiplicity of causes of violence in society, with no direct link between what is portrayed in the media and the actions of individuals.

However, there is compelling evidence for both sides.

Studies show that violence reported on by the media has contributed to greater violence in society but also show the media to have a minimal impact alongside the multiplicity of other causes of violence.

The debate has been raging in many countries for decades and there seems to be no imminent resolution.

Violence begets violence

It is difficult to support any contention that South Africa does not have high levels of violence. Statistics about murder, abuse, domestic violence, common assault, sexual harassment and racism all support this contention.

Given South Africa's brutal colonial history, followed by systematic state segregation and state violence, it is little wonder. To deny this is to deny our past and present. It also dooms our future to greater violence.

Along the way, the media has reported on our violent history and our present.

The key fact is that the media does not simply mirror our society or the violence within it.

The media's portrayal of our society and violence is informed by a number of factors, including basic ethics and news conventions, audience, political perspectives and, to a degree, ownership (although this last point is a debate in itself).

If the media served merely as recorders of history, its role would be a simple one. Rather, the media plays a crucial role not only in reporting events but also in shaping what we think and how we think about those events.

During apartheid, many mainstream print media and the SABC portrayed violence in very particular ways. These often served to reinforce racist stereotypes and justify state violence.

Violence was often typified as "black on black" violence, as if it was somehow endemic for black people to attack black people simply because of their race. In doing so, the explanation and descriptor served to simplify and hide bigger and far-reaching political and societal explanations for the violence.

It also served to further dehumanise those involved: if black people could attack black people simply because of their race, the implication was that black people were prone to violence.

By contrast, when the police force or then-defence force acted, it was

The victims of violence can be victimised again through the media. This photo from the 2008 xenophobic attacks, shows the media response. Photo: Themba Hadebe

framed as being in defence of public property and to restore peace and order. In the early 2000s reporting on violence was an integral component of a crime wave that was seen to be sweeping the country. The media picked up on it, as did political parties.

Citizens were portrayed as victims of ruthless criminals and a discourse of victimhood pervaded. It is important to note that this is a pattern. It is not one item that does this; it happens again and again over a period of time.

Victimhood is rooted in fear and has a historical context that is often linked to crime. The problem with representing people as just victims or as victims-in-waiting, is that it does not lead to greater understanding or even action.

Some radio stations, like Radio 702, were known for their extensive crime coverage, but they were not unique and after a few years shifted their position. There were some exceptions; Classic FM took a deliberate decision not to report on crime as a general rule. Some papers, for instance *Business Day*, still tend not to cover crime, unless it has clear policy or broader societal implications.

Although there have been some significant shifts in how crime, gender-based violence and race are reported, violence continues to be reported largely in event-based stories.

The stories carry graphic detail of the violence, they tend (in the case of crime stories) to be one-offs, with little or no follow-up and the subjects

are often victims. Critically, though, such coverage does not enable or give a sense of how violence can be prevented or ended.

In the case of child or gender abuse, violent graphic details and horrific crimes may be widely reported, but the causes and the context of these are seldom examined.

Perhaps more common these days are so-called "service delivery protests", which in many cases are not about service delivery issues at all, but vary in cause from lack of response and engagement from the local municipal officials to concerns about corruption or inadequate services.

A tragic circle has developed around them. Protestors are aware that one of the few ways they will have their concerns heard is if they use violence, because many media outlets will only cover their concerns if there is violence.

Violence begets violence. It is a difficult cycle to break. The consequences and causes of violence are seldom explained or delved into; the exceptions highlight this.

The violent death of Andries Tatane in Ficksburg was widely reported on, but the reasons for the march in which he was participating were seldom explained.

Some exceptions included the *Mail & Guardian*, which recently carried a follow-up on the state of Tatane's community, highlighting indirectly the futility of his death.

At the time of his death, police brutality was condemned but, again, the causes and broader implications

were not examined.

There has, however, been a shift as a result of the death of Emidio Macia (who was dragged behind a police van) and the tragedy of Marikana, which have kept the issue of police brutality on the news agenda.

In the case of Marikana, there was initially little explanation and the conflict was typified as a dispute between the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union and the National Union of Mineworkers.

The early reports of the violence

were largely event-based, and it was only after journalists made their way to Marikana that more details emerged through better coverage.

The reports by Greg Marinovich, for instance, offered a fundamentally different narrative of events. Suddenly the complexity of what had occurred started to emerge.

Despite this, the voices of those involved were also initially ignored, thus denying the victims and other miners their full humanity. Again, some media went to significant lengths

Debating social cohesion

The notion of 'the other' may drive violence in SA

Several figure in the rainbow nation may account for South Africa's frightend communities

COMMENT
Innocent Nkata

In 1994, the "miracle of the transition" gave South Africa a chance to break with its divided past and usher in the "rainbow nation". But what happened to the rainbow nation? Is it possible that the same diversity that was touted as the foundation of a democratic and open society based on the values of freedom, human dignity and equality has become South Africa's Archilles heel? In this article, I would like to argue that there are several flaws in the rainbow nation which partly account for the widespread violence we see in South Africa today.

Psychologists and other researchers on mass violence have long established the role played by the concept of "the other" in acts of violence. From the Holocaust to the Rwanda genocide, there is strong evidence that the starting point for violence is usually when the would-be perpetrator stops perceiving the would-be victim as a fellow human being, but rather as "the other who is different from me". The amplification of differences enables the would-be victim to be "objectified", that is, turned into an object worth of violation and even elimination. Violence is endemic in South Africa today because people find it very easy to identify and amplify differences, to turn their targets into objects for violation, domination or elimination.

Historically, this notion of "the other" was at the core of the apartheid system and the violence that accompanied it. If you were different from me, you became "the other" and therefore a legitimate target of violence in all its manifestations: physical, emotional, psychological, social and cultural.

Unfortunately, the notion of "the other" did not disappear with the miracle of the transition. In as far as it remains the most significant attempt to reconcile a divided nation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) will forever be a laudable milestone in the birth of the rainbow nation.

However, many have questioned the effectiveness of the TRC in healing the wounds inflicted by apartheid. Did the process really heal them or dit it merely bury them? Is it possible that those unhealed wounds have been festering and are showing themselves in the form of the endemic interpersonal violence we see today? It is now clear that the cracks from South Africa's divided past cannot continue to be papered over. The South Africa we live in today is still very much shaped more by a very sharp awareness of differences than by a sense of shared values and dreams. Race, gender, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, political affiliation and social class continue to be the deep faults that threaten to tear South Africa apart. Lasting solutions to the problem of violence will lie in finding ways of reconciling these differences, rather than continuing to merely celebrate them as the making of a rainbow nation. I will use four examples to illustrate my point.

First, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us, race is still one of the most divisive factors that defines both social relations and social class in South Africa today. It is all noble to strive for a non-racial society but what exactly does non-racialism mean? While studies on inequality have shown growing disparities within rather than between racial groups, another study recently published revealed that 72% of the top management positions in the country are still occupied by white people. Is it then possible to ignore the racial disparities and their impact on social relationships?

In his book *A Future for the Excluded*, Chilean Chlodomir de Morais said: "Our world is divided between those who do not sleep and those who do not eat. Those who do not sleep are afraid that those who do not eat will break through their high security walls." He might as well have been writing about South Africa, where race based resentment is still a reality and it contributes to the widespread violence. A few years ago I listened to a phone-in radio discussion where a man who said he was a robber confessed that "when we do robberies, we are more likely to kill or rape the victim if he or she is white than when he or she is black".

Second, "otherness" is widely reflected in relations between men and women, boys and girls. In patriarchal South Africa, boys do not grow up to assert their identity independently from girls, but rather in relation to their domination over girls. The problematic stereotype of a dominant male figure continues to be embedded in our children's personalities as they grow up. Young boys are socialised into a sharp awareness of their position of power in relation to girls. They learn that girls are the less powerful "others", that a man has the final say, cannot be denied what he wants and has the right to get what he wants from the "other", even if it means using violence to do so.

Third, "makwerekwere" is not just a derogatory term used to describe foreigners in South Africa. It is used to amplify the "otherness" of foreign nationals, which turns them into objects that can be violated with impunity. Stories abound of community members standing by and watching while a foreign national is attacked by vigilantes. This happens when the victim is perceived to be "not one of us" and therefore not deserving of their protection. However, there are cases in the Eastern Cape where community leaders have stood up to emphasise common values of humanity and therefore communities have defended foreign nationals under attack. In other cases, the police are complicit in the violence. By not according foreign nationals equal protection under the law, they tend to legitimise illegal vigilante actions and therefore worsen the web of violence.

Fourth, sexual orientation is disturbingly becoming a mark of "otherness". Despite laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, many South Africans still regard homosexuality as an aberration or a sickness. The phenomenon of "corrective rape" is not just a result of people believing that God created sex for man and woman. Rather, it is the manifestation of the notion of "otherness" which fails to appreciate differences and therefore concludes: I am heterosexual, you are not, therefore you are not normal, your rights can be violated and you must be cured.

These are just some of the possible explanations of the disturbing levels of violence in South Africa. There are also countless possible solutions to this social ill, among them the constitutional project. This underscores the vision of a democratic and open society based on the values of freedom, human dignity and equality. However, someone once commented that you can legislate human behaviour, but you cannot legislate morality and values. Lasting solutions to the problem of violence will, to a large extent, come from dialogue in communities that amplifies shared values and dreams while confronting, appreciating and reconciling differences.

Soul City Institute's groundbreaking Kwanda initiative is a good example of harnessing the positive energy of the nation to emphasise shared values while appreciating the differences. Kwanda, which literally means "to grow", was the first TV reality show of its kind flighted on SABC1 in 2009. Over a 13 week period, the show profiled five communities across South Africa working to make their communities work better, look better and feel better, in the process inspiring a whole nation to organise themselves for a unified approach to social transformation.

For the greater part of 2012, the community of Kwakwatsi in Free State was in turmoil as community members were embroiled in conflict over management of the funds they won in the Kwanda competition. Through a concerted mediation and reconciliation effort facilitated through Kwanda, the community managed to find each other and reconcile their differences. In the Tjakastad community in Mpumalanga, the community policing forum introduced through Kwanda has managed to significantly bring down the levels of crime and violence. The same stories have been narrated from the other Kwanda communities about how they have all managed to help their communities to look better, work better and feel better despite the challenges of differences and conflicts. All attest to the importance of togetherness rather than "otherness". Other countries like Brazil have since expressed interest to use the Kwanda approach to mobilise the nation's energy towards achieving national goals like the millennium development goals.

I believe Kwanda can help South Africa find a way out of the current crisis of violence occasioned by the weak levels of social cohesion.

Innocent Nkata is a social justice activist and is the head of social mobilisation at Soul City: Institute for Health and Development Communication.

Bringing up children in happy and supportive family environments will contribute to a society of free from violence. Photo: Soul City institute

Kwanda has helped people in different South African communities to build social cohesion. Photo: Soul City institute

The South African Family

Proportion of children with absent, living fathers	Up from 42% in 1996 to 48% in 2009
Proportion of children with present fathers	Down from 49% in 1996 to 36% in 2009
	African 30%
	Coloured 53%
	Indian 85%
	White 83%
Proportion of children with absent fathers	African (Up from 46% in 1996 to 52% in 2009
	Coloured (Up from 34% in 1996 to 41% in 2009
	Indian (Down from 17% in 1996 to 12% in 2009
	White (Up from 13% in 1996 to 15% in 2009
Children (0-17) living with both biological parents	35%
Children (0-17) living with mother only	40%
Children (0-17) living with father only	3%

SOURCE: SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

Debating social cohesion

"Enough is a feast"

COMMENT
Zane Dangor

There are many approaches to what constitutes social cohesion. The term is used by progressive analysts and activists to mobilise for more socially and economically inclusive societies.

Conservative instrumentalist notions also abound, that use the term social cohesion as a public policy response towards "restoring law and order", "rebuilding moralities" or developing a sense of belonging.

This is done through building national and nationalist pride using symbols such as the flags of countries and national anthems.

I read many texts on the issue for the purposes of writing this short article, but those that struck me as relevant for the issues confronting South Africa were almost all written by the late Neville Alexander.

In particular, I was interested in his ideas about society and his vision for a society which is underpinned by the principle that "enough is a feast".

Alexander quotes from a speech made by Ernest Mandel wherein he referred to the biblical Sermon on the Mount as a basis for a society that values sufficiency, equality and solidarity.

The biblical injunction Mandel referred to, states the following:
● Feed the hungry
● Clothe the naked
● House the homeless
● Visit the sick
● Care for the old, the young and the weak

Also Alexander states that the new South Africa "has brought about fundamental changes in the form of rule and the institutional character of the capitalist state.

The realm of freedom has been expanded beyond anything that most people imagined in the 1960s, and millions of people have been lifted out of abject pauperism to some level of human dignity.

The struggle has not been in vain in any sense of the term. But, the struggle continues".

The acknowledgment by Alexander, a strident critic of the current government, that democracy has indeed bettered the lives of many people is important.

At the same time, he suggests that the struggle for equality continues. This is predicated on the high levels of inequalities that persist in South Africa. Of the roughly 50% of countries around the globe that measure inequality, South Africa is among the most unequal.

Measuring inequality is important because it indicates very clearly that our society is not based on the principle of sufficiency, but is still organised along the lines of "winners" and "losers" within a social and economic system – a system in which the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

This is a global phenomenon. The social ills associated with high levels of inequality are prevalent across the globe, hence preoccupation by many governments with the project that we now refer to as "social cohesion".

In *The Spirit Level,* British researchers Wilkinson and Pickett indicate that health and social problems are worse in unequal societies.

Their research indicated that life expectancy, mental illness, propensity to commit suicide, infant mortality, crime and imprisonment, drug use and teenage pregnancy are much higher in countries with greater inequalities.

It is worth noting that Wilkinson and Pickett compared inequality data and its outcomes within mostly developed countries.

It therefore stands to reason that in a country like ours, where inequality levels are acute, the social ills associated with inequality are exacerbated and frankly, dangerous.

If we do not deal with inequality and the social and economic issues that sustain such high levels of differential living conditions, our efforts at building social cohesion may be futile. We may experience more of the kinds of social strife and mini revolts that we euphemistically refer to as "industrial unrest" or "service delivery protests".

The roots of a comprehensive social cohesion strategy therefore lie in deepening the solidarity based policy package that government has implemented. This includes expanding the social assistance programmes such as the child support grants and state old age pensions that have proven to be effective in improving the living conditions of the poorer sections of South African society.

These measures have also been the only programmes that have consistently reduced the poverty gap and tempered the levels of inequality.

We need to emphasise and actively implement the sections in the national development plan that seek to implement a social floor, which will determine the minimum level of public goods and services that will ensure that all South Africans enjoy a decent quality of life – based on a socially agreed minimum standard of living.

This includes the goal of decreasing the wage gap between the rich and poor.

We need to be bolder about building a solidarity based society. It includes acceptance by the rich and privileged that higher levels of taxation and redistributive policies are necessary to reduce the gaps between the rich and the poor.

We also need to consider incomes-based policies that will reduce obscene levels of profits for the few, so that decent wages for the many become a reality.

This acceptance by the elites is vital if we are to achieve significant social and economic transformation without a violent social revolution that we have thus far been praised for averting.

It is the challenge we face in creating a more socially cohesive society, based on the principle of "Enough is a Feast" as suggested by Neville Alexander and, before him, by the Sermon on the Mount where humanity was indeed reminded to feed the poor, clothe the naked, house the homeless, care for the sick, the old, those with disabilities, children and the young.

Zane Dangor is the special advisor to the minister of social development Bothabile Dlamini. He writes in his personal capacity

Employment by industry (men) in South Africa

	Oct-Dec 11 Thousand	Jan - Mar 12 Thousand	Apr - Jun 12 Thousand	Jul - Sep 12 Thousand	Oct - Dec 12 Thousand
TOTAL	7 577	7 520	7 574	7 706	7 693
Agriculture	432	443	438	440	458
Mining	294	293	306	302	308
Manufacturing	1208	1165	1162	1166	1173
Utilities	67	77	80	78	76
Construction	939	880	892	919	920
Trade	1 592	1 606	1 574	1 564	1 507
Transport	621	621	636	669	673
Finance	996	993	993	1072	1057
Community and social services	1 173	1 176	1 227	1 227	1 284
Private households	251	263	264	268	236
Other	5	4	3	3	0

Due to rounding, numbers do not necessarily add up to totals.
For all values of 10 000 or lower, the sample size is too small for reliable estimates.

SUPPLIED BY STATS SA

Population by highest level of education for males (Census 2011)

Level of education	Black African	Coloured	Indian or Asian	White	Total (men)	Total (both genders)
Grade 10	1478 348	221 031	50 023	176 483	1925 885	3997 054
Grade 12	3265 016	351 309	200 705	633 514	4450 544	9343 069
Bachelor's degree	127 949	13 794	23 735	117 232	282 710	591 637
Honours degree	53 182	5 995	9 439	62 967	131 583	284 015
Higher degree (master's or doctorate)	39 142	4 648	9 194	65 035	118 019	201 572

SOURCE: STATS SA

The media inadvertently promotes violence

to address this and highlight the capacity for the media to show the real human cost and context of violence.

High profile violent incidents can serve a positive function in the media by informing people not only of the incident but also of the issues and context (including the justice system) that surround it.

The death of Reeva Steenkamp followed by Oscar Pistorius's arrest and bail hearing made huge news. At the same time, the technology and social media reporting ensured that citizens were informed of all the details, in some cases minute by minute.

Although there may be some legitimate concerns about the real public interest of the case, there is little doubt about the information value of having the full bail hearing tweeted and streamed live – it enabled audiences to learn the intricacies of how the justice system works.

Doubly victimised
There was seen a significant shift in how the major print media titles and some radio broadcasters report on gender-based violence and child abuse.

In the early 1990s it was not unusual for rape stories to focus on men's trauma as a result of the rape of their partners, to the virtual exclusion of the women who had been raped.

Some brave reporting by Charlene Smith, herself a rape survivor, helped to shift that. The recent rape of Anene Booysens resulted in media outlets such as Radio 702 launching their own campaigns and initiatives to combat gender-based violence and child abuse.

The *Sowetan* also started a campaign in early 2012 to highlight gender-based violence each week to ensure that it is not off the news agenda. Some excellent pieces of journalism that examined gender-based violence were carried in the *Mail & Guardian* and given significant space and prominence.

Media Monitoring Africa has also seen a positive response by a variety of media houses to improve their portrayal of children.

Media Monitoring Africa's first significant monitoring on children in 2003 showed that in 10% of stories on children, the children's rights were further violated. Children who had been exposed to violence were further traumatised by how their stories were reported on by the media. Thus, while not directly contributing to the violence the children suffered, its impact on them was made worse.

The most recent research from Media Monitoring Africa reveals that only 3% of all items monitored further violated children's rights, a significant and positive shift.

Expectations
What can we reasonably expect of the media in relation to reporting on violence? Is it their role to actively dissuade violence? Is that the role of all media or only of the public broadcaster?

Or should all media seek to meet their audiences's needs and provide quality reporting so that their audiences are well informed and choose to act accordingly?

To the extent that violence itself undermines constitutional rights as it prevents and undermines other fundamental human rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, then it can be argued that it is certainly in media's best and long term interests to actively dissuade violence.

But does this mean that they become emissaries for peace? Some of them may choose to, but the least we can expect is for them to improve their quality of reporting and get the basics right.

Improving the quality of journalism is easier said than done. Journalists work in difficult conditions with limited resources and limited capacity.

It must, however, be acknowledged that as easy as it may be to blame the media for escalating violence, they too are just people.

People who live in a violent society, with challenged systems and a government under huge pressure. It is the responsibility of all to combat violence.

The constitution gives a huge advantage; it offers a vision for all in South Africa, one that must be actively supported. Our research in 2010 about racism showed that all media that was monitored, including small to large, displayed a clear bias in favour and in support of our constitution and its values. The bias came through in countless editorials and can be seen regularly still.

The media thus supports the Constitution, but they must also be encouraged to practice its values and then apply pressure to all within South Africa, be they civil society or government, to do the same.

In that way violence can be reduced and the realisation of a South Africa in which there is equality and dignity for all can begin.

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Debating social cohesion

Debating social cohesion

CENSUS 2011

Geography and age in completed years by population group and sex (Male)

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Other
Eastern Cape					
0 - 15	1059440	87320	3443	27364	2166
16 - 30	760810	71460	4813	29087	6518
31 - 50	477598	66469	4459	42238	4455
51 - 65	234807	27238	1817	30891	867
66 +	116489	8281	702	20574	393
Free State					
0 - 15	391144	13021	1029	21996	556
16 - 30	356849	12351	2994	25144	2185
31 - 50	274648	10756	2401	32299	1652
51 - 65	103181	3846	407	22084	274
66 +	35028	1180	99	13752	88
Gauteng					
0 - 15	1251308	61741	42845	183909	8744
16 - 30	1646581	60472	52339	208675	19172
31 - 50	1449802	56559	58281	281698	16575
51 - 65	387983	19580	20025	163352	3788
66 +	88292	5469	7427	93353	1905
KwaZulu Natal					
0 - 15	1631273	20389	78113	38203	3242
16 - 30	1372853	19121	97199	38024	6173
31 - 50	830759	17173	111823	55902	4815
51 - 65	284966	7829	57837	44246	1240
66 +	100555	2877	21994	31565	509
Limpopo					
0 - 15	969289	2119	2486	14787	628
16 - 30	747497	2496	3744	14706	3165
31 - 50	442597	1966	3547	21107	1885
51 - 65	176466	737	779	12926	221
66 +	93425	203	266	7007	84
Mpumalanga					
0 - 15	633687	5563	3374	32752	785
16 - 30	572177	5500	5592	32445	3396
31 - 50	388991	4838	4970	45582	2183
51 - 65	135731	1777	1605	28130	337
66 +	50784	471	622	12648	115
North West					
0 - 15	520417	11693	2319	25903	935
16 - 30	463323	9798	4664	28537	3216
31 - 50	402141	9096	4037	36277	2363
51 - 65	152827	3566	1206	23879	459
66 +	58290	1282	489	13031	154
Northern Cape					
0 - 15	95674	80142	1011	7684	2590
16 - 30	85169	58378	1848	7662	3659
31 - 50	67936	55724	1342	11563	2583
51 - 65	25463	23524	329	8198	856
66 +	9487	9023	137	4629	363
Western Cape					
0 - 15	268492	425922	6960	74232	10487
16 - 30	341755	373765	9561	89452	21645
31 - 50	282111	364807	9330	126239	16676
51 - 65	58412	154002	3812	86779	4672
66 +	16210	48579	1391	61165	2049

Source: Stats SA

Quarterly Labour Force Survey (4th Quarter 2012)

Employment rates for men in SA (15 - 64)

Gender		Male			
Population group		African/ Black	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White
Province	Employment status				
Western Cape	Employed	306778	498063	1431	185288
	Unemployed	107948	166147	391	7834
	Discouraged job seeker	2506	8397	0	1485
	Other not economically active	109322	222265	0	45105
Eastern Cape	Employed	479973	106280	8687	102132
	Unemployed	227957	33986	0	4502
	Discouraged job seeker	216015	10177	0	0
	Other not economically active	722397	67697	0	42785
Northern Cape	Employed	76773	66600	2552	17790
	Unemployed	36412	19026	0	0
	Discouraged job seeker	5498	5350	0	318
	Other not economically active	69914	43021	1065	2621
Free State	Employed	346643	11019	2553	51667
	Unemployed	175113	2801	0	1719
	Discouraged job seeker	29876	3236	0	0
	Other not economically active	276567	4692	0	15035
KwaZulu-Natal	Employed	1012239	23550	205706	99612
	Unemployed	311213	4559	35098	4265
	Discouraged job seeker	247212	3913	16029	2264
	Other not economically active	1151738	15054	88308	42165
North West	Employed	395097	6124	3652	44609
	Unemployed	113747	1258	0	2225
	Discouraged job seeker	73293	471	0	545
	Other not economically active	327109	3131	3056	19592
Gauteng	Employed	1781339	77697	70636	518328
	Unemployed	582657	25202	9372	25390
	Discouraged job seeker	113125	794	947	4692
	Other not economically active	675497	29906	14172	165279
Mpumalanga	Employed	492480	5775	7353	52650
	Unemployed	180505	1560	0	2648
	Discouraged job seeker	91455	1081	0	0
	Other not economically active	321450	1560	293	18013
Limpopo	Employed	600275	2041	4108	25062
	Unemployed	135990	530	526	928
	Discouraged job seeker	149075	530	0	0
	Other not economically active	724645	1072	2450	3818
South Africa	Employed	5491596	797148	306677	1097137
	Unemployed	1871541	255069	45388	49509
	Discouraged job seeker	928055	33948	16976	9305
	Other not economically active	4378639	388398	109344	354411

Source: Stats SA