

Fostering Peace in Post-Conflict Settings: Evidence from South Africa

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We Evaluate the Efficacy of TRC on Reconciliation

- ▶ Widely used institution to restore peace in post-conflict settings
 - ▶ Establish facts, different groups tell their stories, common narrative (ICTJ 2014)
 - ▶ Foster peace & promote interracial trust (Gibson 2006; IJR 2019)
- ▶ Despite wide usage and sponsorship, effectiveness still debated
 - ▶ Detrimental psychological effects (Stein et al. 2008; Cilliers et al. 2016)
 - ▶ Emphasize everyone's misdeeds (Gibson 2006)
 - ▶ Ignore socio-economic dimensions (Stanley 2001)

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 - ▶ Ignore socio-economic dimensions (Stanley 2001)
- ▶ We empirically test the efficacy of TRC in South Africa
 - ▶ How does this interact with social contact?

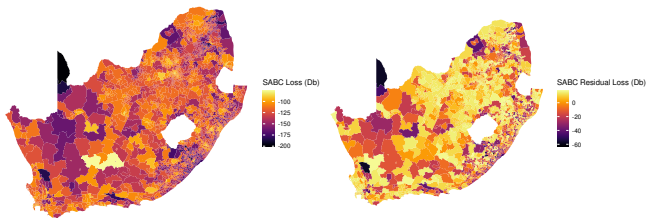
Institutional Background

- ▶ Following end of apartheid regime, TRC in SA is established in 1995
 - ▶ Testimonies from more than 22K victims
 - ▶ Received 7K amnesty applications

- ▶ Large influence of TRC due to the extensive TV coverage
 - ▶ *Truth Commission Special Reports* played an important role
 - ▶ Flagship programme on the TRC from the national channel (SABC)
 - ▶ Aired every week between April 1996 and March 1998
 - ▶ 1.2M weekly viewers → reached population at large
 - ▶ “One of the most mediated events ever taking place in Africa”
(Verdoolaeghe 2005)

Coverage of SABC Special Reports

- ▶ We collect and digitize data on SABC antennas in 1995
 - ▶ location + technical characteristics
- ▶ Use this to reconstruct two types of signal (Hufford 2002)
 - ▶ $SABC_w$: **actual signal strength**
(based on distance, frequency and power of antennas, topography)
 - ▶ $SABC_w^{free}$: **hypothetical signal strength** free of topographic obstructions



Empirical Strategy and Specification

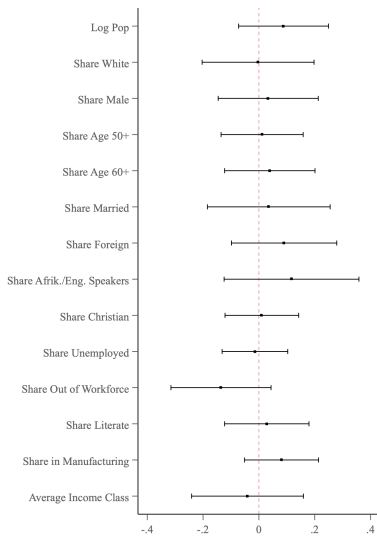
Estimate

$$y_{i,w,d} = \beta SABC_{w,d} + \gamma SABC_{w,d}^{free} + \Gamma X_{i,w,d} + \delta_d + \epsilon_{i,w,d}$$

with $y_{i,w,d}$ the outcome of interest for i in ward w and district d .

- ▶ SABC coverage endogenous (e.g. urbanization, density)
- ▶ Isolate variation due to topography *between* antenna and ward (Olken 2010)
- ▶ Main outcomes obtained from Afrobarometer (waves 2002-2011)
- ▶ Estimate this equation for blacks and whites separately
- ▶ Heterogeneity along district-level residential segregation line

Variation in SABC coverage balanced on predetermined



Notes: Outcomes from the 1991 census.

Exposure to TRC increases support among whites for black parties

<i>Dep. var.</i>	Black Parties		White Parties	
	black (1)	white (2)	black (3)	white (4)
sample				
Exposure to TRC	0.000298 (0.0110)	0.0293** (0.0142)	0.00552 (0.00400)	-0.0185 (0.0361)
Exposure to TRC × Gini index (1991)				
Observations	6,134	1,150	6,134	1,150
R-squared	0.054	0.196	0.048	0.133
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean	0.712	0.0513	0.0378	0.479

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Exposure to TRC increases support among whites for black parties

<i>Dep. var.</i>	Black Parties		White Parties		Black Parties		White Parties	
	black (1)	white (2)	black (3)	white (4)	black (5)	white (6)	black (7)	white (8)
sample								
Exposure to TRC	0.000298 (0.0110)	0.0293** (0.0142)	0.00552 (0.00400)	-0.0185 (0.0361)	-0.0761 (0.130)	0.327*** (0.0981)	0.00507 (0.0289)	-0.405 (0.316)
Exposure to TRC × Gini index (1991)					0.0693 (0.147)	-0.345*** (0.109)	0.00300 (0.0367)	0.438 (0.336)
Observations	6,134	1,150	6,134	1,150	4,724	1,042	4,724	1,042
R-squared	0.054	0.196	0.048	0.133	0.081	0.252	0.056	0.172
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean	0.712	0.0513	0.0378	0.479	0.706	0.0480	0.0411	0.476

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Exposure to the TRC increases trust in institutions

<i>Dep. var.</i>	president		parliament		police	
	black (1)	white (2)	black (3)	white (4)	black (5)	white (6)
sample						
exposure TRC × Gini index	-0.303** (0.123)	-0.562*** (0.202)	-0.164 (0.147)	-0.705** (0.309)	-0.163 (0.129)	-0.363** (0.168)
exposure TRC	0.267** (0.105)	0.474** (0.181)	0.148 (0.127)	0.621** (0.286)	0.150 (0.112)	0.339** (0.139)
Observations	5,975	1,358	5,836	1,420	6,200	1,486
R-squared	0.093	0.160	0.079	0.162	0.068	0.130
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean	0.560	0.335	0.547	0.351	0.468	0.372

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Exposure to TRC increases interracial trust among whites

<i>Dep. var.</i>	interracial		generalized	
	black (1)	white (2)	black (3)	white (4)
sample				
exposure TRC × Gini index	0.227 (0.193)	-0.590 (0.358)	0.114 (0.128)	-0.263 (0.206)
exposure TRC	-0.172 (0.175)	0.460* (0.230)	-0.0946 (0.110)	0.292 (0.180)
Observations	2,634	467	3,603	941
R-squared	0.143	0.308	0.110	0.239
Individual Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean	0.421	0.392	0.232	0.248

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Conclusion

Exposure to TRC has important effects on attitudes

- ▶ Political opinions
- ▶ Trust in institutions

Interesting layers of heterogeneity appear

- ▶ Effects tend to be stronger for whites
- ▶ Effects vanish in highly segregated areas

Future work

- ▶ Additional data sources: intermarriage, voting patterns, crimes
- ▶ Downstream economic consequences