Building States through Restorative Justice [*]

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October 28, 2024

Abstract

How do leaders rebuild states in the aftermath of major intergroup violence? We study the impact of one of the most iconic examples of transitional justice, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which attempted to address this challenge. Exploiting the media coverage devoted to the TRC hearings, we reconstruct quasi-exogenous variation in exposure to live broadcasting of the TRC across South African suburbs. We show that while the TRC fostered unity among Black South Africans, it weakened interracial relations. First, we demonstrate that the TRC created a trade-off between nation-building led by Blacks and a decline in trust in the judiciary among Whites. Next, we show that this decline in trust toward the judiciary fueled racial entrenchment, marked by increased segregation, lower interracial marriage rates, and reduced trust. Additionally, this entrenchment hindered the state's ability to implement affirmative action policies aimed at workplace integration. Finally, we suggest that these effects stem from Whites adjusting their beliefs about judicial bias. To support this, our analysis of daily variations in hearing content highlights how racial salience consistently predicts the backlash among White South Africans.

Keywords: Nation-building, Racial Contact, State Capacity;
JEL Classification: J15, O12, P00, N47

1 Introduction

Building states in the aftermath of democratic transitions presents multiple challenges, especially when states have a recent history of intergroup violence. In such contexts, the legacy of past tensions often leads to divided and fragmented societies, hindering efforts toward state-building and economic development.[1] To address these issues, leaders have implemented nation-building policies to create "imagined political communities" aimed at preventing state failure (Bazzi et al. 2019; Anderson 1991). However, conventional methods such as mandatory schooling may be ineffective in achieving this goal when historical divisions are deeply entrenched. In these cases, *transitional justice* has emerged as a tool to confront past injustices, promote national cohesion, and ultimately reinforce state-building.

Since the late twentieth century, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) have emerged as the leading form of transitional justice.[2] Grounded in the principles of *restorative justice*, TRCs are quasi-judicial bodies aimed at creating a shared narrative of past atrocities and laying the groundwork for the new state. Instead of focusing on prosecuting criminals, TRCs prioritize exposing the wrongs committed before the transition through court-like hearings, where appointed judges reinterpret testimonies in line with the state's new values (Wilson et al. 2001). While widely supported, debates continue over their effectiveness, and empirical evidence on their impact in fostering cohesive, well-functioning states remains limited.

In this paper, we fill this gap by examining one of the most iconic TRCs: the one implemented in post-apartheid South Africa. Following the end of apartheid in 1994 and the democratic transition led by Nelson Mandela, the TRC was established in 1995 to construct a collective narrative of the nation's past. Between 1996 and 2000, the commission heard testimonies from 22,000 victims, reviewed 7,112 amnesty applications, and produced a comprehensive report detailing historical events and offering policy recommendations. The TRC's influence on South Africa's reconciliation discourse was significantly amplified by the extensive media coverage it received, with outlets like Radio 2000—that broadcasted the hearings live—turning the TRC into a *media event* (McEachern 2002; Cole 2010).

While many scholars have argued that the TRC was a "vehicle for the sort of healing and redemption that [...] would help cement the new nation" (p. 219, Fullard and Rousseau 2008), others have been more critical of its approach. A key point of contention has been

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[1] These obstacles include low levels of public goods provision, poor intergroup trust, and scant state legitimacy (Alesina and La Ferrara 2005; Besley et al. 2021)

[2] The rise of the restorative justice model as the leading model of transitional justice started with the end of the Cold War. Between 1974 and 2009 forty truth commissions have emerged (Hayner 2010; Teitel 2014). Since then, the UN secretary and leading practitioners have praised truth commissions for their holistic approach (Secretary-General 2004; Boraine 2006).

how the TRC handled perpetrators' accountability. On the one hand, some claimed that the TRC effectively gave perpetrators and beneficiaries of apartheid a "free pass," creating a judicial deficit (Gibson 2002). On the other hand, others argued that the commission inadvertently exacerbated racial tensions, further polarizing the depictions of the two different racial groups, with white South Africans often being collectively blamed (Wilson et al. 2001).

This paper shows that the TRC promoted unity among Blacks at the cost of hindering racial relations. First, we empirically evaluate the debate above and show that the TRC led to a trade-off between nation-building led by Blacks, and reduced trust in the judiciary among Whites. Next, we investigate the implications of such a trade-off for interracial contact. We document that the TRC led to racial entrenchment as measured by increased racial spatial sorting, lower interracial marriage, and decreased interracial trust. Further, we document that this racial entrenchment weakened the state's ability to implement a key affirmative action policy aimed at promoting workplace integration. We argue that these results can be attributed to Whites adjusting their beliefs about the judiciary's bias in their favor. By analyzing daily variations in hearings' content, we highlight how the differential portrayal of race consistently predicts the backlash observed among Whites.

One of the main challenges in studying the TRC's impact on the broader population is accurately defining exposure to its hearings and trials.[3] To address this, we leverage variation in exposure to live broadcasts of TRC hearings. Soon after its inception, the South African TRC quickly became "one of the most mediated event ever taking place in Africa," (Verdoolaege 2005). Between 1996 and 2000, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) aired the TRC hearings live on Radio 2000. This widespread use of media to disseminate the TRC's message offers a unique opportunity to track its influence across the population. We collect and digitize historical data of antennas and reconstruct exogenous variation in TRC media coverage driven by the idiosyncratic mix of topography encountered by the signal through space (Olken 2009; Durante et al. 2019; Wang 2021).

Our baseline findings indicate that exposure to TRC media introduced a trade-off between nation-building and attitudes toward the judiciary. We document that, on average, TRC successfully fostered nation-building by strengthening national identity and promoting peace. Residents of suburbs with higher TRC media exposure were significantly more likely to identify as South African, rather than by their ethnicity, as compared to those with lower exposure. Further, we find that TRC media systematically reduced violence. Drawing from various data sources, we show a persistent decline in violence that lasted until the second

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[3]Some scholars have replicated TRC-like treatments through experiments, linking them to psychological well-being and communal attitudes (Cilliers et al. 2016). While the effects on trial participants are significant, policymakers are equally concerned with how the general population perceives and processes the transition.

half of the 2010s.

While TRC media promoted nation-building and reduced violence overall, we find important heterogeneity by race. First, the increase in national identity is largely driven by Black South Africans, while the effect on White South Africans is minimal. Further, exploiting corroborative questions on identity, we show that only White South Africans are more likely to describe their group as *more different than the rest of the country* or as *the best in the country.* Similarly, our findings on reduced violence are concentrated in areas predominantly populated by Black South Africans at baseline.

Given that the TRC functioned as a pseudo judiciary institution, we examine its impact on attitudes towards the judicial system. Exploiting questions from the Afrobarometer survey, we construct outcomes of trust in judiciary institutions and perceptions of accountability. We find no evidence that TRC affected accountability or trust in the judiciary among Black South Africans. However, White South Africans develop lower trust in the judiciary and a heightened sense of accountability. We interpret these results as evidence that White South Africans exposed to the TRC update their beliefs about how justice is administered. Together, these results suggest that Whites fear the new state might be unfairly tougher on them when it comes to rendering justice.

A key challenge to our identification strategy is the lack of data on consumption of the specific media outlets broadcasting TRC media. This raises the concern that our treatment may capture general media variation, rather than TRC-specific effects. To address this, we use a series of falsification tests with two complementary approaches. First, we show that exposure to alternative contemporary media sources has systematically null or weaker effects on our key outcomes compared to Radio 2000. Second, we reconstruct TRC media coverage using antennas active in the post-period and show that only the antennas already active during the trials significantly affects our outcomes.

In addition, we present a series of identification checks to address concerns related to the exogeneity of our treatment. Our identifying assumption is that differences in TRC media signal strength across South African suburbs are driven by topography, rather than other unobserved factors that could also affect our outcomes (e.g., agglomeration forces). We provide several empirical evidences to support this assumption. First, variation in TRC exposure is uncorrelated with a wide range of pre-TRC suburbs characteristics. Second, we find no evidence of pre-trends in outcomes for which pre-TRC data exist. Third, our results are robust to controlling for distances to transmitters and major hubs across the country, suggesting that urbanization is unlikely to confound our findings.

In the second part of the paper, we turn to the implications of our main results for interracial contact and racial entrenchment. We hypothesize that, as White South Africans

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develop a more negative perception of judicial fairness, they might view interracial contact as inherently riskier and react by seeking to limit such contacts. We test this hypothesis by leveraging data on intermarriage, residential sorting, intergroup trust, and civic engagement.

We first document that TRC media led to an increase in spatial segregation: in suburbs with Whites exceeding 80% of the population in 1996, we observe an influx of Whites and an outflow of non-White residents by 2011. Conversely, areas with less than 80% of Whites in 1996 experienced an influx of non-White residents and an outflow of Whites by 2011, suggesting that Whites retreated into racial enclaves. Next, using the 1996 and 2011 census, we track the impact of TRC media on intermarriage rates. In a difference-in-difference framework that exploits both the variation in TRC media and timing, we show that individuals who were young enough to marry during the TRC years became less likely to marry someone of a different race when exposed to TRC media. We then argue that TRC decreased intergroup trust. We show that such decline is driven by racially diverse places, consistent with lower *interracial* trust. Finally, document how the disengagement of Whites from public life is also prominent in political and civic participation. Indeed, TRC media significantly reduced White's likelihood to vote, discuss politics, or attend community meetings, while no similar effects are observed among Blacks.

Having established a core tension between strengthened nation-building among Blacks and racial entrenchment among Whites, we finally investigate how the TRC affected state capacity—specifically the state's ability to effectively implement policies. We focus on South Africa's flagship policy for addressing racial inequality, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) policy, which works primarily through a firm rating system that plays a crucial role in public procurement. Firms can improve their B-BBEE rating by implementing affirmative action measures, giving them a competitive edge in public procurements. Importantly, firms with sales below 10 million ZAR are largely exempt to comply, whereas firms above this threshold are bound to comply with B-BBEE requirements to remain competitive in public procurements.

We exploit this threshold to study whether exposure to the TRC on media reduced firms' willingness to comply with affirmative action measures. Specifically, we estimate whether firms affected by TRC media are more likely to bunch at this threshold. To do so, we link matched employer-employee tax administrative data from the universe of firms submitting tax declarations between 2008 and 2018 to our variation in TRC media exposure. We document two main facts. First, we provide cross-sectional evidence of firms strategically positioning their revenues just below the 10 million ZAR threshold, with this behavior being more pronounced in areas with higher TRC exposure. Second, longitudinal evidence reveals that firms positioned just below this threshold are less likely to grow beyond it in the year to

come. These results suggest that TRC exposure increased the perceived costs of complying with affirmative action measures under the B-BBEE policy.

We conclude our paper by providing evidence that the White backlash we document in the main results can be attributed to the increased racial salience in the TRC trials. To do so, we exploit the fact that in the summer of the year 2000, while the Afrobarometer conducted its first round of interviews, the TRC was running amnesty hearings. This allows us to exploit daily variation in racial salience live on TRC hearings and connect it to questions about the mandate of the TRC and to outcomes on identity and trust for the judiciary.

Our results show that South Africans interviewed the same day a TRC hearing was live on radio are relatively more likely to form a specific opinion about the mandate of the TRC. On average, we show that the immediate reaction of South Africans to the mandate of the TRC is generally positive. We interpret these results as corroborating evidence that our cross-sectional variation in Radio 2000 embeds TRC content, and not just a generalized change in the overall South African media.

Finally, we test whether the race of the perpetrator taking the stand in a hearing—a key component of the racial portrayal during a hearing—differentially impacted perceptions of the TRC and the rest of our outcomes. Strikingly, we document a systematic backlash for White respondents whenever a White perpetrator took the stand in a TRC hearing. Conversely, we find generally positive attitudes when a Black perpetrator takes the stand, both for Black and White respondents.

We interpret these results as consistent with our hypothesis that racial salience in the TRC process triggered a backlash among Whites, who were less willing to accept the justice promoted by the TRC. We frame these findings within the broader literature linking salience, particularly racial salience, to distortions in rational decision-making (Bordalo et al. 2022). White South Africans exposed to a White perpetrator reacted by negatively updating their expectations of how the new judicial system would treat them, contributing to the judicial mistrust observed in our main analysis.

Literature Review. This project relates to at least three strands of literature. First, we contribute to the literature on nation- and state-building. Most policies shown to successfully promote nation-building require an adequate level of state capacity (Blouin and Mukand 2018; Esposito et al. 2021; Depetris-Chauvin et al. 2020; Carlitz et al. 2022).[4] Our results provide the first causal evidence of the impact of a government-led TRC on the state-building process in a setting where the democratization is still in process and amid entrenched divisions. Moreover, our findings suggest that in such settings, nation-building

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[4]See Rohner and Zhuravskaya (2023) for a more comprehensive review.

through restorative justice initiatives can generate significant trade-offs among different racial groups.

Second, our study contributes to the literature evaluating the efficacy of restorative justice. In particular, we add causal empirical evidence to the social science literature debating over the efficacy of TRCs, and the South African one specifically (Stanley 2001; Gibson 2002, 2006). Within the peace-building strand of the literature, our paper contributes to the quantitative research evaluating the effectiveness of various restorative justice policies (Balcells et al. 2022; Rahnama 2022; Villamil and Balcells 2021; Rozenas and Vlasenko 2022; Kitagawa and Chu 2021).[5] Most closely related to our work, Cilliers et al. (2016) show that interventions similar to TRCs can promote community-level reconciliation but may negatively affect mental health. We contribute to this literature by explicitly linking transitional justice through TRC to the state-building process.

Lastly, our project contributes to the extensive literature on media, particularly studies examining the impact of media on ethnic violence, discrimination, and extremism (Della Vigna et al. 2014; DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007; Enikolopov et al. 2011; Adena et al. 2015).[6] Closely related to our study is the work by Hara (2023), which investigates the influence of South African media in the early 2000s on language choice and political outcomes. In contrast to Hara's study, we focus specifically on one media outlet that disseminated the TRC's message, examining its role in nation-building, violence reduction, racial relations, and state capacity. We also add to the growing literature on how media can interact with the efficacy of policies or interventions (Besley et al. 2021).

2   Historical and Institutional Background

In this section we briefly describe the historical and institutional background behind the South African transition from apartheid to democracy, the TRC institution, and the role played by the media in disseminating its message among the population at large.

2.1   Apartheid and The Democratic Transition

Apartheid was introduced by the Afrikaner National Party in 1948 to ensure a formal system of racial segregation and White supremacy.[7] The legislative framework of apartheid

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[5]See section 5 of Rohner and Thoenig (2021) for a broader review on the effects of policy interventions on peace-building.

[6]For a review, see DellaVigna and Gentzkow (2010).

[7]For more detailed discussions of apartheid and the transition period, see Thompson and Lynn Berat (2014).

can be divided into two categories: petty apartheid, focused on segregation in daily public life, and grand apartheid, aimed at enforcing complete spatial segregation of South Africa's racial groups. Key petty apartheid laws mandated individuals to be classified in one of four racial groups (Black, Coloured, Indian, and White), segregated public spaces, and prohibited interracial sexual relations. Prominent grand apartheid laws forced racial groups in urban areas to live in designated neighborhoods, established homelands, and required all Black South Africans over 16 to carry a passbook.[8] From the 1950s and to the late 1970s, thousands of Black South Africans were imprisoned for entering White neighborhoods without the required documents, many were tortured, townships were frequently raided by the police, millions were forcibly relocated to homelands with which they had no ties, and Blacks were systematically denied economic opportunities and political rights.

By the late 1970s, internal opposition to apartheid intensified, with large-scale protests from students—including the 1976 Soweto uprising, which was brutally suppressed by the police—as well as worker protests, demonstrations, and acts of sabotage. In response, the apartheid state declared a state of emergency in 1985, during which thousands of people were imprisoned without being charged, political gatherings were prohibited, extra-judicial assassinations took place. Meanwhile, Black-on-Black violence escalated, particularly due to rising tensions between the African National Congress (ANC) and its main political rival, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which drew support primarily from the Zulu population. Between 1984 and 1994, an estimated 20,500 political fatalities occurred, among which 70-80% involved clashes between the supporters of different Black organizations.

Growing instability and the inability of any party to secure a decisive victory led both the apartheid government and the ANC to recognize that a negotiated peace was in everyone's best interest. Secret talks between the two sides started in 1987. Two years later, President F.W. de Klerk publicly announced that reform was the only way forward, unbanned the ANC and other opposition parties, released Nelson Mandela, and initiated negociations toward a peace agreement. In 1992, he called a referendum in which 68% of the (White) voters supported the continuation of the reform process. By 1993, a peace deal laid the foundations for a new non-racial state. Despite repeated disruptions from political violence, this process ultimately culminated in South Africa's first free elections on 27 April 1994.

The negotiated settlement between the apartheid government and anti-apartheid forces required balancing two competing demands: the call for majority rule in a unitary state and the concerns of White South Africans about this shift. A major concession made by

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[8]The legislative reference are the Population Registration Act (1950), the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), the Immorality Amendment Act (1950), the Group Areas Act (1950), the Bantu Authorities Act (1951) , and the Natives Act (1954) respectively.

anti-apartheid forces was the establishment of a process allowing amnesty for perpetrators who fully disclosed the atrocities they committed under apartheid.[9]

2.2   The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The South African TRC stands as a landmark in the history of restorative justice. Established in July 1995 under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, the TRC was tasked with uncovering the motivations, causes, and scope of human rights violations committed under apartheid. This process encompassed the perspectives of both perpetrators and victims. The commission's ultimate goal was to foster reconciliation, unity, and prevent gross human right violation in the future through truth-seeking.

The TRC hearings ran from December 1995 to the end of 2000. The commission began by inviting victims of human rights abuses to share their experiences under apartheid. Nearly 22,000 people came forward, with about 10% invited to recount their stories in public hearings. These victims' hearings started on the 15th of April 1996, lasted for about two years, and played a central role in the commission's ability to offer a comprehensive account of past injustices and a detailed record of apartheid's legacy (Verdoolaege 2005).

Unlike previous truth commissions, the South African TRC was the first to have the authority to grant amnesty to individual perpetrators who fully disclosed the truth and essential facts related to a political objective. The commission received more than 7,000 amnesty applications from former members of security forces, liberation movements, and the extreme right. The commission held over 2,500 amnesty hearings and ultimately granted amnesty to 849 individuals. Due to the high number of applications, the amnesty hearings were concluded only in 2000 (Boraine et al. 2003).

Notably, the commission's activities were held in public, a feature that distinguished it from all previous commissions. The aim was not only to render justice to the victims of apartheid but also to openly discuss South Africa's past after decades of state propaganda and censorship. For this reason, all the hearings took place in public venues such as town halls, churches, or civic centers and were open to all. In addition, local and international media played a pivotal role in disseminating the commission's message by closely following its work and recording all the hearings.

Throughout its mission, the TRC actively promoted a message of national unity and reconciliation, deliberately moving away from a purely legalistic and procedural approach. For example, victims were often asked by the commission's chair at the end of their testimony whether they forgave the perpetrator. Desmond Tutu, the chair of the commission, frequently

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[9]For a more detailed discussion of the various concessions made by the anti-apartheid forces, see for example Mamdani (2020).

insisted on the importance of forgiveness, with religion and prayers becoming integral parts of the process.

While the commission aimed to build a shared narrative of the past, its conclusion did not gain unanimous acceptance across the South African society. For example, a large proportion of the White population questioned the sincerity and veracity of the commission's work, with many believing that the victims exaggerated their accusations during the hearings (Hamber 1998). Among the Black population, many questioned the use of amnesty in exchange for the truth, as illustrated by the fact that several of the granted amnesties would later be challenged in front of the constitutional court (Andrieu 2010). Among the White population, the work of the TRC was often portrayed as a witch hunt (Verdoolaege 2005). More generally, debates persist over the TRC's definition of victims and perpetrators. By focusing on the relationship between victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses, the TRC ignored the even higher number of victims of structural violence during the apartheid period and that many Whites directly benefited from the set of institutions in place during that period, even if they did not commit gross human rights violations (Lanegran 2005; Mamdani 2020).

2.3   Media Coverage

The considerable influence that the TRC had in South Africa was largely a result of the extensive media coverage it received. TRC proceedings were widely disseminated through print, radio, and television, leading the TRC to quickly become "one of the most mediated events ever taking place in Africa" (Verdoolaege 2005). The extensive coverage of the TRC's work was feasible because most hearings and testimonies were held publicly due to the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) deliberate efforts to broadcast the TRC's message widely.

Within the South African media landscape, certain outlets played a pivotal role in broadcasting the TRC's activities. Notably, Radio 2000 carried out one the most comprehensive coverages by airing the TRC hearings live and unfiltered, offering the closest experience to attending the hearings in person for those unable to be there. The emphasis on radio as a primary dissemination tool was driven by its widespread usage and affordability. According to the TRC Final Report (Boraine et al. 1998), radio was deemed the most effective medium to reach the widest audience, penetrating all regions of the country. While urban areas had access to both radio and TV, the former proved key for South Africans living in rural areas (see Figure A.1).

Another important media outlet that contributed to disseminating TRC's work was the TV program *Special Report*. Aired every Sunday between April 21st 1996 and March 29th

1998, the program reached an average viewership of 1.2 million, becoming one of the "biggest audience of any televised current affairs program ever broadcasted in South Africa" (Verdoolaege 2005). The *Special Report* featured highlights of the TRC's activities from the preceding week and provided additional context through interviews and investigative work. In 1996, it received a special award from the Foreign Correspondents' Association. The editorial stance of the *Special Report* aligned closely with the commission's view that truth was necessary for reconciliation. SABC broadcasted *Special Report* on SABC 2 in 1996 and then moved it to SABC 3 from 1997 onward (Evans 2016).

We focus our analysis on the coverage of Radio 2000 because of its specific type of broadcast. Live hearings throughout the day became the closest alternative to the attendance in person to the trials. We replicate our analysis looking at the combination of SABC 2 and 3 and find that it had second order effects with respect to Radio 2000.[10]

3 Data

This section describes our data sources and the construction of the variables used in the analysis. Depending on the exercise we carry out, our geographic unit of analysis is either the suburb or the municipality, of which we have 11,119 and 769 observations without missing observations respectively. Geographic boundaries change over time, hence we systematically crosswalk our data to the 1996 boundaries, our baseline census year.

3.1 TRC Media Coverage

We obtain data on the location of all TV and radio antennas active in 1996 from the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa. For each antenna, we extract information on their exact location, height, wattage, and frequency of operation. We impute missing information on antennas' height using the average height in the country. From all the antennas active at the time, we focus on the antennas transmitting TRC hearings live, ie those associated with the radio station Radio 2000. With the same methodology, we reconstruct coverage of other radio and TV antennas we are interested in.

We employ the standard Longley-Rice Irregular Terrain Model to compute TV and Radio signal loss at the suburb or municipality level (ITM, Hufford 2002).[11] The main inputs of the ITM model are the transmitter's power and frequency, the distance between transmitter and receiver, and the topography of the landscape between transmitter and receiver. Using the

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[10]Results available upon requests.

[11]To do so, we outsourced the exact computations to `CloudRF`, an established firm using state-of-the-art software to compute coverage.

ITM model, we compute media coverage at the suburb level by taking the strongest signal (lowest loss) associated with a particular media outlet. We then denote our treatment—TRC Media—as the lowest loss coming from the radio station Radio 2000. We redo this separately for each radio or TV outlet we are interested in studying.

The exact relationship between signal strength and reception quality is hard to define as it depends on many factors, some of which we do not observe. Data on listeners or surveys on the reception quality are unfortunately unavailable to the best of our knowledge. Hence, we follow a standard approach in the literature and rely on continuous variation in signal strength throughout the analysis (e.g. Yanagizawa-Drott 2014; Wang 2021). We express all continuous variables measuring signal quality in standard deviations and show that our results go through when discretizing media access.

3.2   Individual-level Survey Data

We leverage six geocoded waves of the South African Afrobarometer surveys to measure how exposure to the TRC influenced nation-building, intergroup trust, views of the judiciary, and civic engagement. The surveys were held in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2015. Each wave collected data from 1,600 to 2,400 respondents, comprising 13,052 data points. Figure A.2 presents the location of the Afrobarometer's clusters that we assign to one of the 1996 South African boundaries. Here, we briefly discuss the construction of the main outcome variables used in the analysis. Appendix B.2 systematically provides details on all the variables built from Afrobarometer, including the exact wording of all the original questions.

Nation-building.   We study nation-building by constructing an index based on two questions capturing the sense of attachment to a united South Africa. For the first question, we follow the nation-building literature and use the question labeled *Feeling South African* (Feel SA), which asks respondents how much they feel South African relative to a member of their own identity group (Carlitz et al. 2022; Depetris-Chauvin et al. 2020). The second question we employ, *Desire United South Africa* (United SA), gauges whether the respondent prefers to belong to a united South Africa out of all the groups. We construct our main independent variable by taking the average of the two respective indicators (using principal components yields identical results).[12]

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[12]The precise question for Feel SA is: "Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a South African and being a [respondent's identity group]. Which of these two groups do you feel most strongly attached to?" The precise question for United SA is "It is desirable to create one united South African nation out of all the different groups who live in this country."

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Attitudes toward the judiciary. To capture attitudes toward the judiciary, we employ questions regarding the trust toward judiciary courts and the police. We use these questions to construct dummy variables that take the value of one if respondents declare trusting such institutions, and zero otherwise. Further, we construct two accountability indices, one pertaining to own personal accountability and another referring to the perceived accountability faced by top officials. The own accountability index is based on a question asking whether "someone like themselves would be held accountable" if they break the law. While the exact wording of the question changes across waves, we create an indicator equal to one if the respondent believes they would be held accountable. We construct the accountability index for top officials similarly.

3.3 Violence Data

We use data from two different sources to measure violence at the local level. Our main source of information on local violence is the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD). This data provides information on violent episodes pertaining to protests, riots, strikes, and other social disturbances that occurred in the country from 1990 to 2017 (Salehyan et al. 2012). SCAD collects fewer events than other similar data sources, leading to very sparse events, especially in the second half of the 2010s. For this reason, we aggregate measures of violence at the municipality level. Using suburb-level variation leaves our results unchanged.

As is standard in the literature, we also rely on data from ACLED, which contains all violent events that occurred in the country from 1997 until 2021 (Raleigh et al. 2023). We employ SCAD as our main data source for violence episodes because it allows us to investigate changes in violence before and after the onset of TRC. For both sources, all events are geocoded, allowing us to construct measures of conflict intensity at a fine level of variation. Our primary measure of violence is the inverse hyperbolic sine of per capita total number of violent events, but investigate other formulations including logs and dummy variables.

3.4 Census and Ancillary Data

The South African 1996 census constitutes the backbone of our data construction (Statistics South Africa 1998, 2015). From the census, we extract our pre-determined set of controls, eg population size, share Blacks, or employment rate. Separately, we construct a set of geographic characteristics and link them to 1996 suburbs (Wessel and Smith 1996; Bishop-Taylor et al. 2019).

We exploit long differences between 1996 and 2011 to measure changes in intermarriage

and in the share of Whites or Blacks and proxy for spatial sorting. To study intermarriage we resort to the individual-level census, which is rich in information about South African households and their interrelations. This allows us to build indicators for whether an individual has married outside of their racial or ethnic group. The drawback of working with the individual census is that its level of reporting only allows us to work at the 2011 municipality level (233 unique municipalities). Appendix Table A.1 presents descriptive statistics for all key outcomes and control variables used in the analysis.

3.5   Data from Business Tax Returns

Our firm-level analysis draws on business tax returns provided by the South African Revenue Service (SARS). We retrieve panel data of returns for tax years 2013/2014 to 2017/2018 (National Treasury and UNU-WIDER 2021). The data comprehends information including revenues, annual sales, firm size, and industry. Firms' location in the data is reported at the postal code level, hence we aggregate and match media coverage accordingly (Kilumelume et al. 2022).

Descriptive statistics of our firm-level sample are reported in Table A.8. In total, we observe 704 thousand firms. The average firm has an annual revenue of 41 thousand ZAR and just below 50 employees. The plurality of the firms (23%) are part of the finance and business industry, while manufacturing and retail/motor-trade are the second and third largest industry in terms of number of firms (with 13% and 11% of observations, respectively). Firms that are in the first quartile in terms of TRC exposure residual tend to be slightly smaller than firms in the fourth quartile, with around 20% fewer employees and 33% lower revenue.

4   The Overall Impact of TRC

In this section, we present the main results of our analysis. We begin by outlining our empirical strategy, demonstrating that the variation in TRC media exposure we reconstruct—continuous variation in Radio 2000 signal strength—is orthogonal to pre-existing factors that could simultaneously affect media coverage. The remainder of the section presents the key findings of the paper. Consistent with our central hypothesis, we find that TRC media exposure introduced a trade-off between nation-building for Blacks and attitudes towards the judiciary for Whites. We show that exposure to TRC media fostered a stronger sense of national identity and contributed to reducing violence, with both results concentrated on Black South Africans. Conversely, we show no positive effects of TRC on nation-building for

Whites while documenting worsened attitudes toward the judiciary.

4.1 Empirical Strategy

The goal of our analysis is to estimate the empirical relationship between TRC media exposure during the trials and our outcomes of interest. Depending on data availability, we leverage both cross-sectional and longitudinal variation. In either case, exploiting naive variation in TRC media exposure is prone to several concerns. Most notably, higher TRC media coverage might correlate both with levels and changes in urbanization or economic activity which is likely to separately affect nation-building or reconciliation. We circumvent this issue by reconstructing exogenous variation in TRC media exposure across South African suburbs driven by the mix of topography between antennas and receivers (Olken 2009; Durante et al. 2019; Wang 2021).

Cross-sectional variation. In our baseline cross-sectional model we implement this strategy in three steps. First, using the Longley-Rice propagation model (Hufford 2002), we reconstruct the signal strength associated with the TRC media outlets taking into account the observed topography. Second, we simulate the same TRC media signal strength in the free space, that is in the absence of any topographical obstacle. When constructing the signal strength in the free space, we keep the rest of the parameters identical to the first step. Finally, we regress our outcomes of interest on actual TRC signal strength variation (TRC_s) conditional on the hypothetical signal strength in the free space (TRC_s^{free}). Employing this strategy, the residual variation in the actual signal strength we recover is determined by the topography the signal encounters on its way to the receiver. Equation 1 formalizes the cross-sectional specification we use to analyze data from the Afrobarometer which is available only post-TRC.

$$Y_{i,s,m} = \beta TRC_{s,m} + \gamma TRC_{s,m}^{free} + \theta X_{i,s,m} + \delta W_{s,m} + \alpha_m + alpha_w + \epsilon_{i,s,m} \tag{1}$$

$Y_{i,s,m}$ represents an outcome variable (eg our index of national identity) for respondent i, in suburb s belonging to a municipality m. Our independent variable of interest is $TRC_{m,d}$, the signal strength associated with the Radio 2000 antennas transmitting TRC content live during the years of TRC (1996-2000); $TRC_{s,m}^{free}$ is the signal strength of TRC media in the free space; $X_{i,m,d}$ are individual-level characteristics such as age and age square, gender, and race; $X_{s,m}$ are suburb-level pre-treatment time-invariant characteristics including socio-economics variables from the baseline 1996 census and geographic controls.[13] Accounting

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[13]Our full list of controls from the census include IHS population, share Black, share White, share speak-

for this large set of geographic characteristics further ensures that our variation does not rely on local drivers of signal strength but on the mix of topography between transmitters and receivers. To increase sample size we typically exploit multiple waves of Afrobarometer and include municipality by survey wave fixed effects. This allows us to zoom into within municipality by survey wave variation, netting out macro differences between waves over time and among different macro geographic areas of the country.

We present both the actual and the conditional variation in TRC media coverage in Figure 1. Unsurprisingly, panel (a) shows that TRC media coverage is largest around the more urbanized areas, such as in the Eastern Cape or in the area comprising Johannesburg and Pretoria, in the Gauteng region. In panel (b) the maps present the conditional TRC media coverage after partialling out the signal in the free space and our set of geographic controls. In this case, the patterns of variation look relatively more idiosyncratic and less concentrated in the urban centers. This suggests that our identification strategy is able to leverage variation that is exogenous to key local confounders associated with media coverage.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Longitudinal variation. Part of our analysis exploits variation in our outcomes over time before and after the TRC trials. When we exploit longitudinal variation we estimate an equation of the following type:

$$Y_{s,m,t} = \beta TRC_{s,m} \cdot Post_t + \delta X_{s,m,t} + \alpha_s + \alpha_t + \alpha_{m,t} + \epsilon_{s,m,t} \tag{2}$$

In equation 2, $Y_{s,m,t}$ indicates our outcome of interest (eg violence) in a suburb s observed over the years t. Leveraging the longitudinal nature of the data, we estimate a difference-in-difference (DiD) model by absorbing unit and time effects with the inclusion of suburb and year fixed effects. We estimate the differential impact of the TRC media exposure after the start of trials by interacting $TRC_{s,m}$ with a dummy equal to one starting in 1996, the first year of TRC trials. Suburb fixed effects α_s absorb cross-sectional differences in the TRC free signal. In our baseline specification, the vector of controls $X_{s,m,t}$ includes an interaction between the free signal $TRC_{s,m}^{free}$ and year fixed effects to absorb its time-varying impact. In more saturated specification we also account for regional time trends in violence by including municipality by year fixed effects. While we present our main results estimating equation 2

using a two-way fixed effects model, we also show that our results are unchanged if we account for the presence of negative weights or heterogeneous effects in the DiD (de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille 2020).

We cluster standard errors at the suburb level but present additional results on inference by clustering at the municipality level or by using standard errors that account for spatial correlation in the data (Conley 1999).

In both empirical strategies, our parameter of interest is β as it estimates the impact of a one standard deviation increase in the overall TRC media exposure on national identity, violence, and perceptions of the judiciary, everything else equal.[14]

Identification Check.   Before moving to the results of the analysis, we provide evidence that the cross-sectional TRC variation we reconstruct is balanced on a host of predetermined socio-economic characteristics measured at the suburb level. We do so by sequentially estimating our cross-sectional model presented in Equation 1 where the outcome variables are suburb characteristics constructed from the 1996 census and night lights. We also test whether our identifying variation impacts levels of violence in the pre-period, whereas we discuss pre-trends in violence in the next section when we show the results of the event study analysis.

[Figure 2 about here.]

Figure 2 shows the results of our balancedness test, where we standardize both dependent (indicated on the y-axis) and independent variables. We plot estimated coefficients from the conditional model, which accounts for our identification machinery: the TRC free signal, 1996 population, geographic characteristics, and municipality fixed effects.

All of the estimated coefficients are small in magnitude and are statistically indistinguishable from zero at the 95% level. We do not detect any meaningful pattern of correlation with variables that instead are highly correlated in the unconditional design. We also observe no statistical relationship between TRC media coverage and levels of violence in the pre-period. We compare these coefficients with a pseudo first stage, where we regress radio consumption measured from the first two waves of Afrobarometer on our treatment. Here, we see a strong correlation between exposure to TRC conditional on free signal and radio listenership. This is confirmed in Figure A.5, where we plot the impact of Radio 2000 coverage on the probability of listening to Radio.

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[14]A key point for the interpretation of the estimate of β is that it recovers an intention to treat parameter (Durante et al. 2019).

The overall message of Figure 2 bolsters our assumption that the coverage variation we reconstruct is orthogonal to relevant potential confounders and, as such, is a valid source of identifying variation.

4.2   Main Results

The first set of our results indicates that exposure to live TRC broadcasts fostered unity and pacification among Black South Africans, while it diminished trust in the judiciary among White South Africans.

4.2.1   TRC and National Building

Violence.   The primary aim of the TRC was to "promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past" (Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995). Did disseminating the TRC's message live on Radio 2000 help achieve this goal? Our analysis of the impact of TRC media on pacifying the country— an essential aspect of unity and reconciliation—suggests that it did. Figure 3 presents the results of our event study analysis, which examines the impact of TRC media on both the intensive and the extensive margin of violence using the SCAD dataset. We divide the study period into three parts: the pre-period from 1990 to 1995, the last year before the TRC began and serving as our reference year; the treatment period, during which the TRC was active, indicated by two red dashed lines; and the post-period from 2001 onward.

[Figure 3 about here.]

Our findings reveal a reduction in both the intensive and extensive margins of our baseline measure of violence, weighted by the number of fatalities. Both panels of Figure 3 display a similar pattern: no pre-trends before 1995, a gradual and initially imprecise decline in the coefficient during the treatment years, and a more stable reduction in violence beginning in 2000. The impact of TRC media exposure appears to dissipate to near zero after about ten years. On average, a one standard deviation increase in TRC media exposure reduces the likelihood of violence by approximately 1.3 percentage points (p.p.). We interpret these results as evidence that exposure to live broadcasts of the TRC on Radio 2000 contributed to national reconciliation. Notably, the event study shows that these effects only emerged after the TRC began in 1996, supporting our identification assumption that the cross-sectional variation in media exposure is exogenous.

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To assess whether TRC successfully mitigated "the conflicts and divisions of the past," we look at the impact of TRC media on different types of violence. We categorize violent episodes based on the primary issue recorded in SCAD, grouping them as either ethnic or non-ethnic, and further dividing them based on whether government repression was involved.[15] Table 1 presents our results, with column 1 showing the effect of TRC exposure on total violence using our baseline specification for ease of comparison, a specification that we apply consistently across all columns.

[Table 1 about here.]

Strikingly, we find that the decrease in violence is mostly concentrated in interethnic violence (column 2) rather than non-ethnic violence (column 3). For instance, the baseline estimate in panel A shows a of 1.3 p.p. reduction in the likelihood of any violent episode occurring given a one standard deviation increase in TRC media exposure. This is almost entirely driven by ethnic violence, which displays a decline in violence of 1.1 p.p., while non-ethnic violence drops by only 0.7 p.p. Additionally, we find that the overall decline in violence stems from a reduction in events without government repression (column 4), with no significant change observed in the probability of events involving government repression (column 5).

So far, we have demonstrated that exposure to TRC media led to a reduction in violence, especially interethnic violence within civil society. The next question is whether this reduction also extends to interracial animosity. We rely on the racial composition of South African municipalities at baseline to explore this.[16] We split our estimation sample across terciles of the White share distribution and re-estimate our difference-in-difference analysis in each tercile. Figure A.11 shows the result of our analysis.

We find that the decline of violence driven by TRC media is concentrated in localities with a low presence of White South Africans at baseline. On average, a one standard deviation increase in TRC media exposure leads to a 12% reduction in per capita violence; this effect is even stronger—around 20%—in areas where less than 8% of residents are White. Conversely, in municipalities with 8-27% White residents (the second tercile), the effect is smaller and statistically insignificant. In areas where White residents make up over 27% of the population (the top tercile), the effect is virtually nonexistent.[17] These results suggest that the observed reduction in violence is primarily due to a decline in Black-on-Black violence.

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[15]SCAD records 13 different reasons for the outbreak of violence. Of these interethnic discrimination and the economy are the most common with about 24% and 31% of the cases respectively.

[16]Ideally, we would have preferred looking at whether the decline in violence driven by TRC was composed by interracial conflict. Unfortunately, SCAD does not systematically report the race of the actors involved.

[17]On average, share of White is 11%.

We provide several alternative specifications to our main results on violence. Firstly, our baseline measures of violence are weighted by the number of fatalities which allows us to delve into the role of TRC in fostering pacification in highly violent settings. We present similar effects when focusing on non-weighted violence in Appendix Figure A.7 and Table A.3. Secondly, we show that our results are robust to applying log transformation to our violence outcomes (Figure A.8 and Table A.4). Thirdly, Figure A.9 provides evidence that our analysis is robust to both discretizing our treatment and to the presence of negative weights or dynamic effects in our baseline 2WFE estimation procedure (de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfœuille 2020). Lastly, we replicate our analysis using ACLED. While SCAD data has the crucial advantage of allowing us to estimate pre-period placebos, it is relatively sparser than ACLED. We show in Figure A.10 that our results with ACLED are in line with what we find with SCAD. While we cannot observe pre-trends, we estimate a similar reduction in per capita violence that also evaporates by the start of the 2010s.

Identity. We next provide evidence that South Africans exposed to live broadcasts of the TRC on media developed a stronger sense of national identity. Table 2 presents the results of our analysis, where we regress our main index of national identity on TRC media coverage across five increasingly saturated specifications. Column 1 presents results for the most basic specification, which includes the same controls as in the baseline balanced test. These include the TRC media signal computed in the absence of topographical obstacles (the *free* signal), and key geographic and socio-economic controls. In this model, we estimate an increase in national identity of 5% of a standard deviation, significant at the 10% level. In column 2 and 3 we add further geographic and demographic controls, which increase the coefficient's magnitude to 0.069 and then to 0.075, with statistical significance rising to the 1% level. Further adding individual level controls and an extended set of socio-economic controls does not affect our estimates (column 4 and 5). Our baseline specification in column 5 indicates that a one standard deviation increase in the exposure to TRC live broadcasts leads to an increase in national identity of about 7.5% of a standard deviation.

[Table 2 about here.]

Was the boost in national identity the same for Black and White South Africans? Table A.2 indicates that this was not the case. Our findings show that the results are largely influenced by Black South Africans. Throughout the five columns, the coefficients associated with White South Africans are about half the size of those for Black South Africans and are consistently statistically insignificant. Although the size of the standard errors does not

allow us to completely rule out their equality, it appears that exposure to the TRC through Radio 2000 broadcasts primarily affects the Black population.

To understand the heterogeneous impact of the TRC by race, we examine two outcomes revealing exclusionary identity. Specifically, we assess how TRC media influences respondents' perceptions of their group as *very different* from the rest of the country or as the *best group*. Figure A.6 presents estimates from our preferred specification (column 5 of Table 2). The results show a clear racial contrast. Black South Africans are less likely to view their group as the best or markedly different, while White South Africans exhibit the opposite trend. Although some coefficients may be marginally insignificant, together with the national identity index data, they reveal the TRC's distinct impact by race: it fosters a more inclusive sense of belonging for Black South Africans, whereas results for White South Africans suggest either no effect or greater perceived separation.

Our findings indicate that the TRC significantly contributed to uniting and pacifying South African society. However, its effects are primarily observed within the Black population, while it had little to no impact or even negative repercussions among Whites.

4.2.2 Legal Capacity and Accountability

While the TRC may have pacified part of South African society, some critics argue this has eroded trust in the judiciary. There are two main opposing views regarding the TRC's impact on trust in the judiciary. The first view claims the TRC was unbalanced and unfair, arguing it portrayed apartheid as an issue of "a few bad apples" rather than addressing the systemic violence that occurred (Mamdani 2020), and highlighting the unjust use of amnesties for apartheid agents (Gibson 2002). The second view suggests that the TRC heightened racial polarization by emphasizing race during public hearings. Black victims received praise for their struggles, while White perpetrators often showed little remorse, fostering a sense of collective White guilt. This has sometimes led to accusations of "prejudice against the Afrikaners" in Afrikaans media (Wilson et al. 2001; Verdoolaege 2005).

Both perspectives predict a legal deficit stemming from the TRC, but they differ in who is affected. If the belief is that the TRC was unfairly lenient to White perpetrators, we would expect increased mistrust of the judiciary among Blacks. Conversely, if some White individuals feel the TRC disproportionately targeted ordinary people while sparing high-ranking officials, we might see increased accountability among individuals and decreased trust in the judiciary overall.

[Table 3 about here.]

Table 3 summarizes the effects of TRC exposure on trust in courts, the police, personal

accountability, and perceived accountability of top officials. Our findings indicate that TRC exposure significantly impacts White respondents, who report lower trust in both courts (column 1) and the police (column 2). Additionally, they express a greater sense of personal accountability (column 3) but perceive less accountability among top officials (column 4), with the last finding being marginally insignificant. In contrast, Black respondents show no significant changes. These results challenge the notion that amnesties created a substantial judicial deficit, suggesting instead that increased racial awareness led White South Africans to feel a collective sense of culpability, altering their views on justice.

4.3 Robustness Analysis

4.3.1 TRC Media vs General Media

In this section, we provide evidence that the observed effects are driven by exposure to the TRC, and not only from exposure to generic media. We do so by testing whether alternative media sources are able to reproduce our main results. In particular we reconstruct two alternative media treatment: variation in SABC 1, the main South African TV channel which did not carry TRC programs during the TRC years, and the media coverage associated to the TRC media outlets *after* the end of the trials.

[Figure 4 about here.]

Figure 4 displays the results of our falsification analysis. For each of eight main outcomes, we plot the coefficients associated to our treatment next to the effect of the TRC media outlets in 2013 and the effect of SABC 1, the only SABC TV channel not carrying any TRC programs. As one can see, the only coefficient systematically significant is the one associated to our treatment (Exposure to live broadcasts on Radio 2000). While the impact of SABC 1 is not significant and always smaller than our treatment, the direction of the coefficient suggests that some spillovers of TRC on channels other than those broadcasting TRC media existed. On the contrary, the coefficients associated to TRC media outlets in the post-period are insignificant both statistically and in magnitude. This last results is corroborating evidence that the effects of our treatment are not driven by an overall media impact but by the specific content broadcasted in the years of the TRC trials.

4.3.2 Transmitting Towers and Agglomeration Hubs

Another source of concern is how agglomeration influences the location of radio stations and whether it drives the observed effects. To address this issue, our identification strategy

conditions on a hypothetical signal that, among other factors, accounts for the distance to the station providing coverage in each suburb. However, the hypothetical free signal coverage is highly nonlinear, and merely including it in the regression model may not adequately capture the impact of distance to the transmitting antennas.

Therefore, to test the robustness of our results, we conduct two complementary analyses. First, we estimate our main outcomes by adding distances up to the fifth closest transmitting tower. Columns 1 to 5 in Tables A.9, A.10, and A.11 present the results for national identity, trust in the judiciary and accountability, and violence, respectively. We find that regardless of which distances are included, our results remain virtually unchanged both in magnitude and significance. We then include distances to potential agglomeration hubs, such as Cape Town and Johannesburg (Column 7), as well as the distance to provincial capitals (Column 8), and our results remain very similar.

Second, as a complementary exercise, we re-estimate our results after excluding suburbs with antennas transmitting Radio2000, SABC1, SABC2, and SABC3. Crucially, as shown in Tables A.12, A.13, and A.14, our findings are not driven by the presence of these transmitters. Regardless of which suburbs with transmitter outlets are excluded, our results remain very similar to the baseline specification. This suggests that the observed effects in our main analysis are not capturing factors related to agglomeration forces.

5 Implications for Race Relations

Our findings reveal a significant trade-off: while the TRC fostered national identity and pacified the country, it also bred mistrust among the White minority regarding the judiciary. In the following paragraphs, we explore the implications of this trade-off for intergroup contact and the state's ability to implement affirmative action policies. On the one hand, improved nation-building can enhance interracial contact and improve acceptance of affirmative action policies by diminishing group identity. On the other hand, lower trust in the judiciary may lead one group to be warier of interracial contact and to avoid such interactions as a result. We examine which hypothesis holds by assessing the TRC's impact on measures of interracial contact, civic engagement, and compliance with a policy aimed at reducing workplace racial inequality.

5.1 Interracial Contact and Civic Engagement

We analyze data on spatial sorting, intermarriage rates, and intergroup trust to show that the TRC worsened racial relations in South Africa. Consistent with the increasing alienation

of White South Africans, we also find that they exhibit lower levels of civic engagement.

5.1.1 Residential Sorting

We investigate how the TRC affected residential patterns using the 1996 and 2011 Community Profiles releases of the corresponding census, which provide information on demographic characteristics at the suburb level.

[Table 4 about here.]

Table 4 presents regression results using the difference in the share of Whites from 1996 to 2011 as the outcome (column 1). Our preferred specification shows that exposure to the TRC did not significantly affect the overall share of Whites (column 1). However, if the TRC caused Whites to be more cautious in their interactions with Blacks, we would expect them to leave Black-majority and mixed neighborhoods for White enclaves. This is confirmed in column 2: a one standard deviation increase in TRC exposure increases the share of Whites in predominantly White areas (over 80% White in 1996) by 0.6%, while in mixed areas (20% to 80% White), it decreases the share of Whites by 0.33%. In localities with less than 20% Whites in 1996, the effect is negative but not statistically significant.

The remaining columns explore the driving forces behind these changes in local racial composition. The increase in Whites in already White areas is mainly due to an absolute rise in White residents (column 4), while the TRC seems to lead to a non-significant decline in Black residents (column 6). Conversely, the drop in Whites in mixed areas stems from both White flight and a notable increase in Black residents.

5.1.2 Intermarriage

We next investigate whether TRC affected intermarriage rates between different races. Following decades of control on their romantic lives and residential settlement, the intermarriage rate was unsurprisingly very low in 1996: only 0.93% of married individuals under 30 old were with a partner of another race than their own. By the 2011 census, this proportion had increased slowly but steadily to 2.15%.

[Table 5 about here.]

Table 5 presents difference-in-difference estimates assessing the effects of TRC exposure on these rates. We compare under-30 married individuals from the 1996 and 2011 censuses, controlling for local marriage characteristics from 1996 (such as the share of one's own racial group of the opposite sex). Column 1 shows that TRC exposure had a significantly negative

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impact on intermarriage among under-30 men; those in TRC-exposed municipalities were less likely to marry outside their race compared to under-30 men in 1996. This trend is even more pronounced when controlling for local marriage market characteristics, revealing a decrease of 1.1 percentage points in intermarriage rates for Black men from the 2011 census relative to Black men in 1996 (column 2). The size of this effect remains stable when controlling for province-specific time trends (column 3). The remaining columns confirms these results when focusing on women. Again, an increase of 1 standard deviation in TRC media lowers intermarriage rate of women from the 2011 census by 0.1 percentage points relative to women from the 1996 census. This effect increases to 0.47 percentage points when controlling for local marriage market characteristics, and 0.33 percentage points when further adding provincial-specific time trends.[18] Finally, Table A.7 reports race-specific effects of TRC media on intermarriage and confirms that TRC media lowers intermarriage rates among all racial groups.

5.1.3 Interethnic Trust

Contact hypothesis theory suggests that lower social contact can lead to lower intergroup trust (Allport 1954). Consistent with the reduced social interaction between races documented above, we show that higher exposure to TRC media led to lower interracial trust.

We start by exploiting an indicator we derive from a Afrobarometer survey asking about intergroup trust. On average, TRC media led to small decline in intergroup trust, about at 10% of a standard deviation (see Table A.5). However, being Afrikaner also implies also being White, thus it is unclear whether we should interpret this result as lower intergroup or interracial trust. To discern between the two, we split our sample into high and low White share and rerun our analysis by race.

[Figure 5 about here.]

Figure 5 shows that the TRC reduced intergroup trust, and that these results are driven by areas with a high share of White residents at baseline. In such suburbs, a one standard deviation increase in TRC media exposure decreased intergroup trust by about 40% of a standard deviation. We interpret these heterogeneous effects as evidence of higher mistrust when interracial presence is more salient (high White share suburbs). This suggests that the negative impact of TRC on intergroup trust can be interpreted as a decline in interracial trust.

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[18]The lower number of observations when using the age of the wife is due to the fact than age at marriage is significantly lower for women relative to men (DHS 2016).

5.1.4 Civic Engagement

Finally, we investigate whether exposure to the TRC led to changes in individuals' participation in political and communal spheres. Specifically, we examine whether TRC media exposure influences people's willingness to discuss politics, interest in public affairs, voting behavior, and participation in communal activities.

[Table 6 about here.]

In line with our previous findings on racial entrenchment, we observe that exposure to the TRC has a negative impact on overall civic engagement, particularly among White individuals. As shown in Table 6, one standard deviation increase in TRC media coverage decreases the likelihood of participating in political discussions by 17% of a standard deviation for White South Africans. For Black South Africans, although a similar negative effect is observed, it is not statistically significant (see column 1).

When examining interest in public affairs, TRC exposure is linked to a decrease of approximately 7% of a standard deviation for Black South Africans and 20% of a standard deviation for White South Africans (see column 2). We also find a negative impact on reported voting behavior, with a 7.5 percentage point reduction in the likelihood of voting for Black South Africans and a decrease of 25% of a standard deviation for White South Africans (see column 3). Regarding participation in communal activities (columns 4 and 5), while we observe a negative effect, it is not statistically significant.

Taken together, these results confirm that despite the positive effects of the TRC on nation- and peace-building, it led to an entrenchment of the different racial groups, as measured by residential sorting, interracial marriage, intergroup trust and lower civic engagement. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the TRC led the White population to update their belief on the leniency of the court system toward them. Because of this update in beliefs, Whites react by separating them from the rest of the country.

5.2 State Capacity

So far, we have established that the TRC contributed to increased racial entrenchment. We now explore how this has affected the state's ability to implement policies aimed at addressing racial inequality. Our hypothesis is that the TRC's negative influence on racial relations diminished compliance with state policies promoting fair representation of historically marginalized groups in the workplace. To test this hypothesis, we analyze the impact of the TRC on adherence to one of the key affirmative action initiatives of the post-apartheid

era: the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) policy. A brief overview of the B-BBEE requirements is provided below, with further details in Appendix section C.

5.2.1 The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

The B-BBEE policy was originally introduced in 1993 and has been amended several times since then. It has constituted one of the key pieces of legislation intended to undo the injustices of apartheid since the democratic transition. The official goal of B-BBEE is to curb racial inequalities within South African firms by promoting the economic empowerment of historically discriminated groups in the country.

Key to the policy is the rating system for firms, evaluated against criteria like Black ownership, employment equity, skills development, and socioeconomic contributions. Points are awarded based on how well a firm meets these criteria, with the cumulative score determining its overall B-BBEE status. This status is crucial in the public procurement process: higher B-BBEE ratings lead to preferential treatment in contract bidding. Moreover, this is supposed to generate positive externalities by encouraging widespread compliance with B-BBEE principles across industries.

Crucially, compliance requirements vary by revenue: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with annual revenues below 10 million ZAR automatically receive the highest status, while Qualifying Medium Enterprises (QMEs) with revenues between 10 and 50 million ZAR receive a baseline status – often insufficient for state contracts, necessitating further action to improve their rating. Large enterprises with revenues exceeding 50 million ZAR are solely assessed by their B-BBEE scorecard. This tiered structure creates significant compliance pressures at the 10 and 50 million ZAR thresholds (Lindsay 2015).

5.2.2 Empirical Setup

We investigate how TRC impacts compliance with B-BBEE policy by analyzing whether firms in TRC-exposed areas are more likely to bunch just below the 10 million ZAR threshold, thus avoiding compliance. We focus on the 10M threshold for two reasons. First, this threshold is relevant to a much higher share of firms as compared to the 50 million ZAR threshold. Second, management decisions in larger firms with multiple plants are less likely to be influenced by local conditions such as exposure to the TRC.[19]

To conduct our bunching analysis, we use panel data from South African business tax returns, tracking firm characteristics, particularly annual revenues, from 2008 to 2018.[20] We

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[19]10 million ZAR are equivalent to about 561,000 2024 USD whereas 50 million ZAR to 2,818,775 2024 USD.

[20]We provide a detailed description of the data in section 3 and B.

categorize firms into low- and high-TRC based on their quartiles of residualized treatment: we define as low-TRC (high-TRC) firms that lie within the first (fourth) quartile of the distribution in terms of residualized treatment. Our first approach compares the relative size of the bunching among high- versus low-TRC firms pooling together data from separate years in a cross sectional analysis. The second approach examines the likelihood of revenue growth across different million bins, leveraging the longitudinal nature of the dataset.

5.2.3 Results from Cross-Sectional Analysis

In our cross-sectional analysis, we compare the size of bunching at the B-BBEE cutoff between high- and low-TRC firms. In practice, we estimate the size of the bunch by fitting a polynomial to the observed distribution of annual sales and then computing the excess mass of firms between the observed and the fitted around the B-BBEE threshold (Chetty et al. 2011; Kleven 2016). More specifically, we estimate the following equation:

$$c_j = \sum_{i=0}^{p} \beta_i (z_j)^i + \sum_{i=z_-}^{i=z_+} \gamma_i 1[z_j = i] + \eta_j \tag{3}$$

where c_j is the number of firms in bin j, z_j is the revenue in bin j, $[z_-, z_+]$ is the excluded range, and p is the order of the polynomial. In our baseline specification, the excluded range goes from ZAR 9.5M to ZAR 11M and the bin size is equal to 250 thousands ZAR.[21] We extrapolate the fit to obtain the counterfactual number of firms within each bin in the excluded range, and use the difference between this counterfactual and the actual number of firms to quantify the size of the bunch.

[Figure 6 about here.]

Figure 6 illustrates the approach for both the low-TRC sample (left panel) and the high-TRC sample (right panel). In both samples, there is a clear increase in the density of firms just before the 10 million threshold, at which firms are required to comply with additional affirmative action rules. This is followed by a noticeable dip in the density of firms immediately after this threshold. However, the deviations from the fitted line (the counterfactual) are more pronounced in the high-TRC sample compared to the low-TRC sample. When we compare the estimates of the size of the bunch in these two samples, we find a statistically significant difference of approximately 247, indicating that firms more exposed to the TRC are less willing to comply with affirmative action policies.[22]

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[21]Results are robust to alternative excluded ranges and to alternative bin size.

[22]Standard errors are calculated using a bootstrap procedure, where we randomly reshuffled the error term from Equation 3 a total of 1,000 times (Chetty et al. 2011; Kleven 2016).

5.2.4 Results from Panel Analysis

The panel dimension of the NT-SDF dataset enables us to leverage information on firms' choices over time to enhance the estimation of counterfactual outcomes (Kleven 2016; Garicano et al. 2016). In particular, we utilize the longitudinal nature of the data to estimate the probability of sales growth for each revenue bin around the 10 million ZAR threshold. Our empirical prediction is that high Total Revenue Companies (TRC) are equally likely to grow from one million bin to the next, except when they reach the 9 million bin. At the 9 million bin, we expect high TRC firms to exhibit lower chances of growing to the 10 million bin.

To estimate how TRC influences the likelihood of firm sales growth, we turn to a regression framework and estimate an equation of the following form:

$$y_{i,t,p} = \sum_{b=b_-}^{b_+} \beta_b \cdot TRC_{i,p} \cdot 1[Revenue_{i,t,p} = b] + \gamma_i + \theta_t + X_{i,t,p} + \epsilon_{i,t,p}, \tag{4}$$

where the outcome of interest, $y_{i,t,p}$ is a dummy variable taking a value of 1 if firm i with postal code p grew from bin b to bin $b+1$ from year t to year $t+1$. Firm-level fixed effects $\gamma_{i,p}$ absorb any time-invariant firm characteristics, while time fixed effects θ_t absorb any time shocks that might affects all firms. The vector of controls $X_{i,t,p}$ crucially includes bin fixed effects. The vector β_b contains the coefficients of interest, which represent the bin-specific effects of exposure to TRC on the probability of growing to the next bin.

[Table 7 about here.]

Table 7 shows the baseline regression results in Column 1. While exposure to TRC does not significantly affect growth probabilities for firms outside the 10M threshold (that is, from the 6 to 8M bins and from the 10 to 12M bins), it negatively impacts firms in the 9M bin, with a one standard deviation increase in TRC exposure reducing growth likelihood by about 4%. Subsequent columns confirm the robustness of these findings to more demanding specifications. Column 2 adds year by municipality fixed effects, column 3 adds year by sales bin fixed effects, and column 4 adds year by industry fixed effects, before adding them all simultaneously in column 5.

Taken together, the evidence from the cross-sectional and the panel analyses suggest that TRC increased the size of bunching right at the threshold at which firms are required to start engaging in affirmative action to promote the economic empowerment and integration of groups discriminated against during apartheid. We interpret this as a sign that the TRC further intensified racial divisions, which negatively affected South African firms' willingness

to adopt policies that promote greater racial integration in the workplace. Our findings help quantify the economic distortions associated with deteriorating racial relations.

6   Characteristics and Impact of TRC Hearings

In this section, we exploit daily variation in live TRC hearings on Radio 2000 to characterize the immediate reaction of South African households to the trials. We document how the salience of the hearings on radio affects perceptions over the work of the TRC, its mandate, and scope. Moreover, our exercise bolsters our interpretation that the TRC media variation embeds TRC content instead of a general shift of the media industry. We conclude by arguing how the White backlash can be attributed to the differential portrayal of races on the stand.

6.1   Salience Analysis

To understand the initial reaction of South Africans to the TRC trials, we exploit the fact that the first post-apartheid round of interviews of the Afrobarometer survey occurred during the summer of 2000 when the TRC was still having public hearings. Figure A.12 shows the daily variation created by the overlap of the TRC hearing with the Afrobarometer interviews between July and August 2000. The histogram shows that, excluding two initial days, we have three main chunks of Afrobarometer interviews where hearing days are preceded by days without a hearing. In our empirical strategy, we use a two-way fixed effect model and control for each of these chunks, which we name episodes. This allows us to make sure we compare survey responses during days in which a TRC hearing was broadcasted versus days just before when no trial was discussed, conditional on Radio 2000 coverage. Equation (5) formalizes our strategy.

$$y_{i,s,d,c} = \beta Radio2000_s \times Hearing_{d,c} + \lambda X_{i,s} + \gamma_{sc} + \gamma_d + m\epsilon_{i,s,d,c} \tag{5}$$

where $y_{i,s,d,c}$ measures an outcome for individual i, suburb s, on day d during episode c. $Radio2000_s$ is the cross-sectional continuous variation in Radio 2000 signal strength in suburb s. $Hearing_{d,c}$ is an indicator equal to one if the TRC ran a trial on day d during episode c. $X_{i,s}$ is a vector of demographic characteristics of survey respondent i interviewed in suburb s which include: age and age squared, race and gender.[23] The suburb by episode fixed effects γ_{cs} guarantee that we only compare hearing days to days just *before* when no hearings were

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[23]Not all of the individual characteristics recorded in the Afrobarometer are pre-determined to our treatment. In our baseline analysis, we restrict our attention to age, sex, and gender, however, in practice, including also urban status and educational attainment makes no difference.

aired on radio within a given suburb. Day fixed effects γ_d account for common daily shocks. Our fixed effects make sure that our coefficient of interest β identifies the impact of accessing Radio 2000 on a hearing day within a given episode. Finally, $\epsilon_{i,s,d,c}$ is the error term.

The underlying identification assumption is that survey respondents with high exposure to Radio 2000 on days with a hearing day are similar both in terms of observables and unobservables to respondents on days without a hearing or with poor access to live hearings on the radio. While we cannot directly test this assumption, we can inspect whether the treatment and control group look alike in terms of pre-determined observables. We show the results of this exercise in Table A.15, where we investigate the balancedness of ten individual-level characteristics that we consider arguably pre-determined to our treatment: belonging to either of the three main races, gender, educational attainment, rural status, and age. In none of these ten regressions, did we detect a significant relationship, corroborating our identifying assumption.

6.2   Results

We lead our analysis by exploring whether the salience of the TRC hearings on radio impacted perceptions specifically related to the work of the TRC. To investigate this, we leverage the 2000 wave of the Afrobarometer survey, which included several questions regarding attitudes toward the TRC and reconciliation. We present a summary of our results in Figure 7.

[Figure 7 about here.]

Our estimates show that South Africans interviewed the day a TRC hearing was live on the radio have a higher probability of developing an opinion about the mandate of the TRC. On average, we find that both Black and White respondents exposed to the TRC are more likely to declare that the TRC was an important institution for achieving nation-building. The magnitudes are similar across race—about 10% of a standard deviation—but differ in significance, with the coefficients on White not statistically significant.

Both Black and White respondents exposed to the TRC hearings on the radio seem to react similarly when asked what it takes to achieve national reconciliation. We find that a one standard deviation increase in TRC media exposure leads to about a 10 to 15% boost in the likelihood to agree on what we define *soft* reconciliation measures, that is, understanding or forgiving each other, forgetting the past, and healing difficult memories.

When asked about amnesties we find no significant impact of the TRC. This corroborates our interpretation in the main analysis that the use of amnesties did not lead, on average, to a judicial vacuum as measured by the trust for the courts or the perceptions of accountability for the Black population.

One aspect in which TRC led to disagreement by race is on *hard* measures of reconciliation. We find that exposure to the TRC hearings on the radio provoked an instant boost in the probability of agreeing that reconciliation should involve material compensation for Black respondents. The same analysis on Whites shows no effect. Overall, the results presented in Figure 7 suggest that respondents interviewed while the hearings were live on radio in areas with good radio reception are more likely to react to TRC-related questions. This result bolsters our interpretation that TRC media exposure delivered TRC content. We now turn our attention to the study of a key channel behind our main results.

In our analysis of the overall impact of the TRC, we document how the White backlash regarding the judiciary has a negative cascade effect on interracial contact and state capacity. The question we aim to answer now is what prompted this backlash in the first place. One of the key criticisms moved to the TRC has been the differential portrayal of races, which has been linked to feelings of unfair representation among White South Africans (Wilson et al. 2001). In this exercise, we can test whether one of the key aspects determining racial portrayal in a hearing—the race of the perpetrator applying for an amnesty—differentially impacted both perceptions over the TRC, measures of identity and trust for the judiciary.[24]

We implement this empirical exercise by splitting our estimation sample by the race of the perpetrator on trial and replicating our salience analysis. In our set of hearings from July-August 2000 this translates into a very balanced split with eleven out of twenty hearings having a Black perpetrator.[25] We organize the results of our analysis in two exhibits. Figure 8 shows the results of our analysis on the perceptions of the TRC mandate and our outcomes on identity and trust for the judiciary. Figure A.13 plots our estimates pertaining to what it takes to achieve national reconciliation.

[Figure 8 about here.]

The key takeaway from this analysis is that White respondents exhibit a strong backlash when exposed to White perpetrators testifying during trials. Notably, we find that Whites are less likely to view the TRC as important for nation-building, but only when exposed to a White perpetrator; otherwise, their reaction aligns positively with those of Black respondents. A similar backlash is observed in perceptions of how distinct their group is, beliefs about whether their group is superior, and trust in the judiciary, although the latter result is only marginally significant. As shown in Figure A.13, we also find that White respondents exposed to White perpetrators are significantly less likely to support material compensation.

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[24]Since the salience analysis in this section is based on the first wave of Afrobarometer only, we are constrained in the exact questions we can look at. Nonetheless, we are able to look at the most important ones.

[25]In the summer of the year 2000, the TRC only ran amnesty hearings.

While the magnitudes and standard errors suggest a cautious interpretation of these results, we believe the analysis aligns with the hypothesis that racial salience in the TRC process played a significant role. This is consistent with economic literature showing how salience—in this case, tied to racial identity markers—can distort rational decision-making (Bordalo et al. 2022). Our findings suggest that White South Africans when confronted with a White perpetrator, react to this racial salience by negatively updating their perceptions of the judiciary. We believe this specific mechanism helps explain the trade-offs involved in the overall impact of the TRC.

7   Conclusion

This paper examines the impact of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on the development of the post-apartheid state. As one of South Africa's most widely mediatized events, radio played a crucial role in disseminating the message of the commission to the population at large. Using topographic variation in the coverage of Radio 2000, which broadcasted the TRC hearings live and unfiltered, we found that while the TRC fostered national unity among Black South Africans, it simultaneously exacerbated tensions with White South Africans. On the one hand, the TRC induced a decline in interethnic violence among Blacks, who also reported a stronger sense of national identity. On the other hand, White South Africans exposed to the TRC became more mistrustful of the new judiciary system. We argued that the lower trust in the judiciary prompted White South Africans to see interracial interactions as riskier and, as a result, sought to minimize the risk of interracial contact.

We documented that this dynamic had significant negative consequences for interracial contact, including lower intermarriage rates, greater residential segregation, and a decrease in intergroup trust. Moreover, consistent with White alienation, we showed that they engaged less often with the country's public and political life.

Drawing on evidence from the B-BBEE policy, we also documented that the racial entrenchment associated with the TRC diminished the South African state's capacity to implement policies to improve racial relations. Indeed, firms in high TRC areas were more likely to bunch just below a critical policy threshold, which induces additional investments in measures promoting the advancement of previously disadvantaged racial groups. Ultimately, we found that the TRC increased the implicit tax of pursuing racial equity in the workplace.

We concluded by arguing that the White backlash on the judiciary can be attributed to the differential portrayal of races during the TRC hearings. Zeroing in on the race of the perpetrator taking the stand in the TRC trials, we showed how White South Africans

backlashed systematically when exposed to White perpetrators testifying. This last exercise also further bolstered the interpretation that our variation in Radio 2000 exposure embedded the TRC message specifically instead of a generalized media effect.

As we approach the thirtieth anniversary of the TRC's establishment, our paper contributes to the ongoing and lively debate surrounding its impact. TRCs are complex and powerful institutions, and how their narratives are disseminated to the broader population has vital implications for their influence on society. We emphasize that a central goal of the TRC mandate was largely achieved: the majority of the country experienced increased unity and peace, a significant accomplishment given South Africa's recent history of division and violence within the Black majority (Amodio and Chiovelli 2018).

However, we also present a cautionary tale about how historical divisions can be unintentionally exacerbated, especially when those divisions align with disparities in wealth and economic power. In other contexts, the trade-off between unity for the majority and the alienation of a racial minority might be considered acceptable or even necessary. Yet, our findings demonstrate that in contexts like the South African one, it is inconceivable to imagine a successful state-building process that overlooks the active involvement of Whites, given their disproportionate control over the country's economic power.

A key question is what lessons we can generalize from the South African TRC. Several TRCs in other settings have been established based on the South African model, with a similar reliance on media to disseminate their messages. The most direct parallels are other African TRCs, such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia, and Tunisia (Hayner 2010). Our findings suggest that TRCs in other contexts could significantly affect the state-building process. One open question is how different societal cleavages in other contexts might lead to different conclusions. Investigating this further is essential to fully understand the trade-offs in implementing transitional justice through Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

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Figure 1: TRC Media Exposure, Actual and Residual
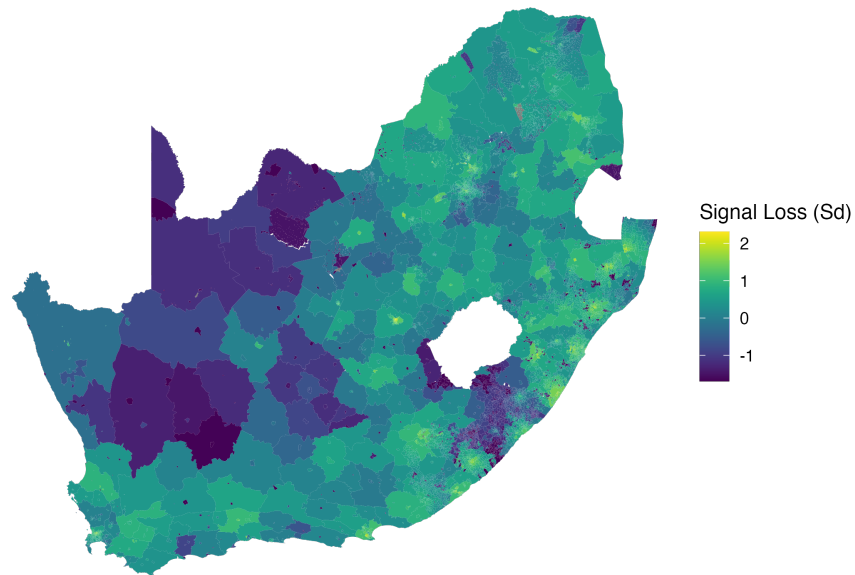
(a) TRC Media Coverage
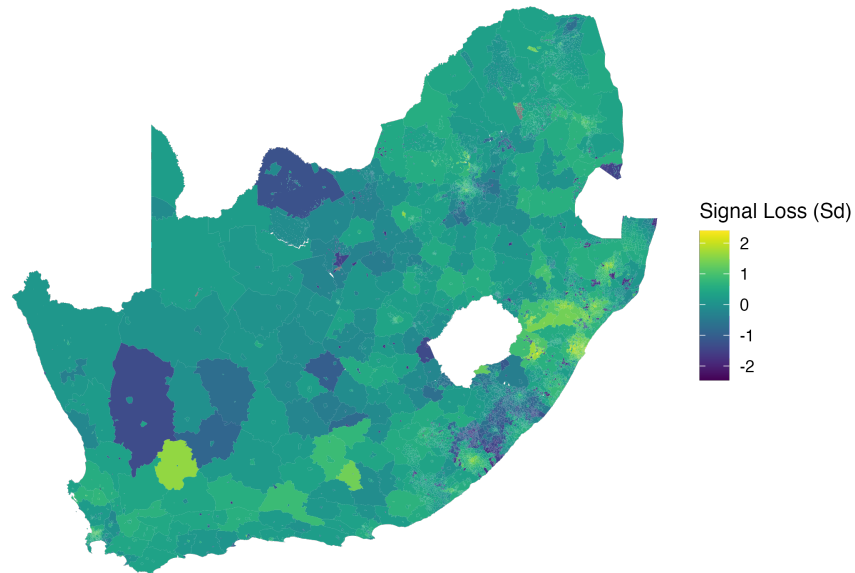
(b) TRC Media Residual Coverage

Notes: The maps plot TRC Media coverage (a) and its residualized version (b), both standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation one. We compute media coverage using the Irregular Terrain Model (Hufford 2002) taking into account terrain topography and antenna specifications; refer to section 3.1 for a detailed explanation of how we reconstruct media variation. Localities with a lighter color (yellow) receive a stronger signal, while darker localities (purple) receive a weaker signal.

Figure 2: TRC Media Coverage Balanced on Pre-Determined
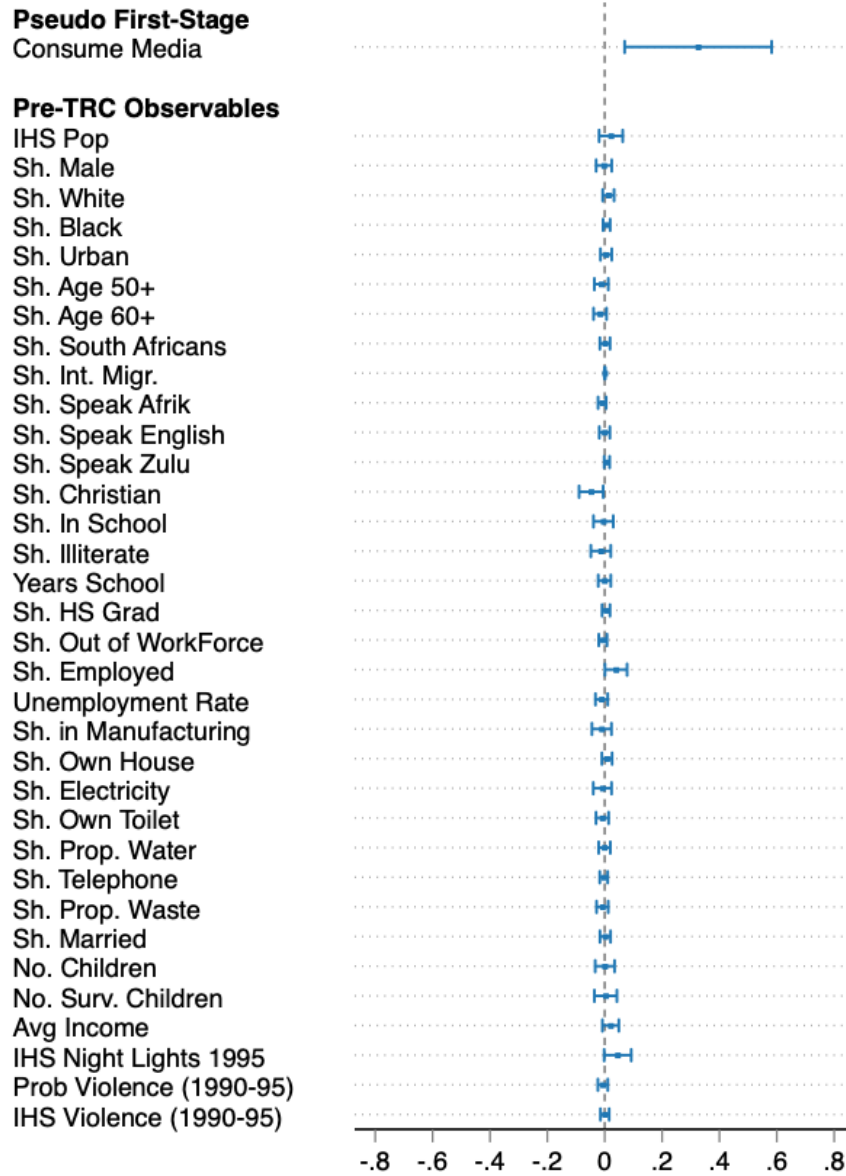
Notes: This figure presents the balance test of TRC Media on pre-determined suburb-level variables. Each coefficient comes from a separate estimation where we regress the outcome variable indicated on the y-axis on TRC media exposure. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. We plot coefficients and 95% confidence intervals from a specification that includes our baseline identification machinery: the TRC free signal, 1996 population, geographic characteristics, and wave-by-municipality fixed effects. First-stage coefficient comes from the Afrobarometer question on media consumption. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Appendix Figure A.4 displays the balance test with three separate specifications; Appendix Figure A.3 displays the balance test comparing our source of variation with a more naive variation in TRC media.

Figure 3: The Effect of TRC Media Exposure on Violence, Event Study
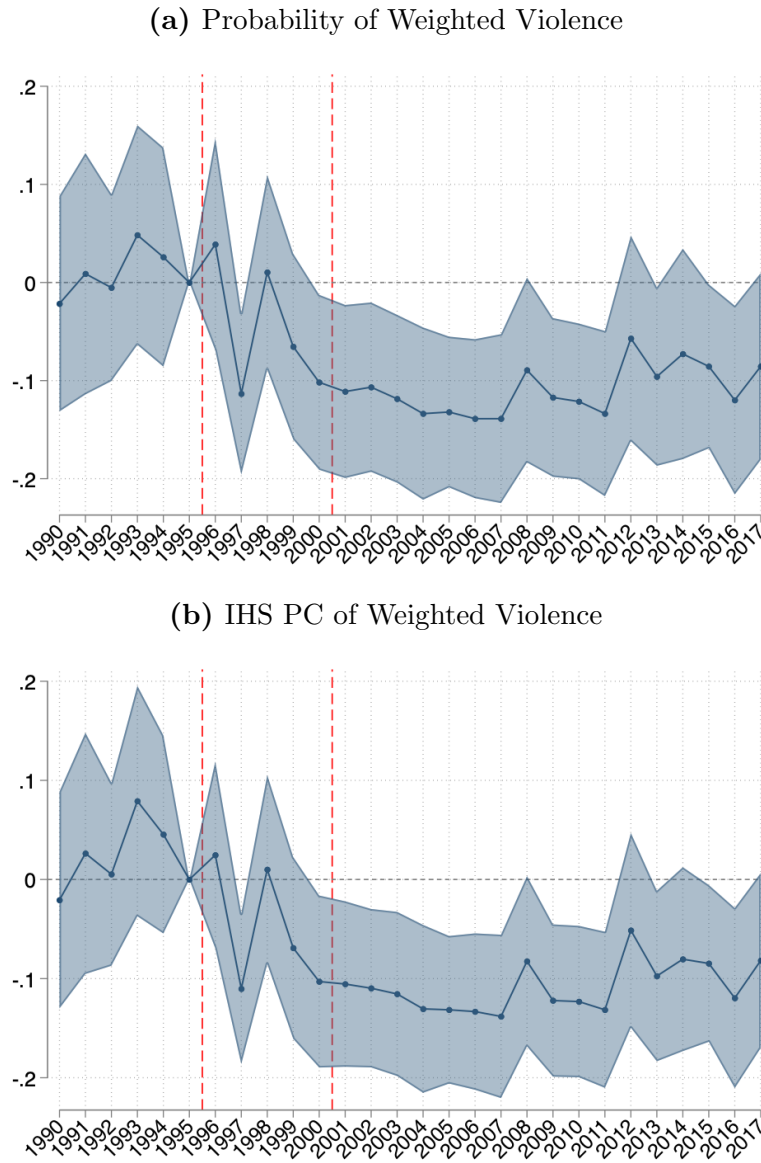
(a) Probability of Weighted Violence

(b) IHS PC of Weighted Violence

Note: These figures plot the event study coefficients for the impact of TRC media on violence, using specification 2. Our baseline measure of violence is weighted by fatalities involved. Panel (a) shows results of the probability of violence. Panel (b) shows results of violence per capita using a IHS transformation. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized and expressed in standard deviations. Confidence intervals at 95%. See Table 1 for a full description of controls included.

Figure 4: Falsifications Using Alternative Media Sources

(a) Feel SA, Index

(b) Feel SA

(c) Violence Episodes, IHS

(d) Violence Extensive

(e) Trust Judiciary, Index

(f) Trust Courts

(g) Trust Police

(h) Accountability
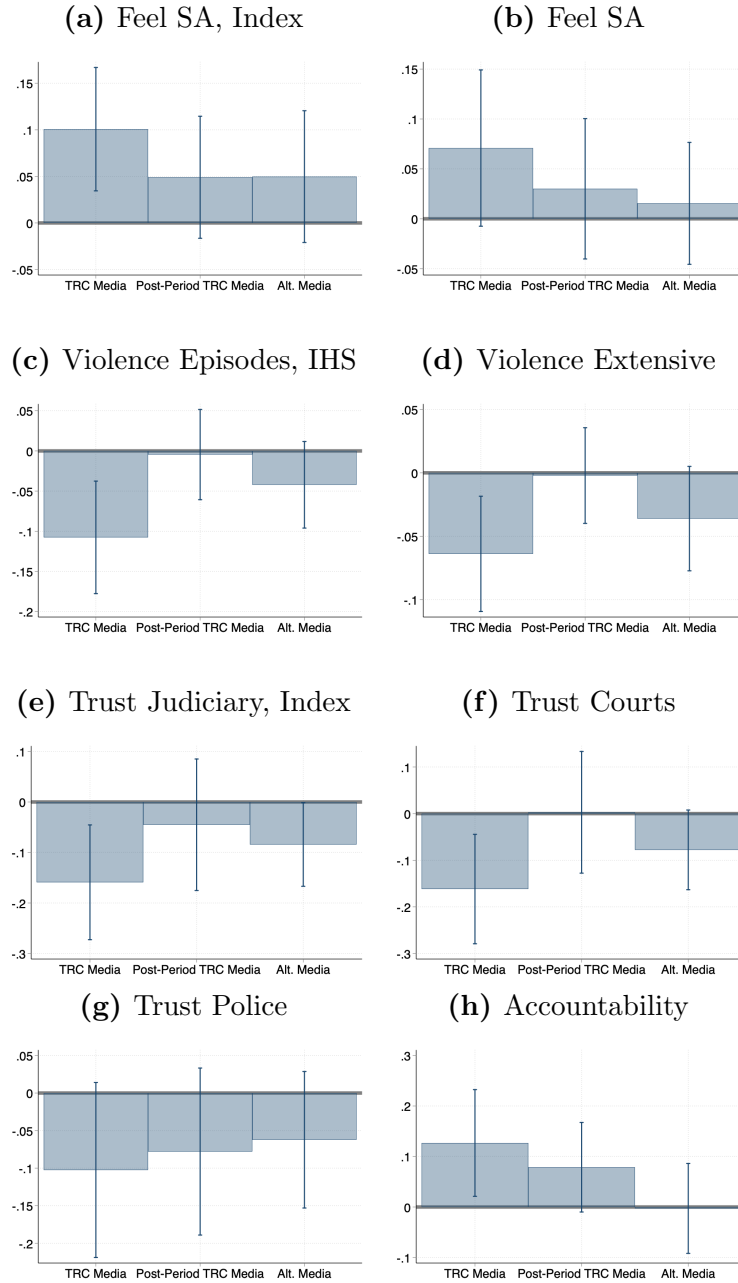
Notes: These figures plot the falsification analysis where we regress our main outcomes on three different media sources: our treatment composed by the media outlets broadcasting TRC content during the years of the trials (TRC Media), the same media outlets that were broadcasting TRC content during the trials after the end of the trials (Post-Period TRC Media) and the main TV channel which did not carry programs devoted to TRC, ie SABC 1 (Alt. Media). We plot bars and confidence intervals from our most saturated specifications for outcomes from Afrobatometer and SCAD (violence), see Table 2 and 1 for a full description of controls included. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. Confidence intervals at 95%. We cluster standard errors at the municipality level.

Figure 5: TRC Reduces Intergroup Trust

(a) Full Sample

(b) High White Share
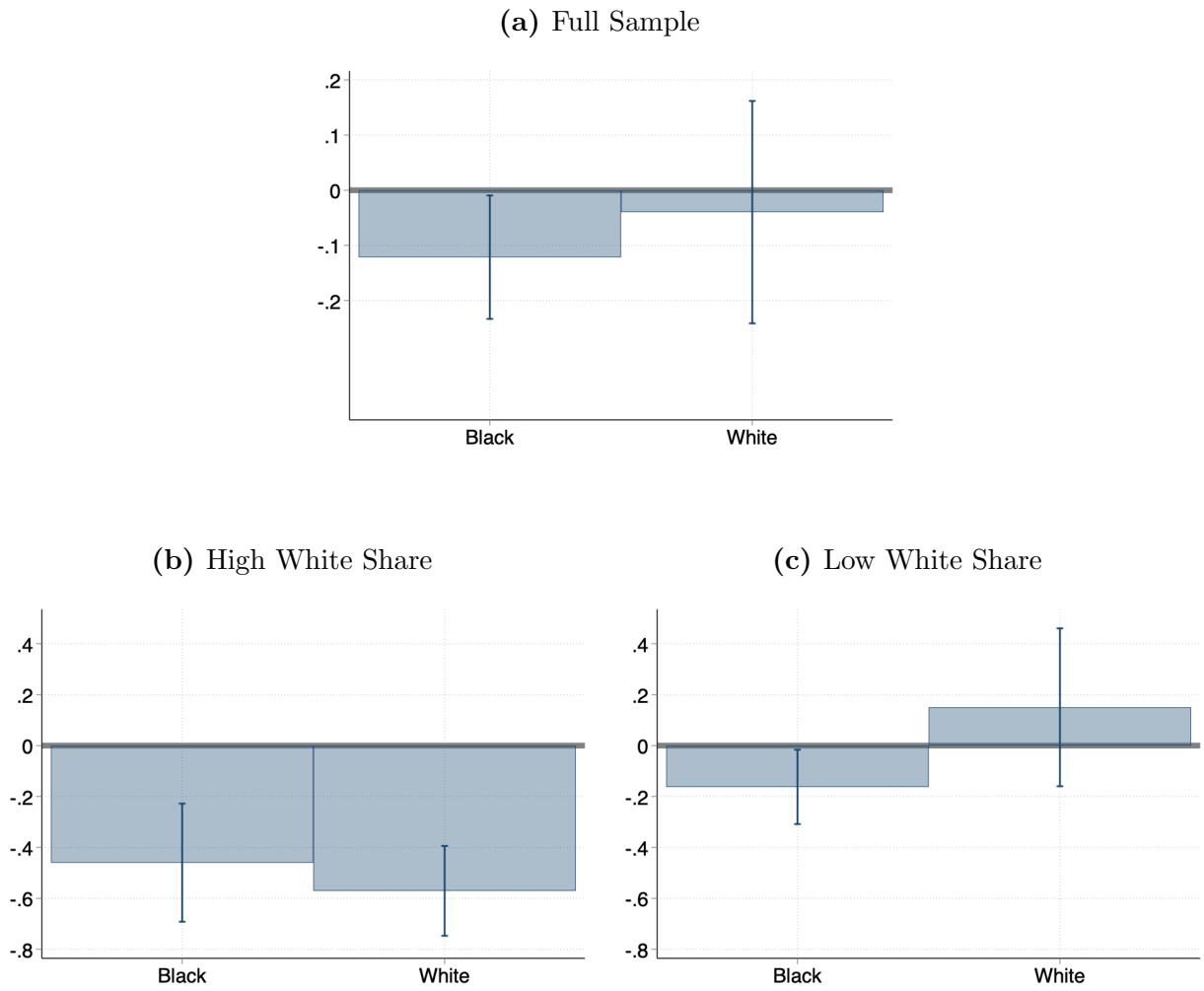
(c) Low White Share

Notes: These figures plots the impact of TRC media on intergroup trust in three samples: full (panel a), White share above 20% (panel b) and White share below 20% (panel c). Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. We plot bars and confidence intervals from our most saturated specification, see Table 2 for a full description of controls included. Confidence intervals at 95%. We cluster standard errors at the municipality level.
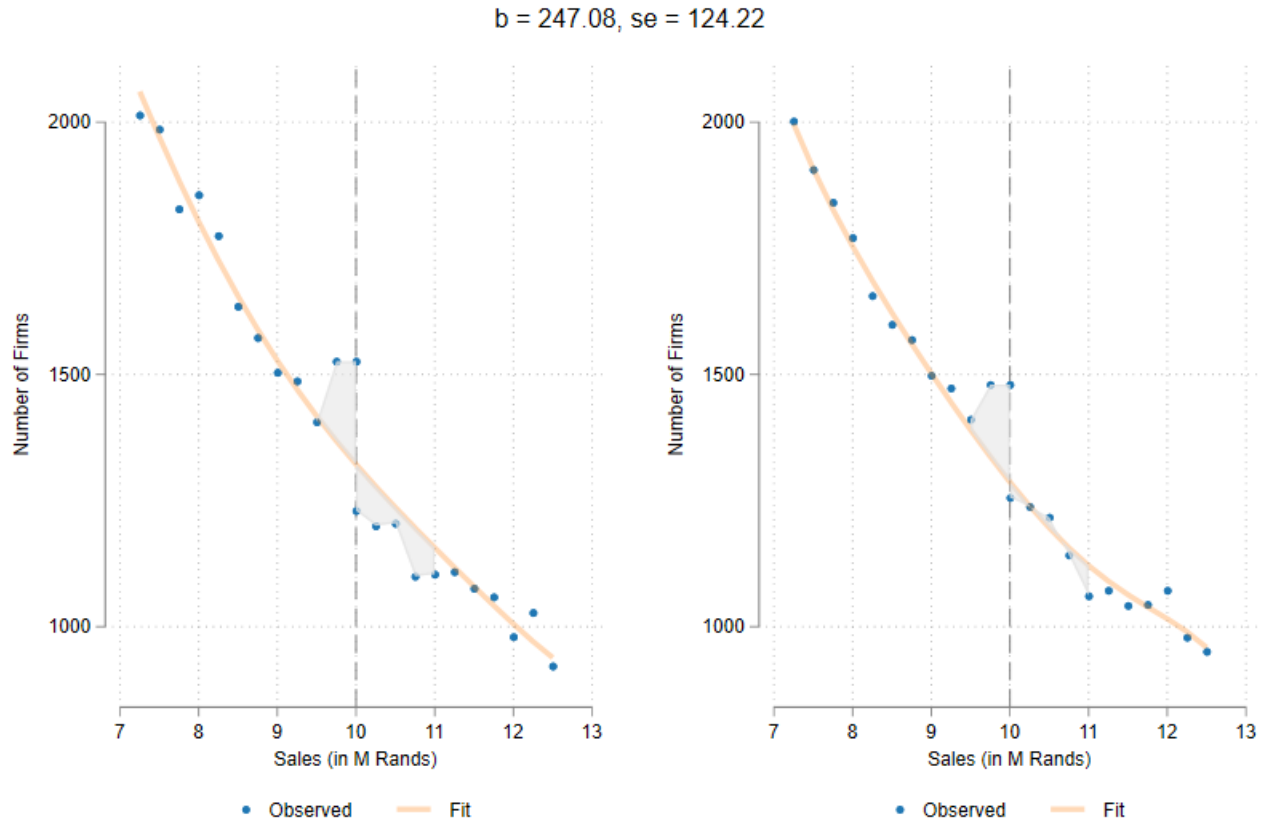
Figure 6: Bunching Around the 10M Treshold, by TRC Quartile

Note: The left panel presents high TRC sample, and the right panel presents low TRC sample. The orange line presents the polynomial fit, and the grey area presents the size of the bunch. Estimate for the difference in the size of the bunch between the left panel and the right panel is presented at the top of the figure, and standard error is obtained via a bootstrap procedure.

Figure 7: Salience Analysis
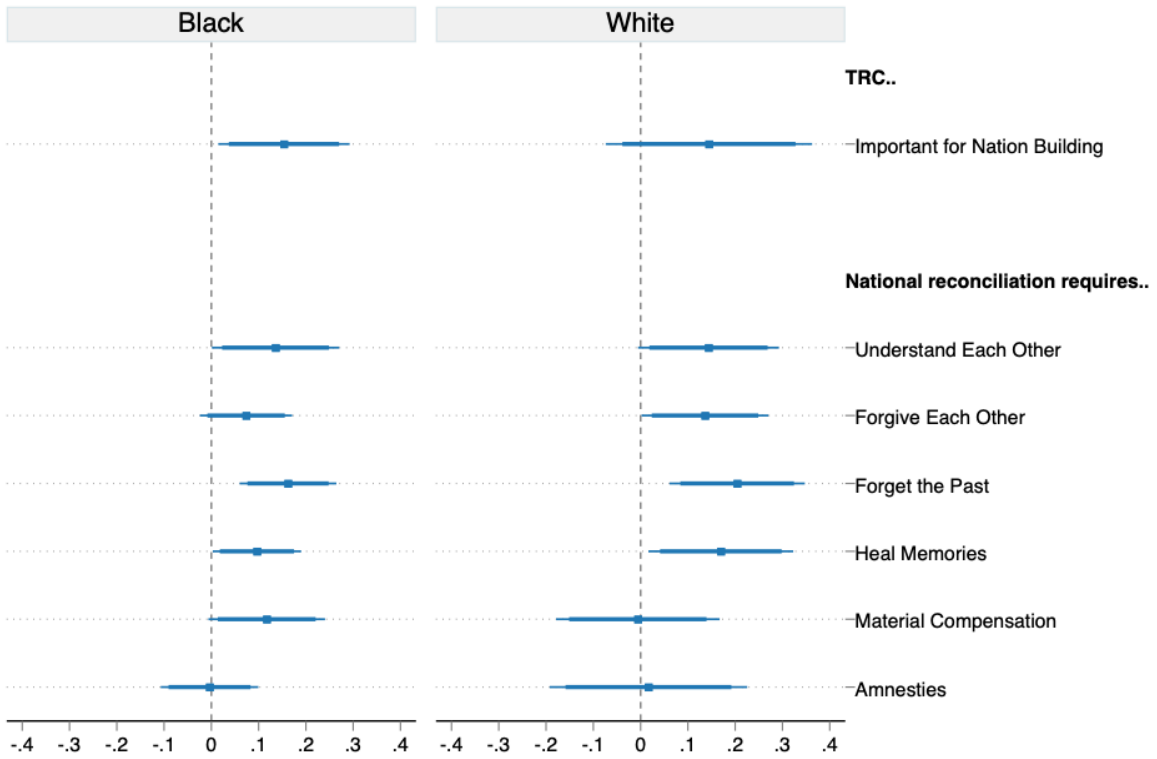
Notes: The figure plots the marginal effects of our salience analysis. We estimate equation (5) separately for each outcome indicated on the right-hand side and report coefficients and 95% confidence intervals by race. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. Standard errors clustered at hearing by suburb level.

Figure 8: Salience Analysis by the Race of the Perpetrator, Identity and Judiciary Mandate
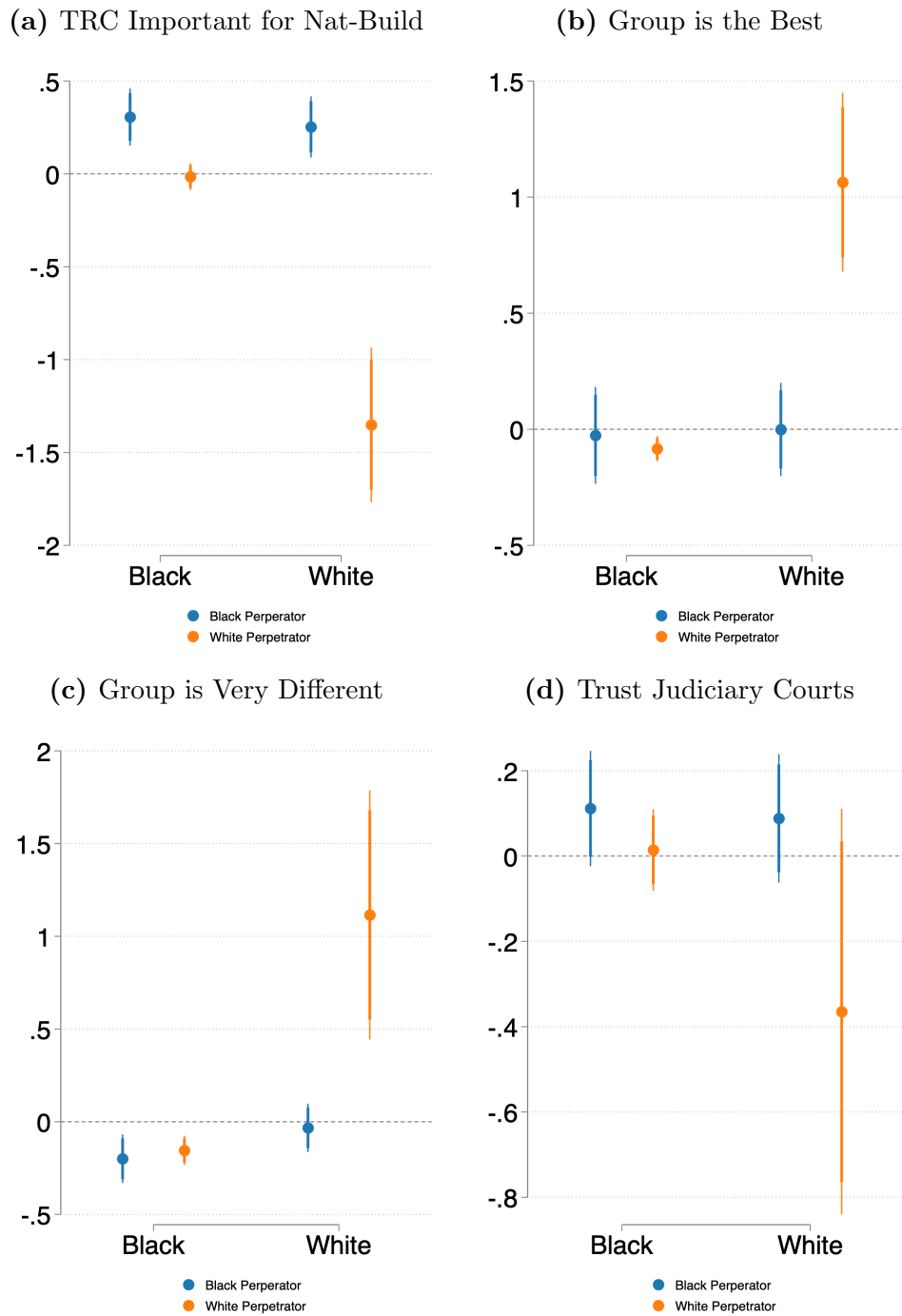
(a) TRC Important for Nat-Build

(b) Group is the Best

(c) Group is Very Different

(d) Trust Judiciary Courts

Note: The figure plots the marginal effects of our salience analysis by the race of the perpetrator. We estimate equation (5) separately for each outcome and by the race of the perpetrator. All dependent and independent variables are standardized. We report coefficients and 95% confidence intervals. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. Standard errors clustered at hearing by suburb level.

Table 1: Impact of TRC Media Exposure Concentrated on Interethnic Conflict

Type of Violence	Panel A: Probability of Violence, Weighted				
	Any	Ethnic	Not-Ethnic	No Govt Repress	Govt Repress
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.013***	−0.011***	−0.007***	−0.014***	−0.000
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.001)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Adj R^2	0.17	0.10	0.15	0.17	0.05
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Type of Violence	Panel B: IHS PC Violence, Weighted				
	Any	Ethnic	Not-Ethnic	No Govt Repress	Govt Repress
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.138***	−0.114***	−0.065***	−0.146***	−0.005
	(0.040)	(0.035)	(0.024)	(0.041)	(0.010)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.12	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.03
Adj R^2	0.20	0.11	0.17	0.19	0.06
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on violence, using specification 2. Panel A reports the results for the occurrence of at least one incident of violence, while Panel B shows results for violence per capita, using an IHS transformation. Both panels focus on our baseline measure of violence, weighted by deaths. The independent variable is standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation of one. Column 1 presents the results for all types of violence. Column 2 focuses on ethnic-related violence, and Column 3 reports results for non-ethnic violence. Column 4 presents the results for episodes of violence where the government was not involved, while Column 5 focuses on instances where the government repressed violence. All specifications include municipality fixed effects, year fixed effects, Free Signal interacted with year fixed effects, as well as province-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2: TRC Boosts National Identity

Dependent Variable:	National Identity				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media	0.053*	0.069**	0.075***	0.074***	0.075***
	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.026)
Basic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic			✓	✓	✓
Individual				✓	✓
Socio-Econ					✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on national identity, using specification 1. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. The dependent variable is constructed by pooling Afrobarometer waves 1 through 6 and taking the principal component of two questions: (i) whether individuals describe themselves as South African rather than identifying with other ethnic group, and (ii) whether it is desirable to create one united South African nation from all the different groups. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. Column 1 includes basic controls: free signal, IHS of population, share of the White population, share of employed individuals, area, area squared, altitude, altitude squared, ruggedness, and ruggedness squared. Column 2 adds geographic controls: average yearly temperature, average yearly rainfall, average agricultural suitability, distance to the coast, distance to inland water, and their squared terms. Column 3 adds ethnic controls: share of English speakers, share of Afrikaans speakers, share of Zulu speakers, and share of the Black population. Column 4 adds individual-level controls: gender, race, age, age squared, rural residency, and highest educational attainment. Column 5 adds socio-economic controls: average income score, share of urban population, share of married individuals, share of Christians, and share of the population aged over 60. Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Rule of Law

Dependent Variable:	Trust toward		Accountability	
	Courts	Police	Ordinary People	Top Officials
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
TRC Media × Black	−0.044	−0.003	0.044	−0.046
	(0.048)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.045)
TRC Media × White	−0.162***	−0.103*	0.127**	−0.075
	(0.060)	(0.059)	(0.054)	(0.092)
Baseline Ctrls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.56	0.43	0.59	0.51
Adj R²	0.08	0.07	0.20	0.13
Observations	13052	13052	13052	8757

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on the rule of law, using specification 1, where we interact TRC media exposure with the individual's race. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. In Columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is a dummy that takes the value of one if the individual reports trusting the courts and the police, respectively. Column 3 is a dummy indicating whether the individual agrees that ordinary citizens are held accountable when breaking the law. Column 4 is a dummy indicating whether they agree that officials who commit crimes will be held accountable. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Residential Sorting

Dependent Variable:	Δ White Share		Δ White Pop		Δ Non-White Pop	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TRC Media	0.000		−0.008		−0.241	
	(0.002)		(0.139)		(0.291)	
– × Share White ≥ 80%		0.090***		1.589**		−0.587
		(0.020)		(0.722)		(0.814)
– × Share White ∈ (20%, 80%)		−0.045***		−1.016		1.364**
		(0.016)		(0.722)		(0.691)
– × Share White ≤ 80%		−0.001		−0.021		−0.291
		(0.002)		(0.142)		(0.287)
Free Signal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Socio-Econ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	-0.04	-0.04	0.32	0.32	0.18	0.18
Adj R²	0.64	0.67	0.37	0.38	0.54	0.55
Observations	9277	9277	9277	9277	9277	9277

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on residential sorting, using specification 1. The unit of observation is the suburb. The independent variable is standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. In columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is the change in the share of White residents between 2011 and 1996. In columns 3 and 4, the dependent variable is the change in the number of White residents between 2011 and 1996, using an IHS transformation. In columns 5 and 6, the dependent variable is the change in the number of non-White residents over the same period, also using an IHS transformation. Columns 2, 4, and 6 present the results when TRC exposure is interacted with three categorical variables: a dummy indicating whether the share of White residents in 1996 was greater than 80%, between 20% and 80%, or less than 20%. Geographic controls include: area, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, average yearly rainfall, average agricultural suitability, distance to the coast, and distance to inland water, along with their squared terms. Socioeconomic controls include: the share of English speakers, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, Christians, White population, employed individuals, urban population, males, South African citizens, population aged over 60, married individuals, those employed in manufacturing, and the average income score. All regressions include Free Signal and municipality fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: Intermarriage

Dependent Variable:	Likelihood Intermarried (percent)					
	Male Cohort			Female Cohort		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TRC Media × Post	−0.462*	−1.181***	−0.999***	−0.130	−0.479**	−0.337*
	(0.266)	(0.381)	(0.254)	(0.238)	(0.197)	(0.181)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decade FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marriage Market Ctrls		✓	✓		✓	✓
Province × Decade FE			✓			✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.43	1.43	1.43
Adj R^2	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06
Observations	103885	103885	103885	191260	191260	191260

Note: The unit of observation is an under-30 years old married individual from census 1996 or 2011. Only men are considered in columns 1-3, while only women are considered in columns 4-6. The outcome is a binary variable taking a value of 100 if the respondentâs spouse is of the same racial group as the respondent, and 0 otherwise. The main explanatory variable of interest is the interaction between TRC media and a dummy that indicates whether the respondent is from the 2011 census. TRC media is measured at the municipality level. All columns control for basic individual controls (race, and a 2-degree polynomial of age), municipality fixed effect, and decade fixed effect. Columns 2 and 5 add as control an interaction between the size of the homogamous market at the municipality level for a specific individual in 1996 interacted with time trends. Columns 3 and 6 add province-specific time trends. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6: TRC Reduces Civic Engagement for White South Africans

Dependent Variable:	Discuss Politics	Interest Public	Voted	Collective Action	Community
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Black	−0.031	−0.071*	−0.075**	−0.018	−0.043
	(0.043)	(0.039)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.041)
TRC Media × White	−0.173***	−0.201***	−0.249***	−0.073	−0.074
	(0.062)	(0.066)	(0.054)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Baseline Ctrls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.62	0.58	0.59	0.27	0.24
Adj R²	0.12	0.07	0.35	0.21	0.12
Observations	13052	13052	10824	13052	13052

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on civic engagement, using specification 1, where we interact TRC media exposure with the individual's race. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. In Columns 1 to 4, the dependent variable is a dummy that takes the value of one if the individual: discusses political matters with friends and family (Column 1), expresses interest in public affairs (Column 2), has voted in the last elections (Column 3), or is part of a voluntary association or community group (Column 4). Column 5 presents the principal component of two questions: (i) whether the individual attends community meetings and (ii) whether they join others to raise an issue. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Bunching Below the 10M Threshold, Panel Evidence

Dependent Variable:	Likelihood Growth to the Next Million				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC × 6M	−0.00452	−0.00491	−0.00726	−0.00452	−0.00783
	(0.0181)	(0.0181)	(0.0179)	(0.0181)	(0.0179)
TRC × 7M	0.0107	0.00910	0.0150	0.00986	0.0125
	(0.0201)	(0.0201)	(0.0200)	(0.0201)	(0.0200)
TRC × 8M	0.000848	−0.00107	0.00496	0.0010	0.00229
	(0.0206)	(0.0207)	(0.0205)	(0.0206)	(0.0207)
TRC × 9M	−0.0463**	−0.0468**	−0.0493**	−0.0468**	−0.0503**
	(0.0216)	(0.0217)	(0.0214)	(0.0215)	(0.0215)
TRC × 10M	−0.00504	−0.00249	−0.00457	−0.00510	−0.00213
	(0.0208)	(0.0207)	(0.0210)	(0.0208)	(0.0208)
TRC × 11M	−0.0130	−0.0129	−0.00916	−0.0136	−0.00890
	(0.0227)	(0.0228)	(0.0227)	(0.0228)	(0.0230)
TRC × 12M	0.0123	0.0119	0.00983	0.0124	0.0100
	(0.0224)	(0.0224)	(0.0224)	(0.0224)	(0.0225)
Firm FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year by Muni FE		✓			✓
Year by Sales FE			✓		✓
Year by Industry FE				✓	✓
R^2	0.190	0.194	0.236	0.192	0.242
Observations	1,203,644	1,203,171	1,198,116	1,203,192	1,197,189

Note: This table presents the results of TRC media exposure on the likelihood of firm sales growth, using specification 4. The dependent variable is a dummy that takes the value of one if the firm moved up to the next million-revenue bin in the following year. The coefficients of interest are the interaction terms between residualized TRC coverage and revenue bin categories. Only interaction terms for bin categories ranging from 6M to 12M are displayed. All regressions include year and firm fixed effects. Column 2 introduces municipality-by-year fixed effects, Column 3 adds sales-by-year fixed effects, and Column 4 includes industry-by-year fixed effects. Column 5 presents the most saturated specification, including all previous controls. Standard errors are clustered at the firm level, and statistical significance is indicated by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

A   Online Appendix (Not for publication)

A.1   Additional Figures

Figure A.1: Frequency of Media Source Consumption
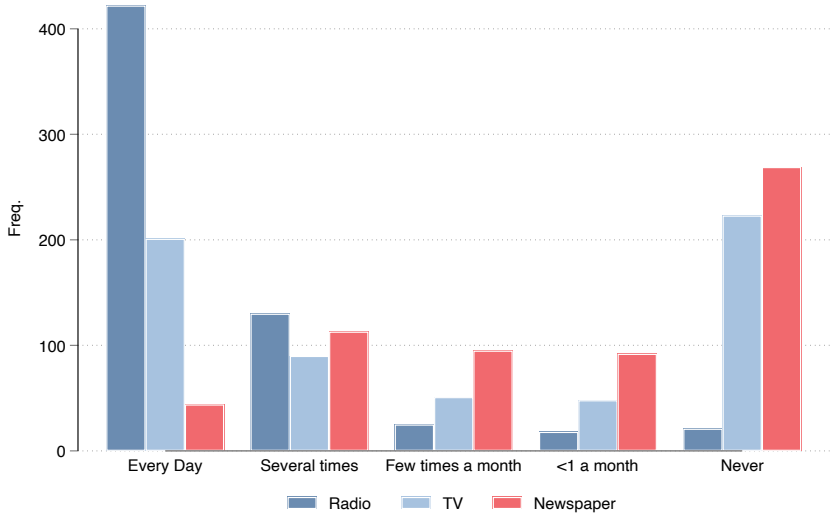
(a) Rural
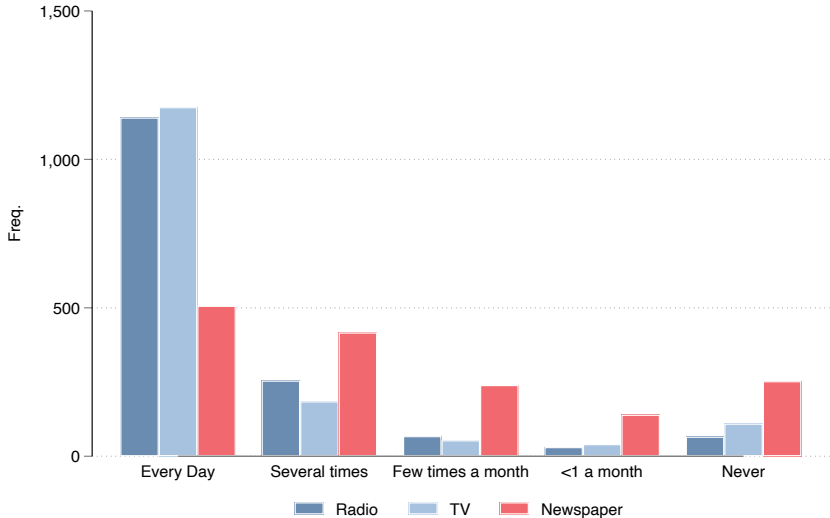
(b) Urban

Notes: The graph shows the frequency of use of different media sources for rural (panel a) and urban suburbs (panel b). The data comes from the first round (2000) of the Afrobarometer survey. The exact question we employ states: "How often do you get news from the following sources?"

Figure A.2: Location of Afrobarometer Clusters
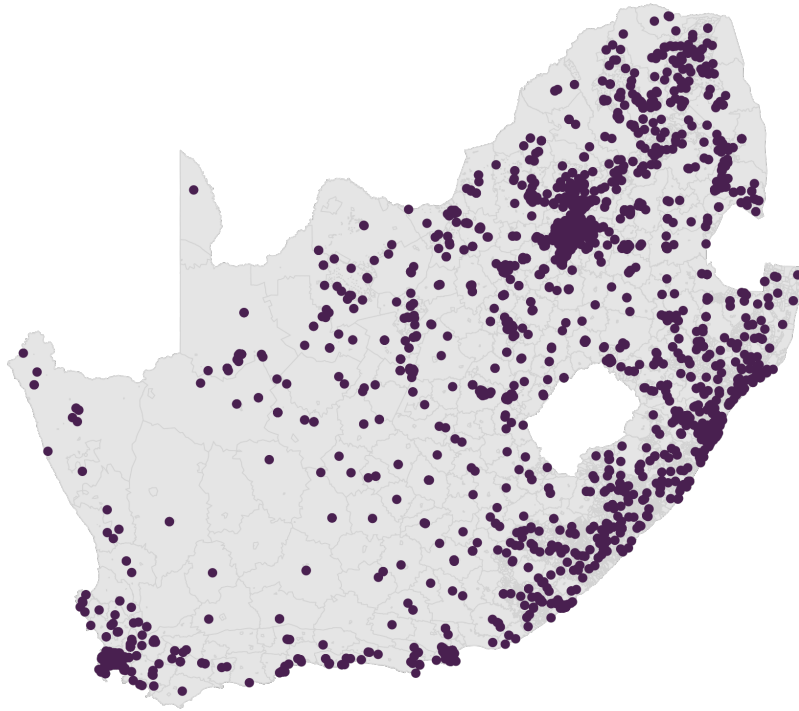
Notes: The map plots the location of Afrobarometers' clusters for waves one to six (purple dots). Boundaries in the background represent 1996 suburb boundaries.

Figure A.3: TRC Media Coverage Balance Test, Compare with Unconditional Variation
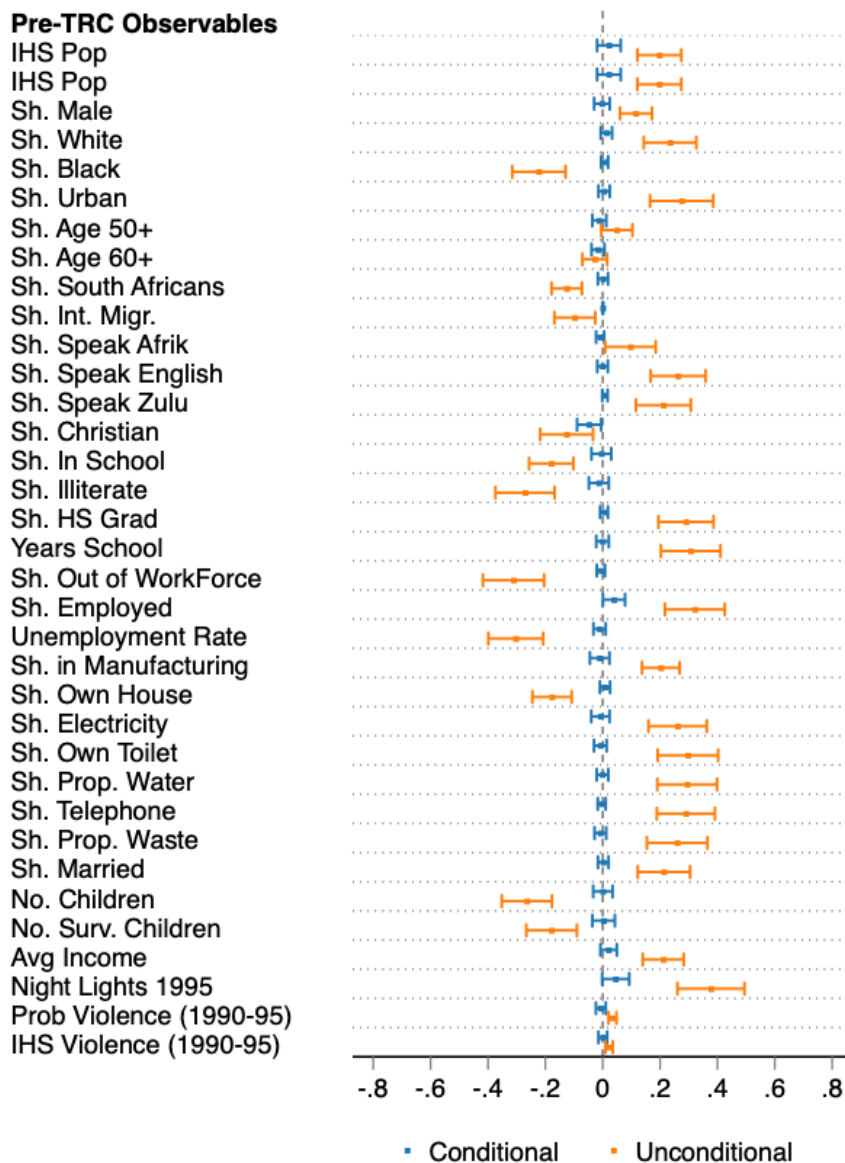
Notes: This figure plots the balance test of TRC Media on pre-determined suburb-level variables. Each coefficient comes from a separate estimation where we regress the outcome variable indicated on the y-axis on TRC media exposure. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. We present coefficients and 95% confidence intervals from two specifications: in orange we plot the results of a naive bi-variate specification; in blue we plot our baseline specification which includes: the TRC free signal, 1996 population, geographic characteristics and municipality fixed effects. First stage coefficient comes from Afrobarometer question on media consumption. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality-level.

Figure A.4: TRC Media Coverage Balance Test, Alternative Specifications
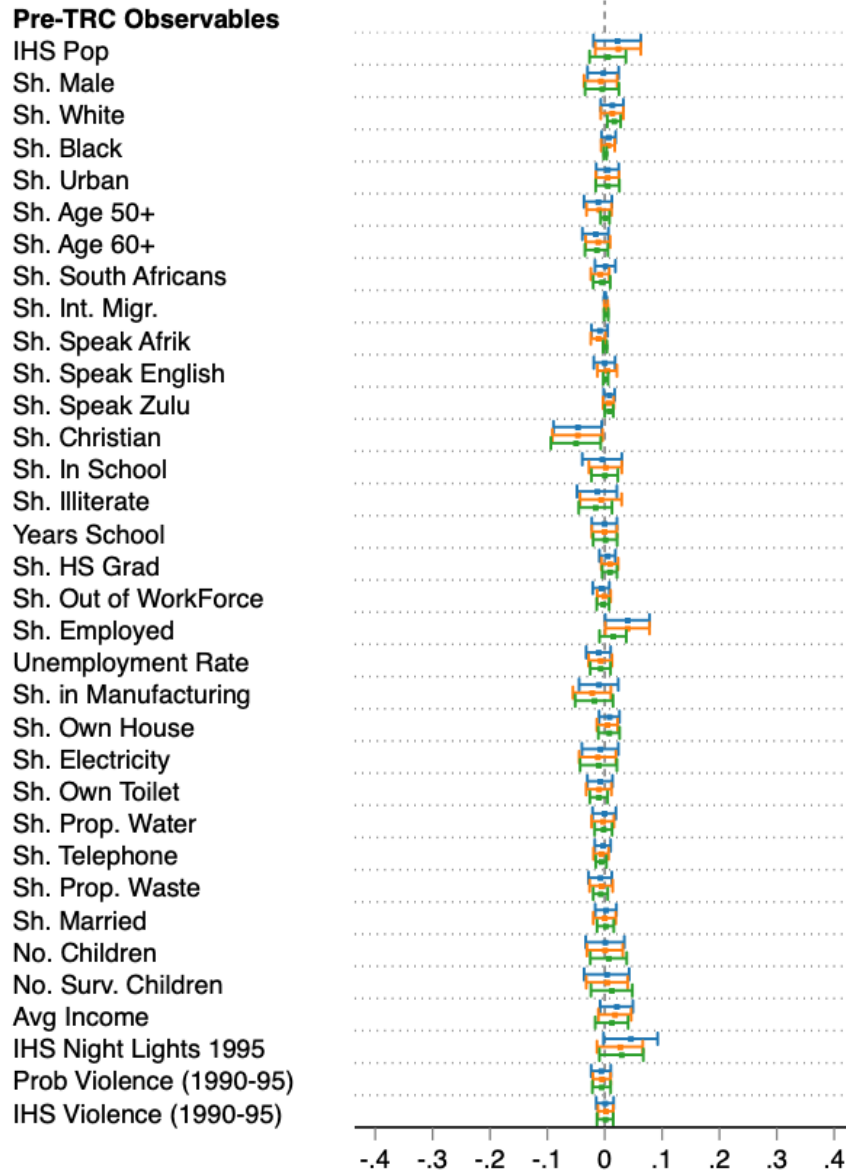
Notes: This figure plots the balance test of TRC Media on pre-determined suburb-level variables. Each coefficient comes from a separate estimation where we regress the outcome variable indicated on the y-axis on TRC media exposure. three specifications with increasingly saturated controls. In blue (top marker) we plot the results of our baseline specification, same as in Figure 2; in orange (middle marker) we include the rest of the geographic controls; in green (bottom marker) we use our most saturated specification, same as in column 6 of Table 2 the TRC free signal, geographic characteristics, suburb socio-economic variables and municipality fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality-level.

Figure A.5: Pseudo First-Stage of TRC Media
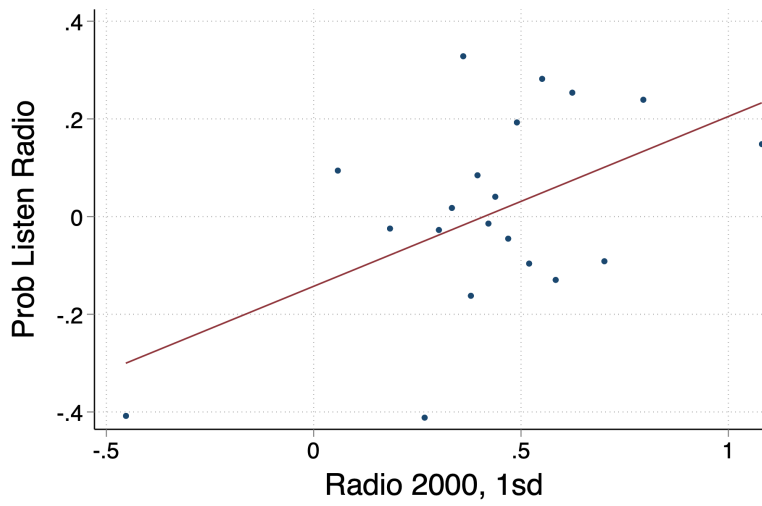
(a) Radio 2000, 1sd

Notes: These figure plots the impact of Radio 2000 exposure on the likelihood of listening to radio. The outcome variable measures the likelihood to consume radio, and are constructed using Afrobarometer respondents from the first two waves. The specification used to estimate the pseudo first-stage includes our baseline identification machinery: the TRC free signal, 1996 population, geographic characteristics and municipality fixed effects.

Figure A.6: White South Africans Develop Exclusionary Identity

(a) Own Group *Very Different*

(b) Own Group *Best*
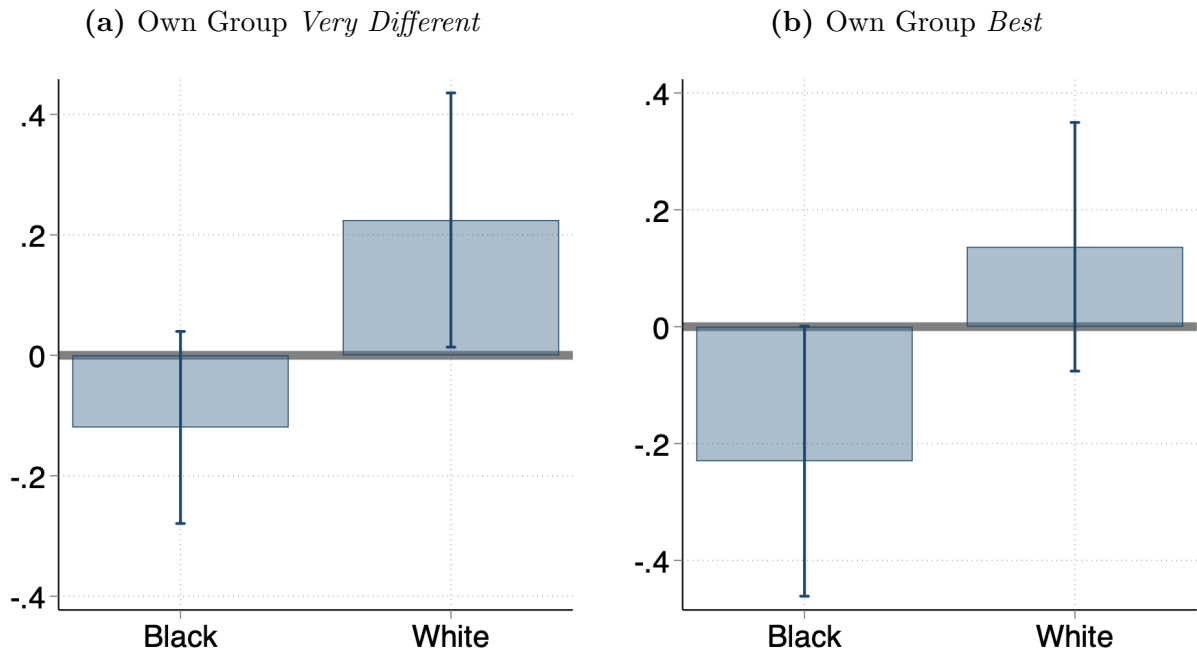
Note: These figures plot the impact of TRC media on exclusionary identity. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized. See Table 2 for a full description of controls included. Confidence intervals at 95%. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Figure A.7: The Effect of TRC Media Exposure on Violence, Event Study
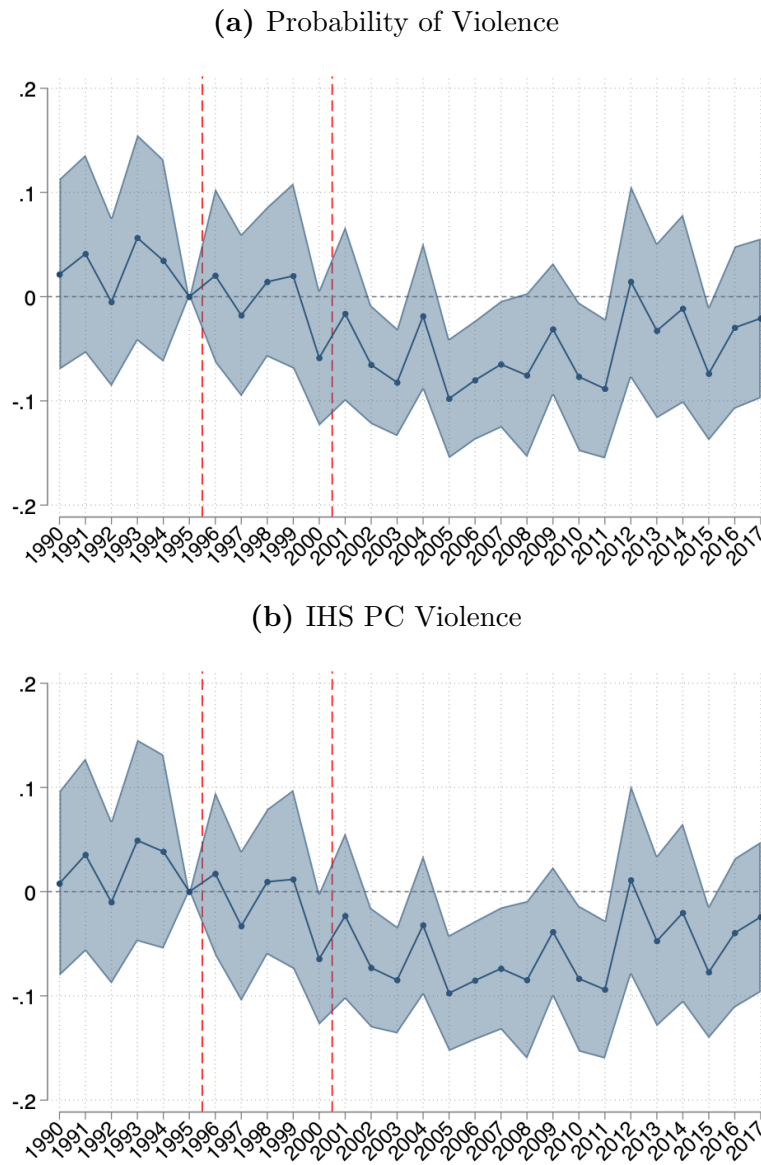
(a) Probability of Violence

(b) IHS PC Violence

Note: These figures plot the event study coefficients for the impact of TRC media on violence, using specification 2. Panel a shows results of the probability of violence. Panel b shows results of violence per capita using a IHS transformation. The independent variable is standardized. See Table 1 for a full description of controls included. Confidence intervals at 95%. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Figure A.8: The Effect of TRC Media Exposure on Violence, Event Study, Logs
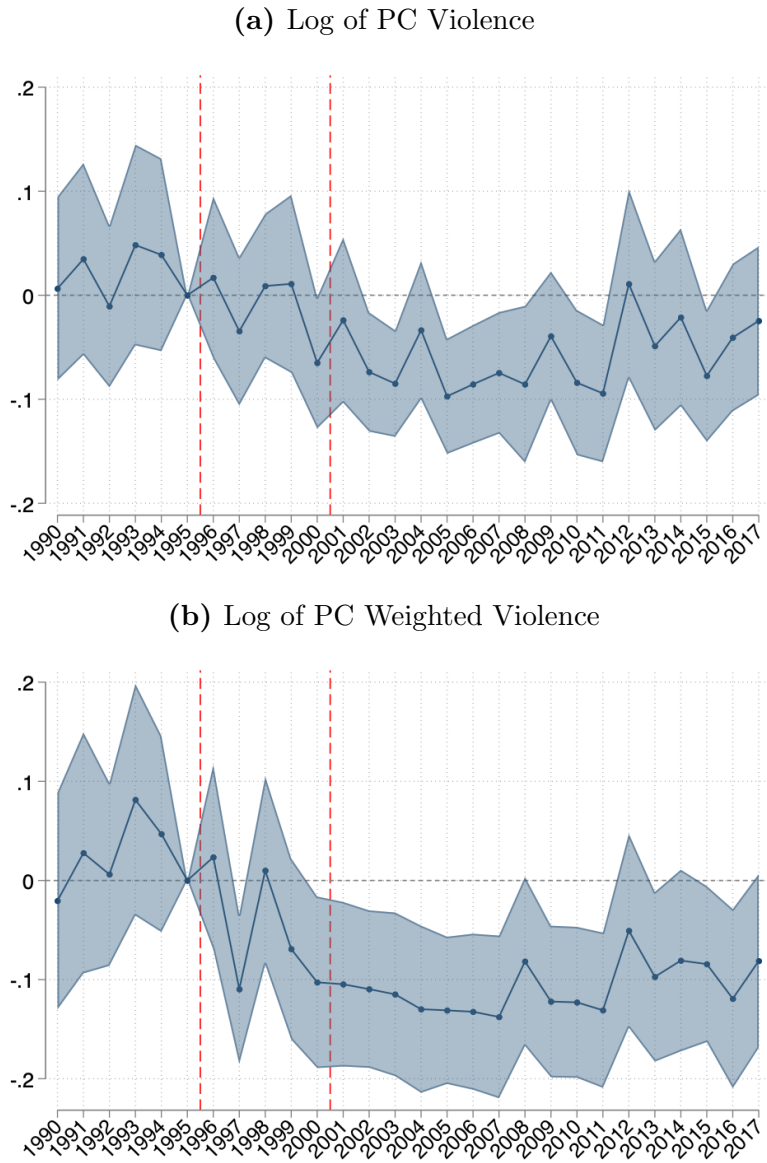
(a) Log of PC Violence

(b) Log of PC Weighted Violence

Note: These figures plot the event study coefficients for the impact of TRC media on violence, using specification 2. Panel (a) shows results of the probability of violence using a log transformation. Panel (b) shows results of violence per capita using a using a log transformation. The independent variable is standardized. See Table 1 for a full description of controls included. Confidence intervals at 95%.Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Figure A.9: Main Results on Violence Robust to de Chaisemartin et al (2024)

(a) IHS of PC Violence
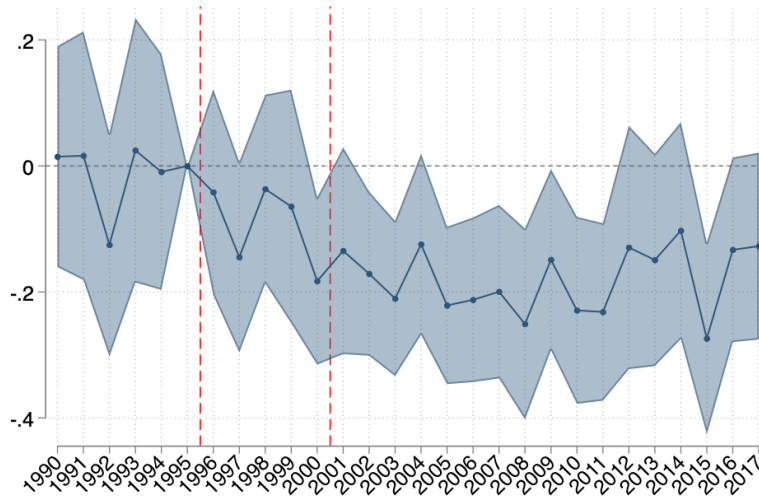
(b) IHS of PC Weighted Violence
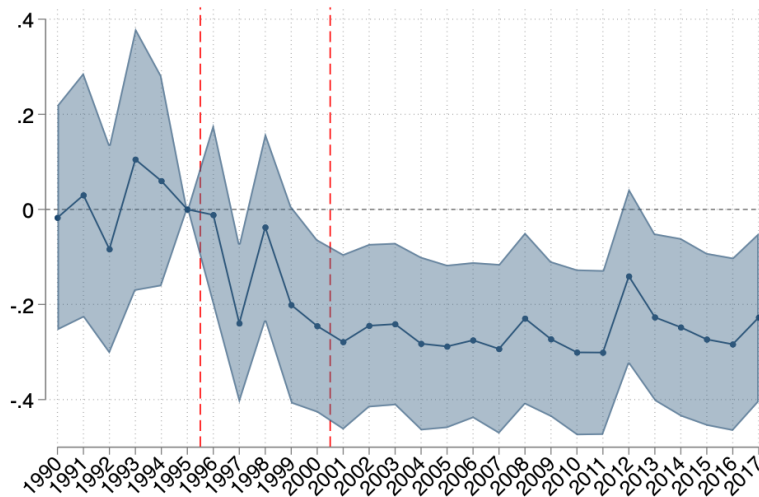
Note: These figures plot the event study coefficients for the impact of TRC media on violence, using de Chaisemartin et al (2024). Panel (a) shows results of the probability of violence. Panel (b) shows results of violence per capita using a IHS transformation. The independent variable is an indicator equal to one if the TRC media coverage is above its median value. Confidence intervals at 95%. Standard errors cluster at the municipality level.

Figure A.10: The Effect of TRC Media Exposure on Violence, ACLED
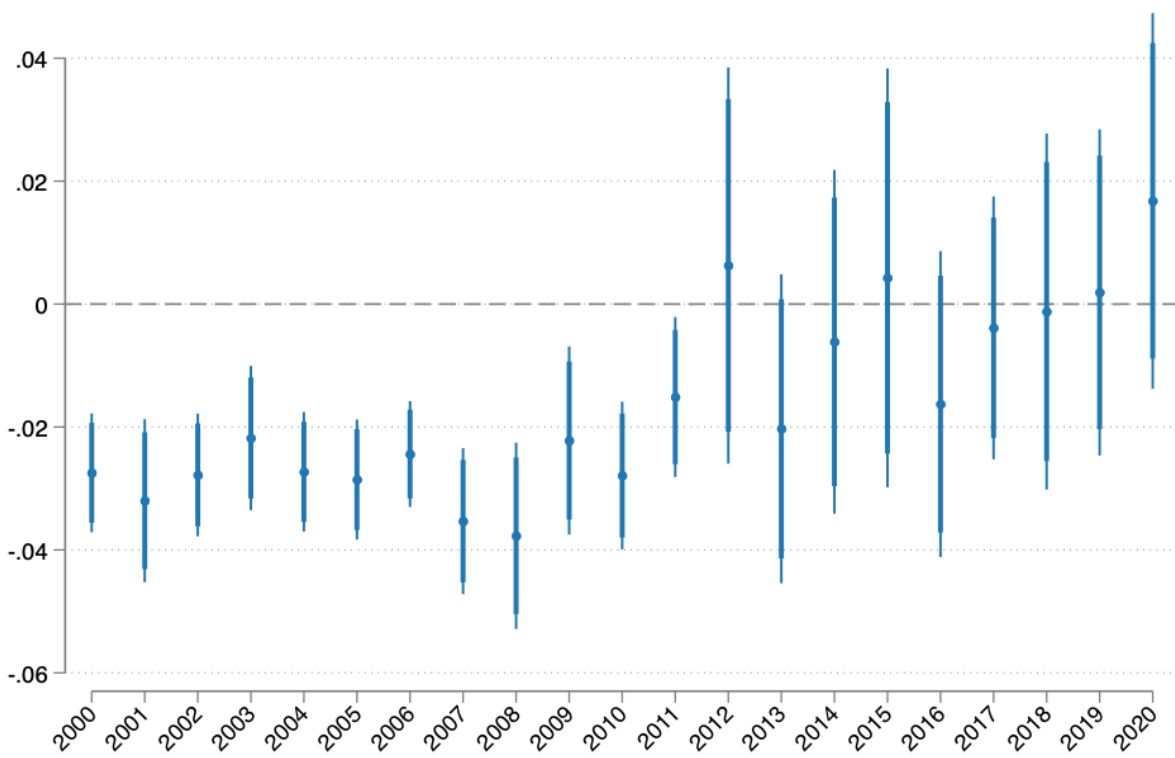
Note: This figure plots the estimated Effect of TRC media coverage on violence using ACLED data. The independent variable is standardized. The coefficients shows the interaction between TRC media exposure and year FE. Confidence intervals at 95%. Standard errors cluster at the municipality level.

Figure A.11: The Effect of TRC Media Exposure on Violence by Share White
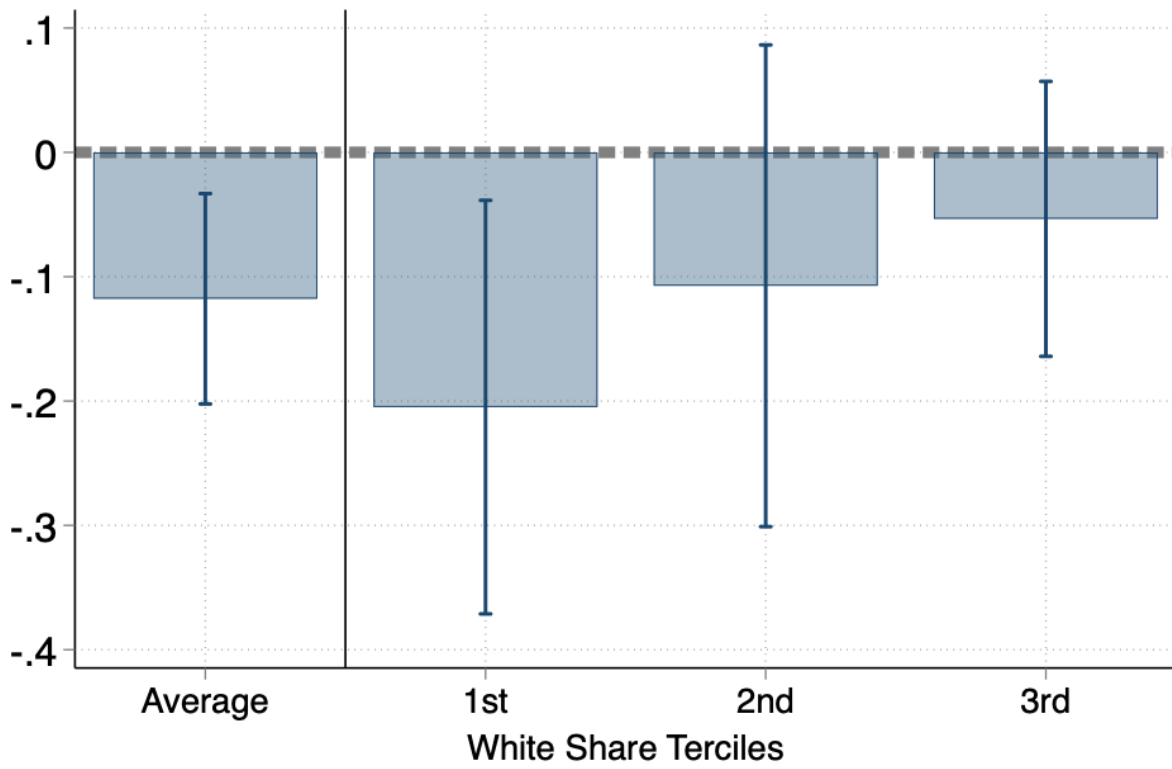
Note: This figure plot the estimated Effect of TRC media coverage on violence by share of White population. The independent variable is standardized. Confidence intervals at 95%. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level.

Figure A.12: TRC Hearings Frequency in 2000
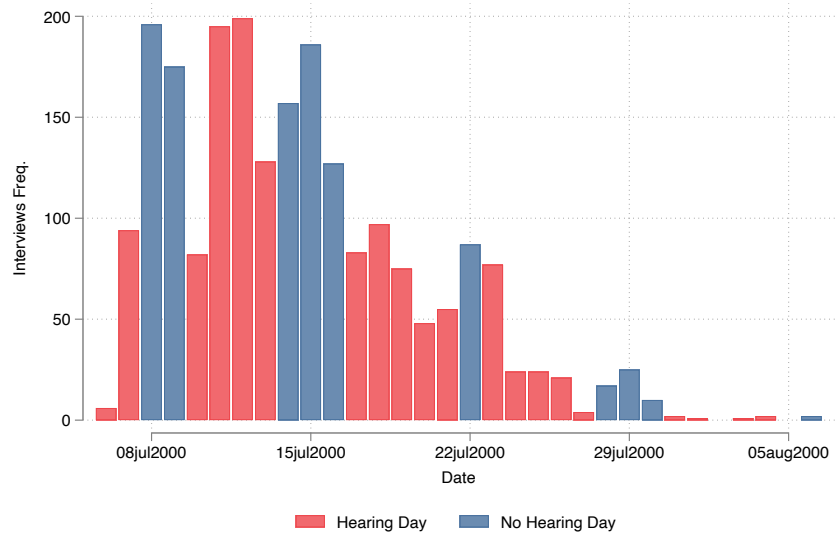
Notes: The histogram plots the number of daily Afrobarometer interviews carried during the first round of the Afrobarometer survey in South Africa (July-August 2000). Days during which a hearing was conducted by the TRC are shown in red, while days with no hearing are presented in blue.

Figure A.13: Perceptions on Steps to Achieve Reconciliation by the Race of the Perpetrator

(a) Soft Reconciliation (Index)

(b) Amnesties

(c) Material Compensation
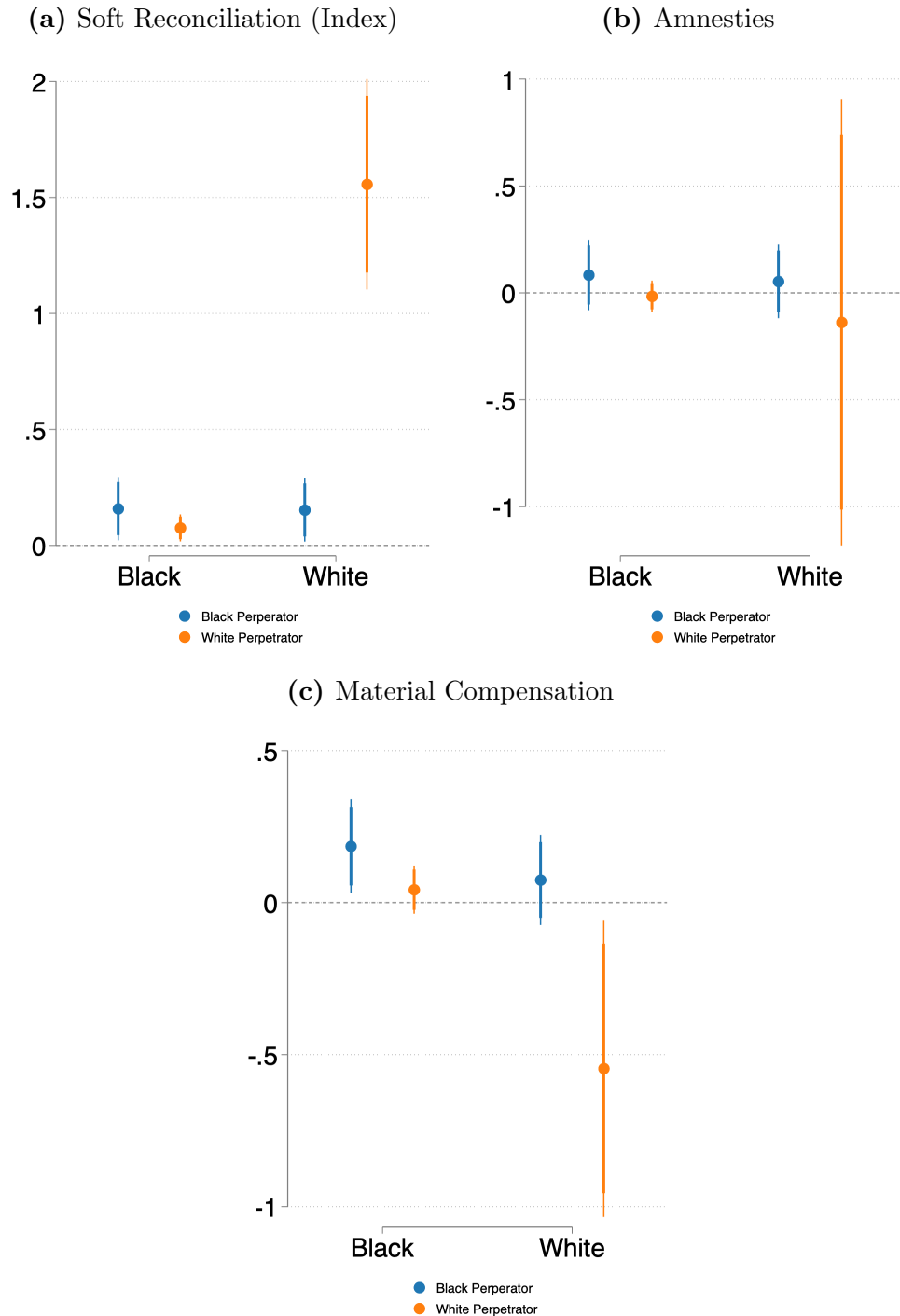
Note: The figure plots the results of our salience analysis by the race of the perpetrator on questions related to steps needed to achieve reconciliations the TRC. We estimate equation (5) separately for each outcome and by the race of the perpetrator. Soft reconciliation index comprehend the four questions asking about forgetting the past, healing difficult memories, forgiving each other and understanding each other. We report coefficients and 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors clustered at hearing by suburb level.

A.2 Additional Tables

Table A.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	N. Obs
Main Independent and Control Variables, Suburb Sample					
TRC Media	-56.46	19.56	-90.00	-11.46	11119
Population	3395.60	8291.91	2.00	309828.00	11119
Share Male	0.47	0.06	0.02	1.00	11119
Share Black	0.81	0.34	0.00	1.00	11119
Share White	0.11	0.26	0.00	1.00	11119
Share Christians	0.75	0.19	0.00	1.00	11119
Share English	0.07	0.18	0.00	1.00	11119
Share Afrikaans	0.11	0.26	0.00	1.00	11119
Share Zulu	0.22	0.38	0.00	1.00	11119
Share Urban	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00	11119
Share Aged 60+	0.08	0.05	0.00	0.88	11119
Share Married	0.25	0.11	0.00	1.00	11119
Share SA Citizens	0.99	0.03	0.12	1.00	11119
Share Employed	0.18	0.19	0.00	1.00	11119
Average Income Group	3.22	2.43	1.00	15.00	11119
Share Manufacturing	0.07	0.10	0.00	1.00	11119
Altitude	13.91	4.42	1.00	23.00	11119
Ruggedness	7.85	5.43	0.00	38.19	11119
Mean Temperature	18.25	1.99	11.84	22.88	11119
Mean Precipitations	725.82	204.34	61.53	1162.53	11119
Mean Agricultural Suitability	2.79	1.27	0.00	8.00	11119
Area	1.07e+08	1.11e+09	1709.66	5.14e+10	11119
Dist. River	4598.97	5354.26	0.24	58512.69	11119
Dist. Lakes	33968.55	30408.63	0.00	380199.57	11119
Dist. Coast	260200.95	224541.34	75.66	812387.85	11119
Afrobarometer Outcomes, Individual Sample					
Share Black	0.70	0.46	0.00	1.00	13052
Share White	0.13	0.34	0.00	1.00	13052
Share Coloured	0.12	0.33	0.00	1.00	13052
Female	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00	13052
Age	37.85	14.10	18.00	99.00	13052
Share Rural	0.16	0.36	0.00	1.00	13052
At least Primary Education	0.90	0.29	0.00	1.00	13052
At least Secondary Education	0.60	0.49	0.00	1.00	13052
National Identity (Index)	0.70	0.32	0.00	1.00	13052
Feel SA	0.56	0.50	0.00	1.00	13052
United SA	0.83	0.38	0.00	1.00	13052
Trust Justice Courts	0.56	0.50	0.00	1.00	13052
Trust Police	0.43	0.50	0.00	1.00	13052
Own Accountability	0.59	0.46	0.00	1.00	13052
Officials Accountability	0.51	0.49	0.00	1.00	8757
Interest Public	0.58	0.49	0.00	1.00	13052
Discuss Politics	0.62	0.49	0.00	1.00	13052
Voted Last Elections	0.59	0.49	0.00	1.00	10824
Community (Index)	0.24	0.34	0.00	1.00	13052
Collective Action	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00	13052
Violence Outcomes, Muni-Year Sample					
Share Violence	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	21532
Violence, Weighted by Casualties	6765.56	284061.80	0.00	25930970.00	21532
Ethnic Violence, Weighted by Casualties	2809.21	135883.59	0.00	11448077.00	21532
Violence	14.80	186.85	0.00	7719.93	21532
Ethnic Violence	4.26	90.61	0.00	6063.94	21532

Notes: Descriptive Statistics of all the variables used in the analysis.

Table A.2: TRC Increase in National Identity Driven by Black

Dependent Variable:	National Identity				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Black	0.056*	0.072**	0.078***	0.077***	0.078***
	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.027)
TRC Media × White	0.028	0.038	0.046	0.045	0.046
	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Basic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic			✓	✓	✓
Individual				✓	✓
Socio-Econ					✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on national identity, using specification 1, where we interact TRC media exposure with the individual's race. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. The dependent variable is constructed by pooling Afrobarometer waves 1 through 6 and taking the principal component of two questions: (i) whether individuals describe themselves as South African rather than identifying with other ethnic group, and (ii) whether it is desirable to create one united South African nation from all the different groups. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. Column 1 includes basic controls: free signal, IHS of population, share of the White population, share of employed individuals, area, area squared, altitude, altitude squared, ruggedness, and ruggedness squared. Column 2 adds geographic controls: average yearly temperature, average yearly rainfall, average agricultural suitability, distance to the coast, distance to inland water, and their squared terms. Column 3 adds ethnic controls: share of English speakers, share of Afrikaans speakers, share of Zulu speakers, and share of the Black population. Column 4 adds individual-level controls: gender, race, age, age squared, rural residency, and highest educational attainment. Column 5 adds socio-economic controls: average income score, share of urban population, share of married individuals, share of Christians, and share of the population aged over 60. Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.3: Impact of TRC Media Exposure on Violence by Type of Violence, PC Violence

Type of Violence	Panel A: Probability of Violence				
	Any	Ethnic	Not-Ethnic	No Govt Repress	Govt Repress
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.012***	−0.013***	−0.004	−0.013***	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.001)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01
Adj R^2	0.33	0.14	0.35	0.33	0.20
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Type of Violence	Panel B: Violence PC, IHS				
	Any	Ethnic	Not-Ethnic	No Govt Repress	Govt Repress
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.080***	−0.089***	−0.028*	−0.089***	0.005
	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.016)	(0.024)	(0.009)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.15	0.06	0.12	0.13	0.04
Adj R^2	0.38	0.15	0.40	0.38	0.20
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on violence, using specification 2. Panel A reports the results for the occurrence of at least one incident of violence, while Panel B shows results for violence per capita, using an IHS transformation. The independent variable is standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Column 1 presents the results for all types of violence. Column 2 focuses on ethnic-related violence, and Column 3 reports results for non-ethnic violence. Column 4 presents the results for episodes of violence where the government was not involved, while Column 5 focuses on instances where the government repressed violence. All specifications include municipality fixed effects, year fixed effects, Free Signal interacted with year fixed effects, as well as province-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.4: Impact of TRC Media Exposure on Violence by Type of Violence, Logs

| | Panel A: Weighted PC Violence, Log | | | | |
| *Type of Violence* | Any | Ethnic | Not-Ethnic | No Govt Repress | Govt Repress |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.129***	−0.106***	−0.060***	−0.137***	−0.005
	(0.037)	(0.032)	(0.022)	(0.038)	(0.010)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.03
Adj R²	0.20	0.11	0.18	0.19	0.06
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

| | Panel B: PC Violence, Log | | | | |
| *Type of Violence* | Any | Ethnic | Not-Ethnic | No Govt Repress | Govt Repress |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media × Post	−0.072***	−0.080***	−0.025*	−0.081***	0.004
	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.008)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Signal by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prov by Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.14	0.05	0.11	0.12	0.04
Adj R²	0.38	0.15	0.41	0.38	0.20
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on violence, using specification 2. Panel A reports the results for the violence per capita weighted by the number of deaths occurred. Panel B shows results for violence per capita. Both are transformed by taking the log + 1 transformation. The independent variables is standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Column 1 presents the results for all types of violence. Column 2 focuses on ethnic-related violence, and Column 3 reports results for non-ethnic violence. Column 4 presents the results for episodes of violence where the government was not involved, while Column 5 focuses on instances where the government repressed violence. All specifications include municipality fixed effects, year fixed effects, Free Signal interacted with year fixed effects, as well as province-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.5: TRC Reduces Intergroup Trust

Dependent Variable:	Intergroup Trust				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
TRC Media	−0.059	−0.094	−0.114*	−0.116*	−0.113*
	(0.063)	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.058)
Basic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnic			✓	✓	✓
Individual				✓	✓
Socio-Econ					✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36
Adj R^2	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02
Observations	2179	2179	2179	2179	2179

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on intergroup trust, using specification 1. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. The dependent variable is a dummy variable that takes the value of one if the individual reports trusting people from other ethnic groups. This question is available only in wave 3 of the Afrobarometer survey. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. Column 1 includes basic controls: free signal, IHS of population, share of the White population, share of employed individuals, area, area squared, altitude, altitude squared, ruggedness, and ruggedness squared. Column 2 adds geographic controls: average yearly temperature, average yearly rainfall, average agricultural suitability, distance to the coast, distance to inland water, and their squared terms. Column 3 adds ethnic controls: share of English speakers, share of Afrikaans speakers, share of Zulu speakers, and share of the Black population. Column 4 adds individual-level controls: gender, race, age, age squared, rural residency, and highest educational attainment. Column 5 adds socio-economic controls: average income score, share of urban population, share of married individuals, share of Christians, and share of the population aged over 60. Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.6: Nation Building and Rule of Law - Time Variation

Dependent Variable:	National Identity	Trust toward Courts	Police	Accountability Own	Top Officials
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A - Waves 1-3					
TRC Media × Black	0.146**	−0.037	0.008	0.105	−0.039
	(0.070)	(0.073)	(0.059)	(0.072)	(0.089)
TRC Media × White	0.077	−0.186*	−0.169*	0.105	−0.249**
	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.118)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.58	0.51	0.40	0.73	0.62
Adj R^2	0.08	0.07	0.03	0.10	-0.01
Observations	6474	6474	6474	6474	2179
Panel B - Waves 4-6					
TRC Media × Black	0.010	−0.070	−0.028	0.016	−0.053
	(0.048)	(0.070)	(0.057)	(0.053)	(0.046)
TRC Media × White	0.033	−0.137	−0.033	0.190*	0.048
	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.087)	(0.104)	(0.105)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.54	0.61	0.46	0.45	0.48
Adj R^2	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.10	0.12
Observations	6578	6578	6578	6578	6578
Baseline Ctrls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on nation-building and rule of law, using specification 1, where we interact TRC media exposure with the individual's race. Both dependent and independent variables are standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Panel A presents results from waves 1 to 3, while Panel B shows results from waves 4 to 6. In Column 1, the dependent variable is a PCA based on whether individuals identify as South African and whether they desire a united South Africa. In Columns 2 and 3, the dependent variables are dummy variables indicating whether individuals trust the courts and police, respectively. In Columns 4 and 5, the dependent variables are dummy variables indicating whether individuals believe that ordinary citizens and officials who commit crimes will be held accountable, respectively. See Appendix B.2 for more details on the construction of the variables. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.7: Intermarriage (By Race)

Dependent Variable:	Likelihood Intermarried (percent)					
	Male Cohort			Female Cohort		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TRC Media × Post × White	0.923*	−1.376	−1.452	0.923	−1.211	−1.130
	(0.493)	(0.855)	(0.918)	(0.613)	(1.061)	(1.150)
TRC Media × Post × Coloured	1.407	−1.100	−0.026	2.260	0.221	0.858
	(1.477)	(1.184)	(0.995)	(1.424)	(1.077)	(1.097)
TRC Media × Post × Black	−1.114***	−1.177***	−1.128***	−0.642**	−0.510***	−0.428**
	(0.427)	(0.353)	(0.268)	(0.278)	(0.190)	(0.174)
Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decade FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marriage Market Ctrls		✓	✓		✓	✓
Province × Decade FE			✓			✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.43	1.43	1.43
Adj R^2	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06
Observations	103885	103885	103885	191260	191260	191260

Note: The unit of observation is an under-30 years old married individual from census 1996 or 2011. Only men are considered in columns 1-3, while only women are considered in columns 4-6. All columns present race-specific marginal effects of TRC media interacted with the 2011 census dummy on intermarriage. The independent variable is standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Controls are the same as in Table 5. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.8: NT-SDF Firms - Descriptive Statistics

	Low TRC			High TRC		
	N. Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	N. Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Firm Variables						
Sales (in M Rands)	180,651	33.87	665.7	172,873	45.39	795.0
Number of Employees	181,039	43.29	926.1	173,214	54.25	779.9
Share of women among employees	181,039	0.411	0.316	173,214	0.404	0.312
Average wage (1000s Rands)	180,195	119,504	163,202	172,598	130,131	276,800
Agriculture	181,039	0.0234	0.151	173,214	0.0205	0.142
Manufacturing	181,039	0.117	0.322	173,214	0.115	0.319
Construction	181,039	0.104	0.306	173,214	0.101	0.302
Retail	181,039	0.0951	0.293	173,214	0.0907	0.287
Retail Motortrade	181,039	0.132	0.338	173,214	0.132	0.338
Wholetrade	181,039	0.0592	0.236	173,214	0.0548	0.228
IT	181,039	0.0384	0.192	173,214	0.0446	0.207
Transport/Communication	181,039	0.0788	0.269	173,214	0.0886	0.284
Finance/Business	181,039	0.237	0.425	173,214	0.235	0.424
Socio-Econonomic Variables						
IHS Population	181,039	9.948	1.236	173,214	10.02	1.740
Share Black	181,039	0.300	0.271	173,214	0.345	0.317
Share White	181,039	0.570	0.310	173,214	0.528	0.337
Share Male	181,039	0.493	0.0329	173,214	0.498	0.0622
Share Christians	181,039	0.727	0.125	173,214	0.718	0.143
Share Zulu Speaker	181,039	0.0891	0.188	173,214	0.109	0.166
Share English Speaker	181,039	0.335	0.228	173,214	0.320	0.228
Share Afrikaaner Speaker	181,039	0.351	0.248	173,214	0.325	0.286
Share Urban	181,039	0.944	0.210	173,214	0.945	0.202
Share SA Citizen	181,039	0.967	0.0286	173,214	0.964	0.0343
Share Aged 60+	181,039	0.0954	0.0521	173,214	0.106	0.0644
Share Married	181,039	0.395	0.0954	173,214	0.383	0.102
Unemployment Rate	181,039	0.115	0.133	173,214	0.129	0.132
Share Manufacturing	181,039	0.116	0.0563	173,214	0.112	0.0763

Note: This table presents descriptive statistics of firms in the NT-SDF employer-employee matched panel tax dataset. The first three columns present descriptive statistics in the low TRC quartile, while the last three columns focus on firms in the high TRC quartile.

Table A.9: Results Robust to Controlling for Distances: National Identity

Dependent Variable:	National Identity							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
TRC Media × Black	0.108***	0.088**	0.093**	0.091**	0.088**	0.088**	0.089**	0.091**
	(0.036)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.044)
TRC Media × White	0.068	0.051	0.053	0.051	0.045	0.044	0.046	0.051
	(0.049)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.053)
Dist to first TX		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to second TX			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to third TX				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fourth TX					✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fifth TX						✓	✓	✓
Dist to Hubs							✓	✓
Dist to Prov Capital								✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on nation-building, using specification 1, which interacts TRC media exposure with the individual's race. The dependent variable is a PCA on whether individuals identify as South African and their desire for a united South Africa. Column 1 provides the baseline specification. Subsequent columns introduce controls for distance to transmitters: Column 2 accounts for the nearest transmitter, Column 3 for the second closest, Column 4 for the third, Column 5 for the fourth and Column 6 for the fifth. Columns 7 adds the distances to Cape Town and Johannesburg, and Column 8 adds distance to the provincial capital. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.10: Results Robust to Controlling for Distances: Judiciary

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Panel A: Trust Judiciary Courts							
TRC Media × Black	−0.044	−0.038	−0.036	−0.037	−0.035	−0.036	−0.031	−0.031
	(0.048)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
TRC Media × White	−0.162***	−0.156***	−0.155***	−0.156***	−0.152***	−0.151***	−0.141**	−0.139**
	(0.060)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052
	Panel B: Own Accountability Index							
TRC Media × Black	0.044	0.057	0.059	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.053	0.052
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.044)
TRC Media × White	0.127**	0.139**	0.140**	0.138**	0.139**	0.140**	0.131**	0.130**
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59
Adj R^2	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Observations	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052	13052
Dist to first TX		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to second TX			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to third TX				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fourth TX					✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fifth TX						✓	✓	✓
Dist to Hubs							✓	✓
Dist to Prov Capital								✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on trust in the judiciary and accountability, using specification 1, which interacts TRC media exposure with the individual's race. In Panel A the dependent variable is a dummy variable indicating whether individuals trust the courts. In Panel B the dependent variables are dummy variables indicating whether individuals believe officials who commit crimes will be held accountable. Column 1 provides the baseline specification. Subsequent columns introduce controls for distance to transmitters: Column 2 accounts for the nearest transmitter, Column 3 for the second closest, Column 4 for the third, Column 5 for the fourth and Column 6 for the fifth. Columns 7 and 8 add the distances to Cape Town and Johannesburg, and the provincial capital, respectively. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.11: Results Robust to Controlling for Distances: Violence

Dependent Variable:	IHS PC Violence							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
TRC Media × Post	−0.075***	−0.063***	−0.064***	−0.064***	−0.062***	−0.063***	−0.074***	−0.074***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Dist to first TX		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to second TX			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to third TX				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fourth TX					✓	✓	✓	✓
Dist to fifth TX						✓	✓	✓
Dist to Hubs							✓	✓
Dist to Prov Capital								✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15
Adj R^2	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38
Observations	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532	21532

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on violence, using specification 2. The dependent variable is violence per capita, using an IHS transformation. Column 1 provides the baseline specification. Subsequent columns introduce controls for distance to transmitters: Column 2 accounts for the nearest transmitter, Column 3 for the second closest, Column 4 for the third, Column 5 for the fourth and Column 6 for the fifth. Columns 7 and 8 add the distances to Cape Town and Johannesburg, and the provincial capital, respectively. All specifications include municipality fixed effects, year fixed effects, Free Signal interacted with year fixed effects, as well as province-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.12: Results Robust to Omitting Suburbs with Antennas: National Identity

Dependent Variable:	National Identity					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TRC Media × Black	0.108***	0.108***	0.107***	0.106***	0.109***	0.106***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.036)	(0.038)
TRC Media × White	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.046	0.073	0.050
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.048)
Exclude Suburb with Tx						
Radio 2000		✓				
SABC 1			✓			
SABC 2				✓		
SABC 3					✓	
Any						✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.69	0.69	0.69
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	12857	11996	12940	11689

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on nation-building, using specification 1, which interacts TRC media exposure with the individual's race. The dependent variable is a PCA on whether individuals identify as South African and their desire for a united South Africa. Column 1 presents the baseline specification. In Column 2, we exclude suburbs that have a Radio2000 transmitter. Column 3 excludes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 1, while Column 4 omits those with an SABC 2 transmitter. Column 5 removes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 3. Column 6 excludes suburbs that have antennas transmitting any of the TRC outlets. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.13: Results Robust to Omitting Suburbs with Antennas: Judiciary

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
			Panel A: Trust Judiciary Courts			
TRC Media × Black	−0.044	−0.044	−0.055	−0.041	−0.044	−0.051
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.049)
TRC Media × White	−0.162***	−0.162***	−0.168***	−0.166***	−0.161***	−0.171***
	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.059)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56
Adj R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Observations	13052	13052	12857	11996	12940	11689
			Panel B: Own Accountability Index			
TRC Media × Black	0.044	0.044	0.049	0.030	0.045	0.037
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)
TRC Media × White	0.127**	0.127**	0.135**	0.115**	0.127**	0.123**
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.053)	(0.056)
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59
Adj R^2	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Observations	13052	13052	12857	11996	12940	11689
Exclude Suburb with Tx						
Radio 2000		✓				
SABC 1			✓			
SABC 2				✓		
SABC 3					✓	
Any						✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave by Muni FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the marginal effects of TRC media exposure on trust in the judiciary and accountability, using specification 1, which interacts TRC media exposure with the individual's race. In Panel A the dependent variable is a dummy variable indicating whether individuals trust the courts. In Panel B the dependent variables are dummy variables indicating whether individuals believe officials who commit crimes will be held accountable. Column 1 presents the baseline specification. In Column 2, we exclude suburbs that have a Radio2000 transmitter. Column 3 excludes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 1, while Column 4 omits those with an SABC 2 transmitter. Column 5 removes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 3. Column 6 excludes suburbs that have antennas transmitting any of the TRC outlets. All regressions include municipality-by-wave fixed effects. All controls are measured at the suburb level. All regressions include baseline controls, which consist of demographic indicators such as the IHS of population, shares of English speakers, White population, employed individuals, Afrikaans speakers, Zulu speakers, and Black population, along with socio-economic variables like the average income score, urban population share, marital status, Christian population share, and the proportion of individuals over 60. We also include individual-level characteristics such as gender, race, age (and its square), rural residency, and educational attainment. Geographic factors include area, altitude, ruggedness, average yearly temperature, rainfall, agricultural suitability, and proximity to the coast and inland water (and their squared terms). Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.14: Results Robust to Omitting Suburbs with Antennas: Violence

Dependent Variable:	IHS PC Violence					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
TRC Media × Post	−0.075***	−0.072***	−0.077***	−0.069***	−0.064***	−0.061***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Exclude Suburb with Tx						
Radio 2000		✓				
SABC 1			✓			
SABC 2				✓		
SABC 3					✓	
Any						✓
Baseline Ctrs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.15	0.14	0.14	0.11	0.13	0.09
Adj R^2	0.38	0.35	0.36	0.31	0.34	0.23
Observations	21532	21476	20944	18872	21112	18088

Note: This table presents the estimated effect of TRC media exposure on violence, using specification 2. The dependent variable is violence per capita, using an IHS transformation. Column 1 presents the baseline specification. In Column 2, we exclude suburbs that have a Radio2000 transmitter. Column 3 excludes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 1, while Column 4 omits those with an SABC 2 transmitter. Column 5 removes suburbs with a transmitter for SABC 3. Column 6 excludes suburbs that have antennas transmitting any of the TRC outlets. All specifications include municipality fixed effects, year fixed effects, Free Signal interacted with year fixed effects, as well as province-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parenthesis. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.15: Balance Test, Salience Analysis

Dependent Variable:	Female	Primary Edu	High School	University	Rural	Age 35 Plus	Age 60 Plus	Black	Coloured	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
R2000 × Hearing	0.026	0.062	−0.230	−0.116	0.064	−0.037	−0.035	−0.194	−0.050	0.194
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.163)	(0.095)	(0.138)	(0.071)	(0.104)	(0.225)	(0.054)	(0.246)
Episode by Suburb FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean of Dep. Var.	0.50	0.99	0.82	0.20	0.17	0.49	0.08	0.72	0.10	0.13
Adj R^2	-0.19	0.02	0.49	0.42	0.40	0.08	0.10	0.88	0.86	0.82
Observations	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157	2157

Note: This table presents the balance test for the salience analysis, using specification 5. The data used is from the first round of the Afrobarometer survey. The dependent variables are key individual characteristics. The coefficient of interest is the interaction between TRC media exposure and a dummy variable indicating whether a public hearing occurred on the interview day. All regressions include episode-by-suburb and day fixed effects. Both the dependent variables and the TRC media exposure variable are standardized. Regressions are weighted using Afrobarometer survey weights. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality-level. Statistical significance represented by * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

B Data Appendix

In this section we provide further details on data construction.

B.1 Media Coverage

We compute coverage for both TV and Radio 2000 stations using the Irregular Terrain Model (ITM) with CloudRF, a software used for modeling radio propagation. This process involves generating an average coverage map based on ITM model predictions, which are driven by two sets of inputs. The first set includes the technical characteristics of the antennas, such as coordinates, height, power, and frequency, which were obtained from the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa. When specific characteristics were unavailable, we used national averages. The second set of inputs involves the topographic characteristics of the region, accounting for factors like hills or mountainous terrains that significantly influence signal strength (Crabtree and Kern 2018). We tuned these parameters to fit the South African context based on advice from engineers at CloudRF.

Figure B.14 provides an example of the radio coverage reach from a transmitter located in Kimberly. For each antenna, we generated high-resolution coverage data at 90-meter resolution, and we used GIS software to aggregate the signal coverage from the raster data to suburbs by calculating the mean coverage.

Figure B.14: Example radio coverage output
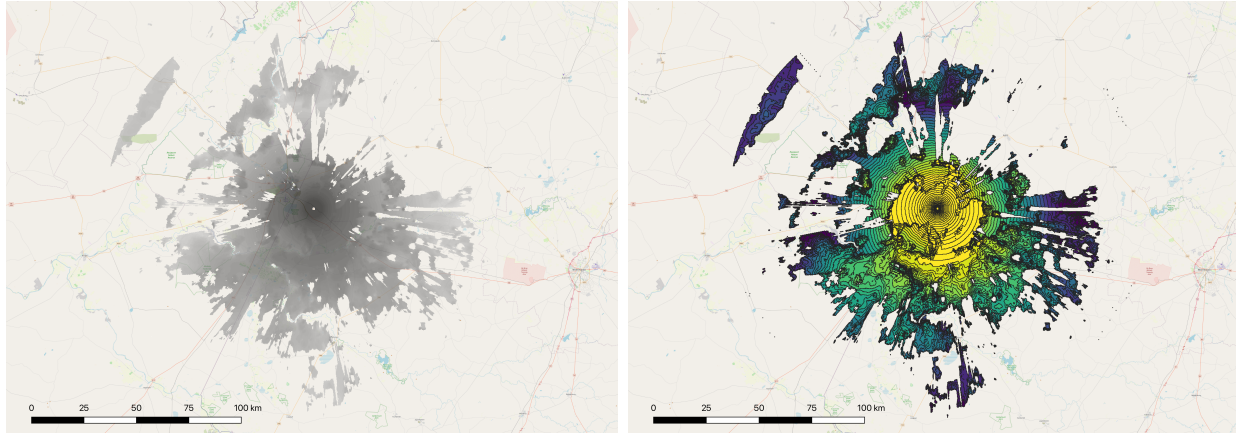
(a) Gray scale raster output   **(b)** Raster to vector output

Notes: This figure illustrates an example of the ITM radio coverage output for an antenna located in Kimberly. Panel A displays the original raster output at a 90-meter resolution, capturing the fine-grained signal coverage distribution. Panel B presents the vectorized version of the raster, where differences in coverage after adjusting for topographic characteristics are more clearly observed. Areas shaded in dark purple represent lower coverage, while yellow tones indicate regions with higher signal reception.

B.2 Afrobarometer

National Identity   We perform a principal component analysis on two categories of questions: (i) Feeling South African, where we harmonized two related questions due to the unavailability of a consistent question across all waves:

- For wave 1: 'You feel much stronger ties to [identity group] than to other South Africans?' (1 = strongly disagree or disagree; 0 = otherwise).

- For waves 2 to 6: 'Let us suppose that you had to choose between being a South African and being a [identity group]. Which of these two groups do you feel most strongly attached to?' (1 = South African; 0 = otherwise).

(ii) Wanting a united society, which is derived from the question:

- For waves 1 to 6: 'It is desirable to create one united South African nation out of all the different groups who live in this country.' (1 = strongly agree or agree; 0 = otherwise).

Intergroup Trust   We use the following question, which was only available for wave three:

- 'How much do you trust each of the following types of people: South Africans from other ethnic groups?' (1= I trust them a lot or I trust them somewhat; 0= otherwise).

Trust towards institutions   From waves 1 to 6 we use the following questions:

- Courts: 'How much of the time can you trust the courts of law' (1= just about always or Most of the time; 0= otherwise).

- Police: 'How much of the time can you trust the police?' (1= just about always or Most of the time; 0= otherwise).

Accountability   For accountability of ordinary individuals we harmonized across waves the following questions:

- We create an average of the following questions for waves 1 to 3: What if a person like yourself committed a serious crime? (1= very likely or likely; 0= otherwise)
  - 'How likely is it that the police would catch and charge them?'
  - 'How likely is it that a court of law would convict them?'
  - 'How likely is it that the Receiver of Revenue would find out and penalize them?'

- From wave 4 to 6: 'Do ordinary people who break the law go unpunished?' (1= never or rarely; 0= otherwise)

For accountability of top officials, we harmonized the following questions from wave three onwards, as this was the first wave in which the question became available:

- We create an average of the following questions for wave 3:
  - 'How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a top government official committed a serious crime?' (1= very likely or likely; 0= otherwise)
  - 'How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a top official did not pay a tax on some of the income they earned?' (1= very likely or likely; 0= otherwise)

- From waves 4 to 6: 'Do officials who commit crimes go unpunished?' (1= never or rarely; 0= otherwise)

Civic Engagement

- Discuss Politics, from waves 1 to 6: ' When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matter?' (1= frequently or occasionally; 0= otherwise)

- Interest Public, from waves 1 to 6: 'Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?' (1= most of the time or some of the time; 0= otherwise).

- Voted from waves 1 and 3 to 6: With regard to the most recent, [national election], which statement is true for you?' (1= you voted in the elections; 0= otherwise).

- Collective Action, from waves 1 to 6: 'Participate with others to address an important problem affecting the community or nation?' (1= yes; 0= otherwise).

- Community, from waves 1 to 6: We perform a principal component analysis on two questions:
  - 'Attend group concerned with local matters?' (1= a few times or often; 0= otherwise).
  - 'Attend a community development or self-help association?' (1= a few times or often; 0= otherwise).

Role of the TRC   For questions related to the TRC, we rely on the first wave of the Afrobarometer, as it is the only wave that contains this type of question.

- Successful reparations: 'How well would you say the government is handling the reparations to people identified as victims by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?' (1= very well, fairly well; 0= otherwise).

- Important for Nation Building: Please tell me whether you disagree, neither disagree nor agree, or agree with these statements, 'TRC was important for building a united South African nation'. (1= strongly agree or agree; 0= otherwise).

- Soft reconciliation: We perform a principal component analysis on four questions. Please tell me whether you disagree, neither disagree nor agree, or agree with these statements (1= strongly agree or agree; 0= otherwise)
  - Reconciliation requires that South Africans understand one another better
  - National Reconciliation requires that people forgive one another

- National Reconciliation requires forgetting the past
- National Reconciliation requires the healing of memories

- Material compensation: 'National reconciliation requires material compensation for victims of apartheid' (1= strongly agree or agree; 0= otherwise).

- Amnesty: 'National reconciliation requires amnesty as provided by the TRC' (1= strongly agree or agree; 0= otherwise).

- One's contribution: 'It is my responsibility as a citizen to contribute to the process of reconciliation' (1= strongly agree or agree; 0= otherwise).

B.3   Data from SARS

The panel includes firms from 2008 to 2018, constructed from two types of forms submitted by firms: corporate income tax declarations (CIT) and personal income tax forms submitted on behalf of employees. We extract firms' revenue from the CIT, and infer their location from the IRP5 forms. Importantly, firms are not required to directly report their location. However, employees must indicate their firm's postal code on their tax declaration (IRP5). We assign a firm's location based on the postal code associated with the largest total wage expenditure, according to the IRP5 forms, in the most recent year the firm appears in the panel.

In addition to revenue and location, we observe the number of employees, the proportion of female employees, the average wage, and the firm's industry code. Table A.8 presents descriptive statistics for our firm-level sample, which includes 704,000 firms. The average firm has an annual revenue of 41,000 Rands and employs just under 50 people. The largest industry by firm count is finance and business (23%), followed by manufacturing (13%) and retail/motor trade (11%). Firms in the lowest quartile of TRC exposure residual tend to be smaller than those in the highest quartile, employing around 20% fewer workers and generating 33% less revenue.

C The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

In this section, we provide a more comprehensive picture of the history and legislation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment.

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) policy, introduced initially as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in 1993, was implemented to promote the economic participation of historically disadvantaged groups in South Africa. This policy was designed to address deep-seated racial inequalities by fostering Black ownership, management, and employment in the South African economy. One of its key components is a rating system that evaluates firms based on their performance across various dimensions of empowerment. The resulting B-BBEE scores directly affect a company's ability to engage in public sector procurement, incentivizing them to actively work towards reducing racial disparities within their operations.

Under B-BBEE, firms are evaluated according to a scorecard that includes criteria such as Black ownership, employment equity, skills development, enterprise and supplier development, and socioeconomic development. Points are awarded based on how well a firm meets these criteria, with the cumulative score determining its overall B-BBEE status. This status is crucial in the public procurement process: firms with higher B-BBEE ratings are afforded preferential treatment, increasing their chances of securing contracts. Moreover, firms with strong B-BBEE scores are also more attractive business partners for other companies seeking to improve their procurement recognition levels. The policy, thus, is supposed to create chain effects, encouraging widespread compliance with B-BBEE principles across industries.

The impact of B-BBEE compliance varies significantly based on a firm's size, with the policy categorizing businesses into three distinct groups. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), defined as those with an annual revenue below 10 million ZAR, are automatically granted the highest B-BBEE status, exempting them from the stringent requirements placed on larger businesses. Qualifying Medium Enterprises (QMEs) with revenues between 10 and 50 million ZAR are awarded a medium B-BBEE status by default. However, they have the opportunity to improve their status if they reach a B-BBEE score higher than the one assigned by default. For large enterprises with revenues exceeding 50 million ZAR, their B-BBEE status is determined entirely by their score on the B-BBEE scorecard. This tiered approach creates notable thresholds at the 10 and 50 million ZAR revenue mark, beyond which firms face stricter obligations and more pressure to improve their B-BBEE compliance. Consequently, this policy introduces significant discontinuities in compliance incentives as firms grow in size.

We focus on the 10 million ZAR threshold for two main reasons. First, this threshold is relevant to a much higher share of firms than the 50 million ZAR threshold. Second, management decisions in larger firms with multiple plants are less likely to be influenced by local conditions such as exposure to the TRC.