

OVERCOMING APARTHEID:

CAN TRUTH RECONCILE A DIVIDED NATION?

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APARTHEID



Can Truth Reconcile
a Divided Nation?

JAMES L. GIBSON



Democratization:

*A Strategic Plan for Global Research
on the Transformation and
Consolidation of Democracies*

Tetlock Findings on the Accuracy of Expert Forecasts

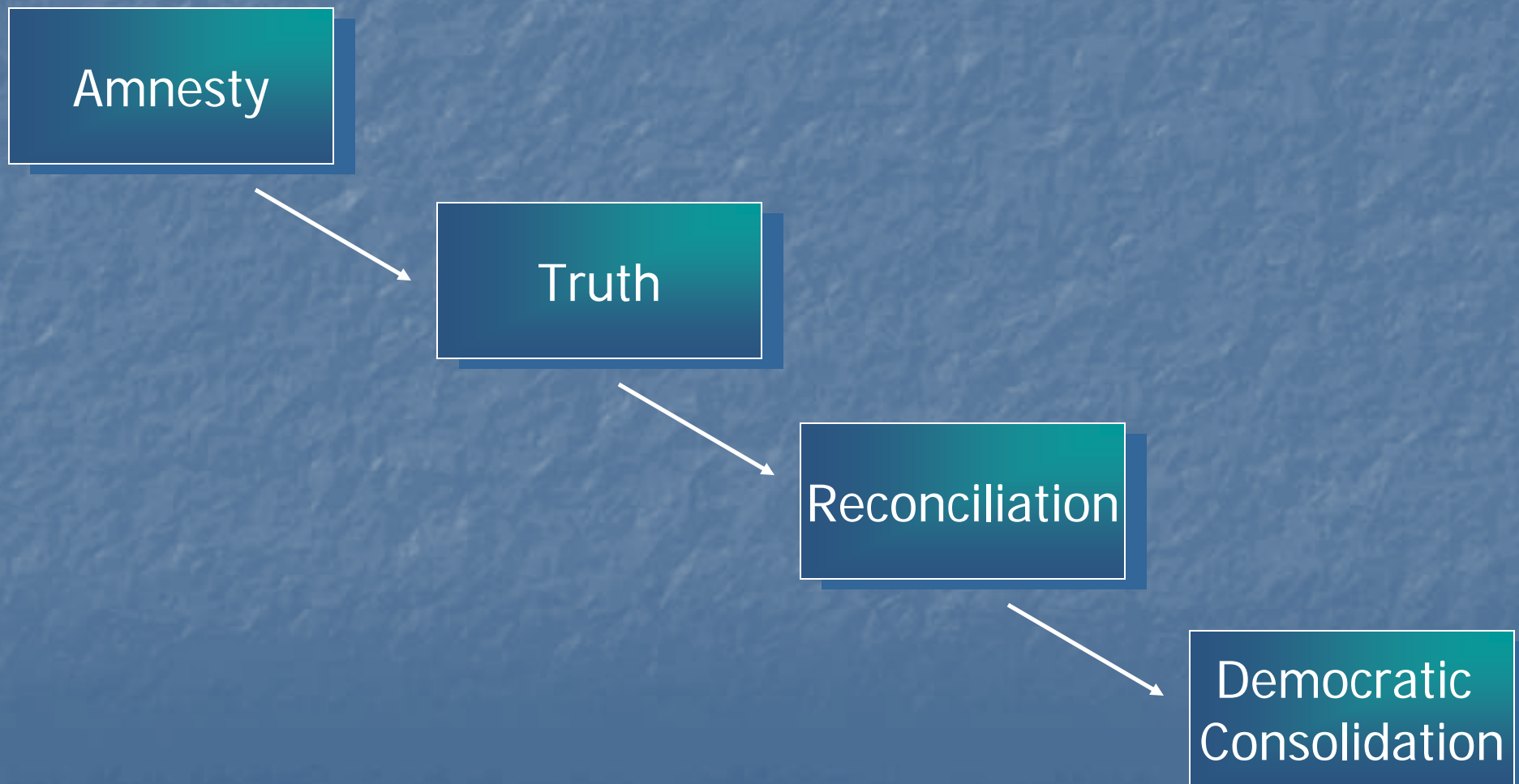
Issue Domain	Status of Forecast	N
<i>Soviet Union</i>	Inaccurate	27
	Accurate	11
<i>South Africa</i>	Inaccurate	15
	Accurate	11

Source: Tetlock, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1998

The goal "of the Commission shall be to promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past."

- (National Unity and Reconciliation Act, Section (3) (1)).

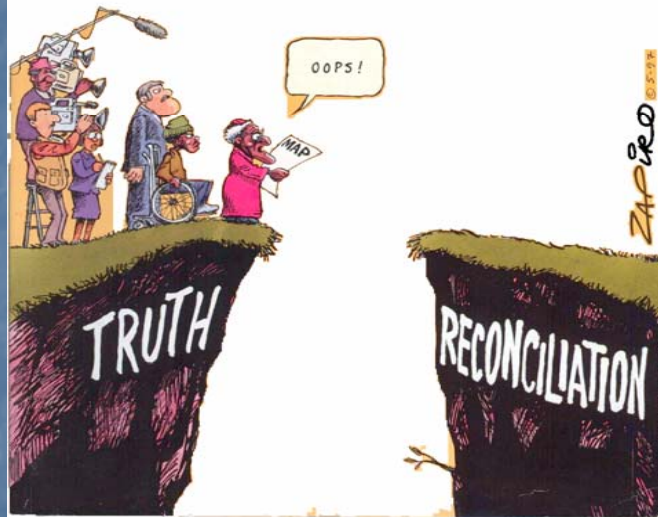
Assumptions of the Truth & Reconciliation Process



Edited by Wilhelm Verwoerd & Mahlubi 'Chief' Mabizela

TRUTHS Drawn in Jest

Commentary on the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission through Cartoons





Research Design

- Survey Dates: Nov 2000 – Feb 2001
- 3727 Adults (18yrs and older) South Africans interviewed
- Survey translated into 8 languages
- Face to face interviews
- Rural/urban stratification
- Questionnaire based on extensive focus group research across the country

Elements of South Africa's Collective Memory

Apartheid was a crime against humanity. (True)

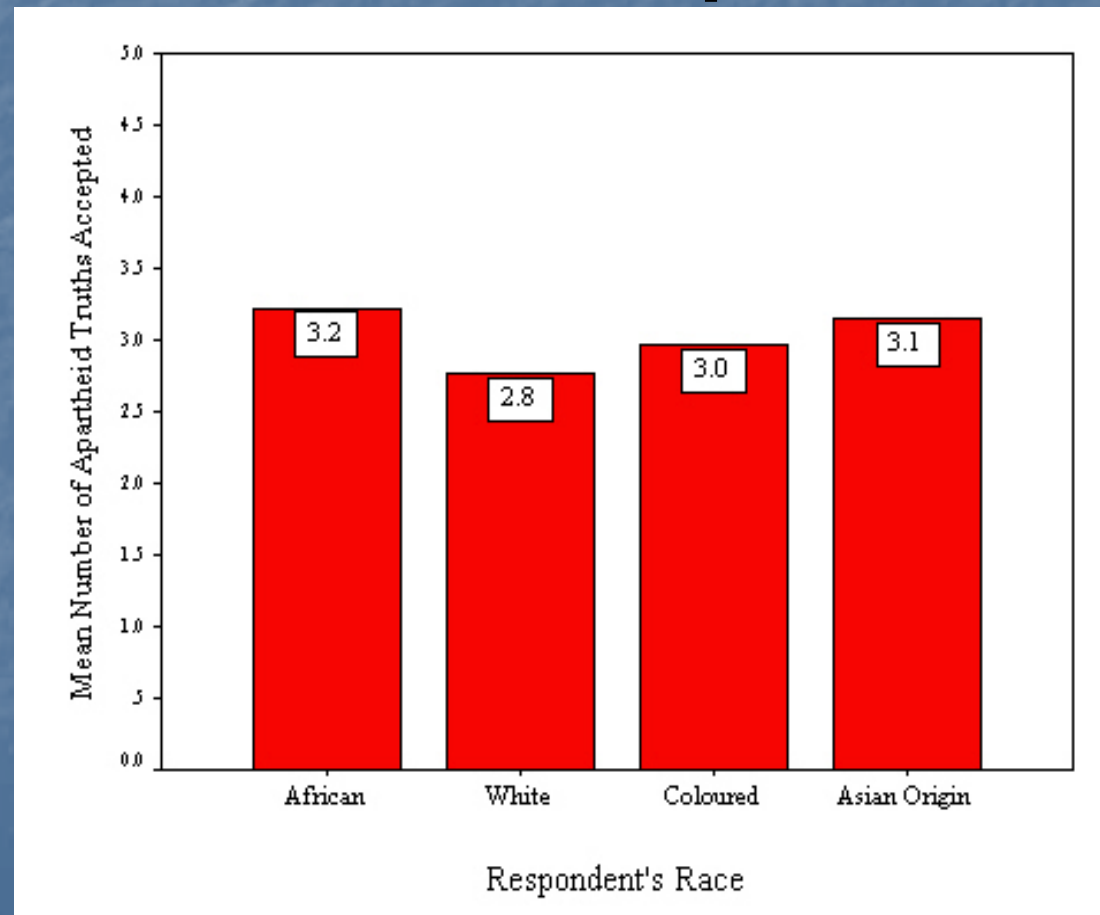
There were certainly some abuses under the old apartheid system, but the ideas behind apartheid were basically good ones. (False)

Both those struggling for and those struggling against the old apartheid system did unforgivable things to people. (True)

Acceptance of South African Collective Memory

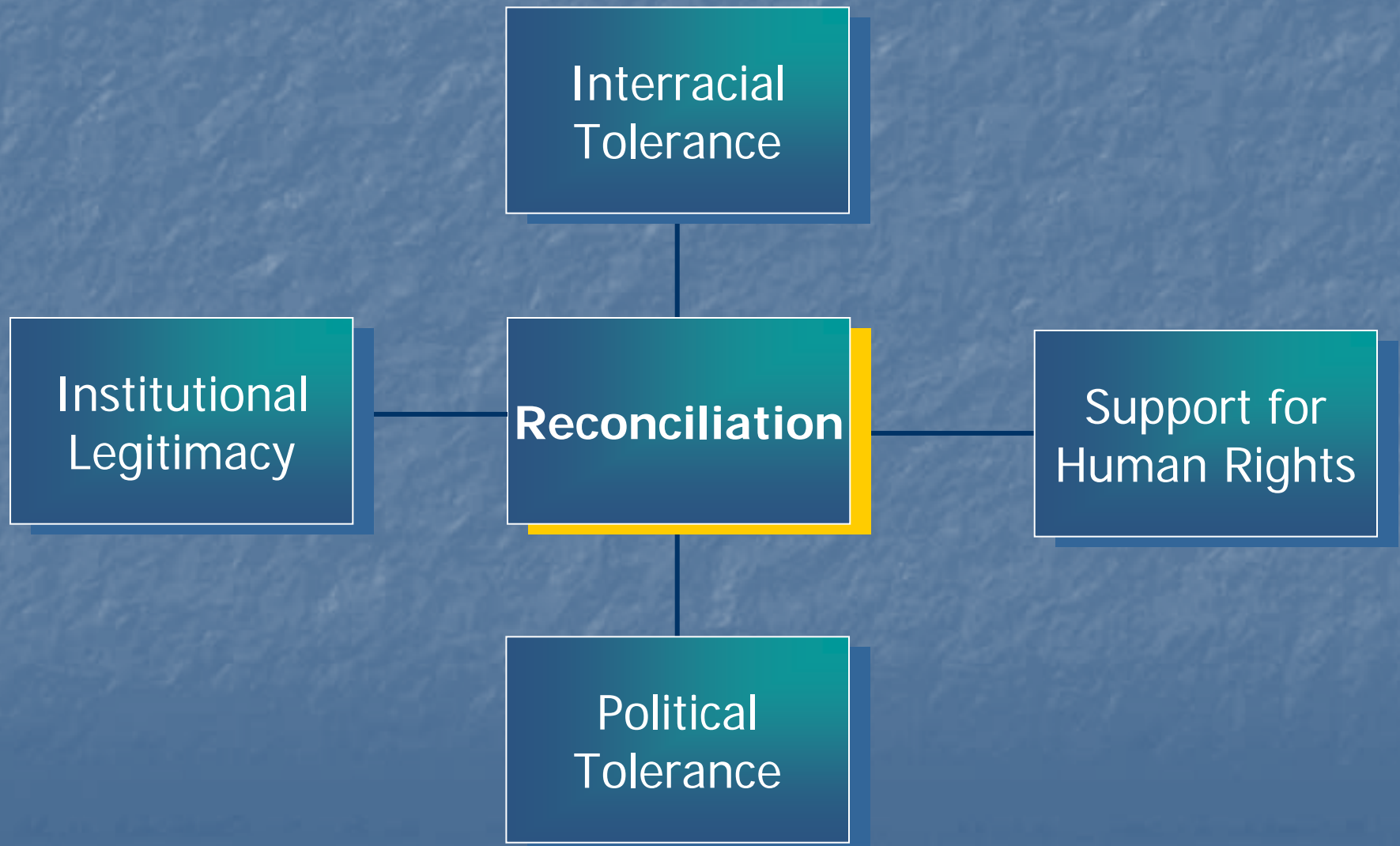
Statement	% Accepting as Truth	
	Blacks	Whites
Apartheid was a crime against humanity*	94	73
Despite abuses, apartheid ideas were good ones	36	51
Those struggling for & against apartheid did unforgivable things*	76	74

Figure 3.1 Acceptance of the TRC's Collective Memory—Average Number of Truths Accepted

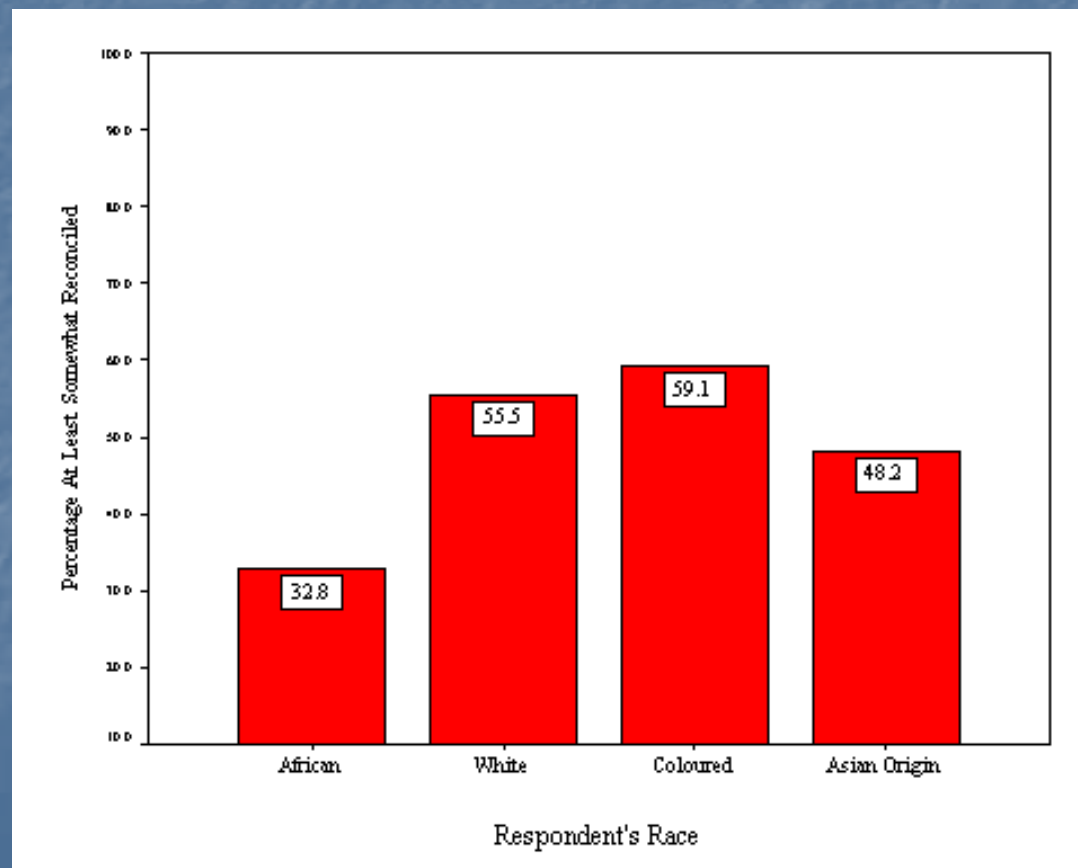


Note: Interracial difference of means: $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$.

The Dimensions of Reconciliation



Racial Differences in Overall Levels of Reconciliation



Truth Acceptance and Overall Reconciliation Index

<i>African</i>	Truth Acceptance ———— .23 ———> Reconciliation
<i>White</i>	Truth Acceptance ———— .53 ———> Reconciliation
<i>Coloured</i>	Truth Acceptance ———— .34 ———> Reconciliation
<i>Asian Origin</i>	Truth Acceptance ———— .09 ———> Reconciliation

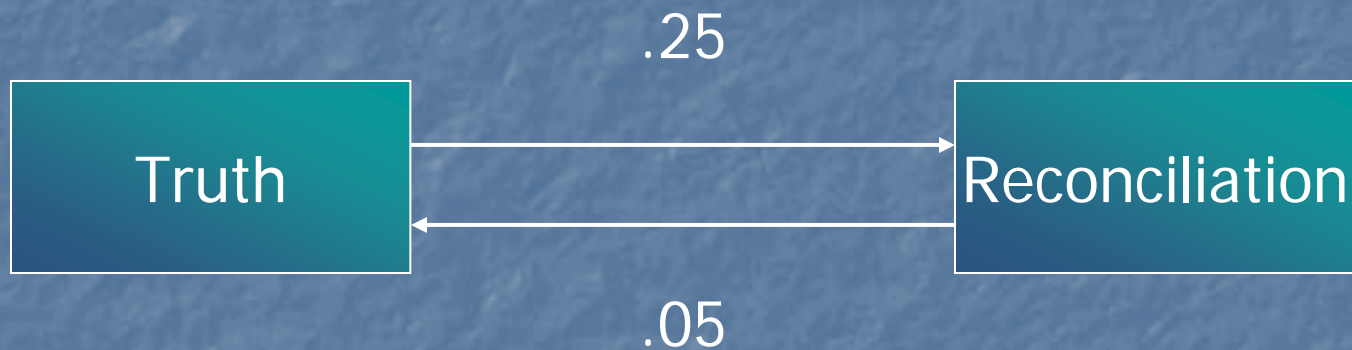
The Causal Relationship

Coloured South Africans



The Causal Relationship

South Africans of Asian Origin



The Causal Relationship

White South Africans



Yes, all these things when they came out at the TRC, I thought, my God, where was I living? Was that in South Africa?

The whites, you didn't know any of that was going on. You looked on apartheid and you were comfortable because you could go to the shops and go where you liked.

Yes, they were happy. We were ignorant in a sense of knowing what actually really went on.

Q. Those struggling for and against apartheid did terrible things to others. What do you think of that?

It's very true, both sides have blood on their hands.

Even the so-called liberators had very inhumane methods that they used when they wanted to put through a message A lot of people were hurt in the townships.

It's true, both sides did bad things.

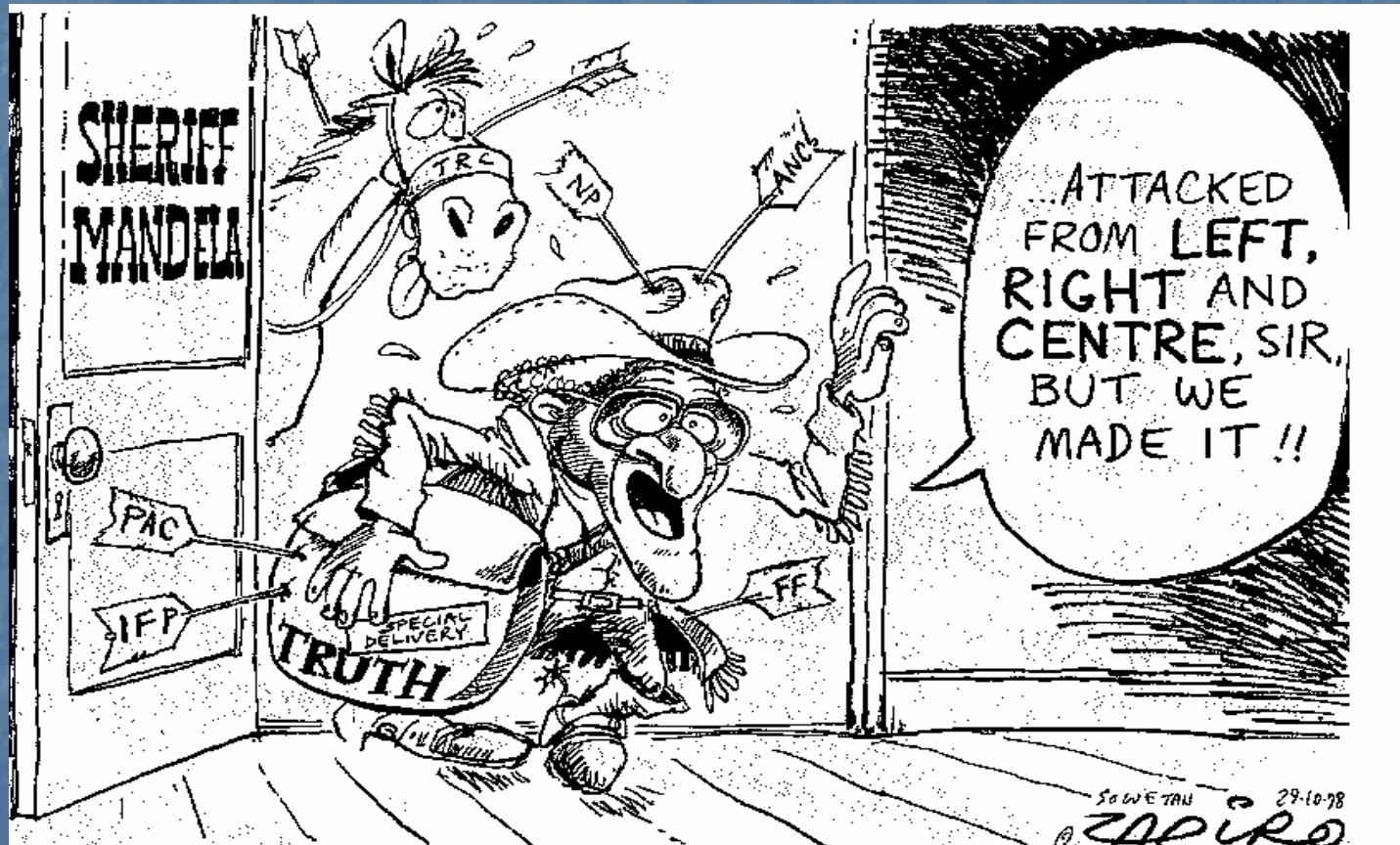
Two wrongs don't make a right.

“All that a truth commission can achieve is to reduce the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse.”

- Michael Ignatieff 1996, 113.

Factors Contributing to the Success of Truth and Reconciliation

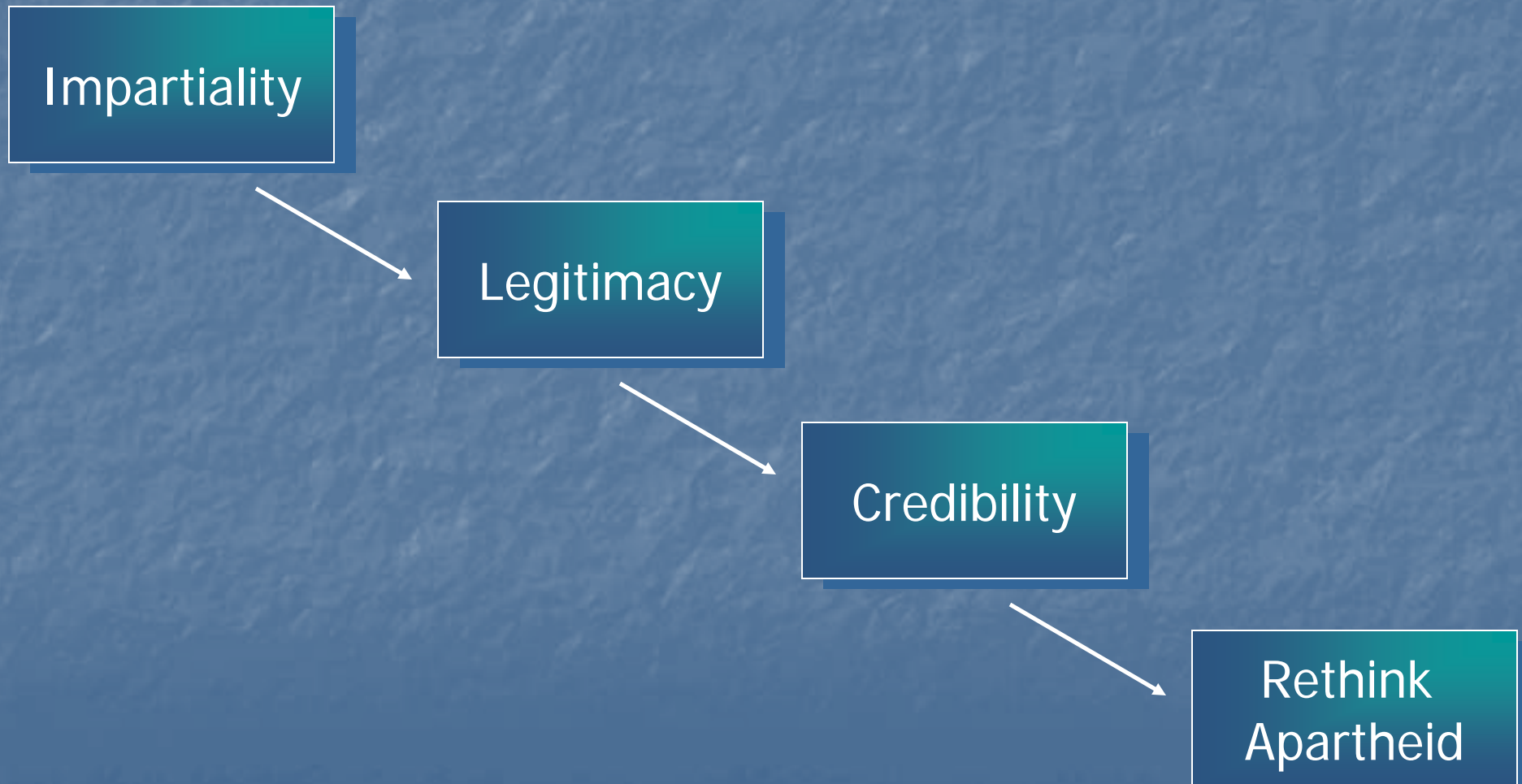
- Penetrated society
- Impartiality



Factors Contributing to the Success of Truth and Reconciliation

- Penetrated society
- Impartiality
- The Message -- Blaming all sides

The Success of the TRC



Factors Contributing to the Success of Truth and Reconciliation

- Penetrated society
- Impartiality

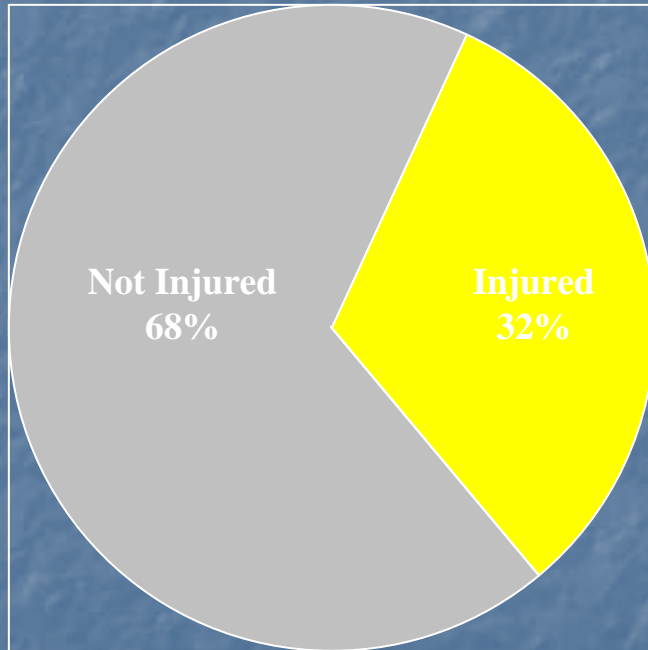
- The Message -- Blaming all sides
- Overcoming the Justice Deficit
- Leadership

System Characteristics Contributing to the Success of Truth and Reconciliation

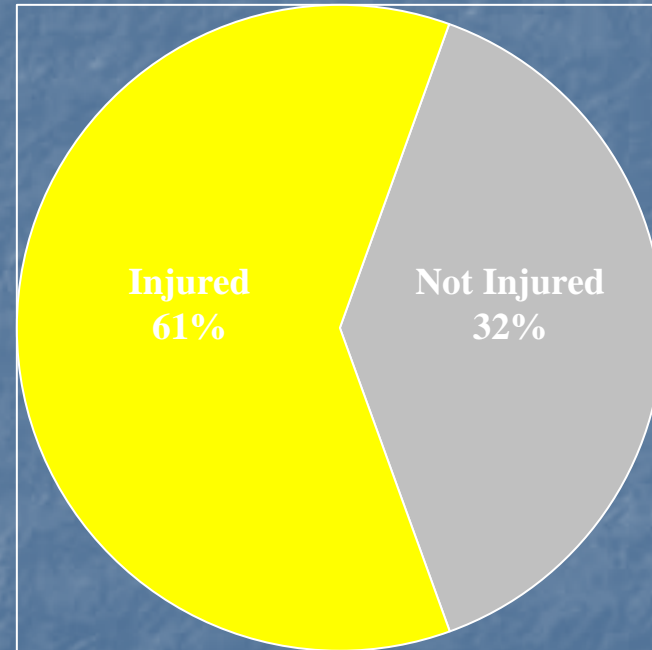
- Support for the rule of law
- Political pluralism
- Amnesty
- Extent of injuries

The Injuries of Apartheid

General



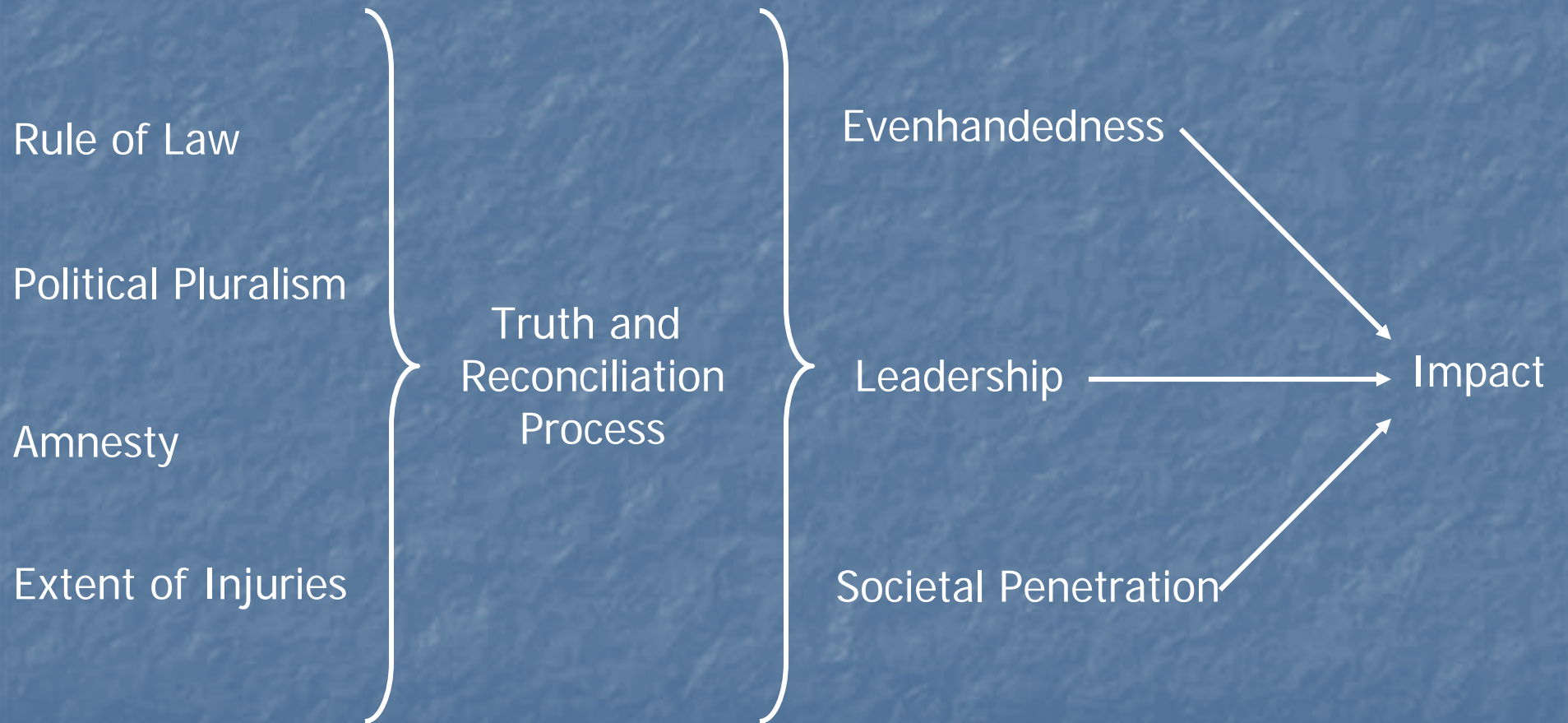
Specific



System Characteristics Contributing to the Success of Truth and Reconciliation

- Support for the rule of law
- Political pluralism
- Amnesty
- Extent of injuries
- Leadership

Macro Model



Connecting Reconciliation and Civil Peace

Component of Reconciliation

Mechanism for Mitigating Intergroup Conflict and Enhancing Democratic Consolidation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ■ Reduction of political intolerance | Expansion of individual freedom and the marketplace of ideas |
| ■ Reduction of intergroup prejudice | Increased intergroup trust and cooperation |
| ■ Support for a human right culture | Increased constraints on the ability of authorities to suspend/manipulate the rule of law |
| ■ Institutional legitimacy | Expanded capacity of institutions to make unpopular but necessary decisions; increased acquiescence |
| | |
| ■ Collective Memory | Redirecting political debate from the past to the future |

