SA Reconciliation Barometer 2015

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AN UNEQUAL SOCIETY: EXPLORING ACCESS AND ADVANTAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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About the IJR

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) was launched in 2000, in the aftermath of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The aim was to ensure that lessons learnt from South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy were taken into account as the nation moved ahead. Today, the Institute's vision is to build fair, democratic and inclusive societies in Africa through carefully selected engagements and interventions. The IJR's mission is to shape national approaches to transitional justice and reconciliation in African countries by drawing on community intelligence as well as on macro-trend research and comparative analysis.

About the South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey

The South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) is a public opinion survey conducted by the IJR. Since its launch in 2003, the SARB has provided a nationally representative measure of citizens' attitudes to national reconciliation, social cohesion, transformation, and democratic governance. The SARB is the only survey dedicated to critical measurement of reconciliation and the broader processes of social cohesion and is the largest longitudinal-data source of its kind globally. The SARB survey was conducted annually between 2003 and 2013 through face-to-face interviews and by using a structured questionnaire. In 2013 and 2014, the SARB survey instrument underwent extensive review in order to improve the survey questionnaire in both its conceptualisation and measurement. This process was concluded in 2015 and the new survey was fielded during August and September 2015 by the international market research company, TNS. The survey employed a multistage cluster design whereby enumerator areas (EAs) were randomly selected, and, within each of these, households were randomly selected with a view to visiting such households. At each household, a systematic grid system was employed in order to select the specific respondent for an interview. The final sample of 2 219 respondents was then weighted so as to adequately represent the adult population of South Africa.

Summary

In the first set of results that was released from the 2015 South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) survey, it was reported that more than two-thirds of respondents felt that they had little or no trust in South Africans from racial groups other than their own, while a majority of respondents identified the gap between rich and poor as the most divisive aspect of South African society. The second set of results, released in 2016, explored ordinary South Africans' sense of economic security, their sense of deprivation, the way in which they view their financial situation in relation to others', and whether they feel that progress has been made in addressing the economic backlogs caused by apartheid. Findings in this regard point to a persistence of racialised responses and experiences where perceptions of economic security among ordinary citizens are concerned. In 2016, social relations were placed under further strain against the backdrop of a tough political and economic environment. Persistent socio-economic inequalities continue to affect the progress made in terms of social cohesion and reconciliation in a post-apartheid South Africa, while efforts to address these inequalities have not been successful. In an attempt to understand the multiple layers of socio-economic inequalities in South Africa, this fourth set of results focuses on perceptions of inequalities in opportunities – and thus inequalities in social mobility, and not only inequalities in outcomes. Individuals' perceived access to the financial resources and social capital required to achieve self-identified goals are explored, as well as their perceptions regarding having the required education and physical mobility needed to achieve their goals, with the aim of offering insights into who feels that they have sufficient access and advantages to fulfil their potential.

Key findings

- 43.6% of South Africans feel they have access to the financial resources they need, 43.9% believe they have access to the groups of people (or social capital) they need, 45.2% believe they have the education they need, and 40.4% feel they can easily get to where they need in order to achieve their personal goals.
- The differences in responses among Living Standard Measure (LSM) categories, however, are stark when it comes to perceptions of having the required education to achieve self-identified goals, with more than two-thirds (69%) of higher LSM category, and only a third (33.3%) of lower LSM category respondents agreeing that they have access to the education they need.
- Findings regarding perceptions of having the required education to achieve personal

goals show differences among racial groups, with 77% of white respondents, 56% of Indian respondents, 42.4% of black respondents and only 29.8% of Coloured respondents feeling that they have the education they need to achieve their goals.

- Findings regarding the perceptions (in terms of access and advantages) of unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job show that this group of people feels excluded on multiple fronts, with 68.4% of respondents from this category disagreeing that they are able to easily get to where they need to be in order to achieve their goals, 57.2% disagreeing that they have the education they need, 59.3% disagreeing that they have access to the social capital they need, and 59.4% of respondents in this category disagreeing that they have the financial resources they need to achieve their goals.

Background

During the course of 2015 and 2016, frustrations resulting from vast socio-economic inequalities found (and, at the time of release of this Briefing Paper, were still finding) an outlet in national student protests for free higher education in South Africa. Under the banner of #FeesMustFall, multiple layers of advantage and disadvantage, of access and non-access, of inclusion and exclusion (among and between various groups) became apparent – making evident the need for a much deeper understanding of individuals' and various groups' experiences of socio-economic inequalities.

Socio-economic inequality works to the detriment of building an inclusive society, maintaining democratic values, and facilitating the reconciliation processes in South Africa. This Briefing Paper, which sets out to gain a better understanding of the aforementioned multiple layers of access and advantage, is the fourth in a series of papers based on the results from the latest SARB survey, which was conducted during August and September 2015. The first Briefing Paper explored, among other things, public opinion on sources of social division in South Africa, and found that the largest group of respondents (30.3%) identify the gap between rich and poor as the defining source of social divisions in South Africa.[1] Inequality furthermore causes repercussions in terms of the consolidation of our democracy, as high levels of inequality are not compatible with the development of a stable democratic political system.[2] It is thus in the interest of the fundamental values upon which our society is built not only to understand, but also to address, these inequalities.

South Africa is one of the world's most unequal countries, with a Gini coefficient (the measure most often used to measure income inequalities) of 0.69.[3] The realities of socio-economic inequalities in South Africa, however, extend well beyond mere differences in income distribution. Inequalities in terms of access to (quality) education opportunities and (basic) services; physical separation from or proximity to areas with more economic activities and opportunities; a high unemployment rate and underemployment; apartheid legacies – which continue to have an impact on social structures – and continued gaps in resources between races, as well as growing interracial inequalities in the context of a rising black middle class, are just some of the factors that form part of a complex socio-economic environment, where both unequal outcomes and unequal opportunities are evident.

1   Hofmeyr, J., Govender, R. 2016. 'Perceptions of Economic Security and Well-being.' *SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey Briefing Paper 2*. Accessed Online: http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/pdfs/IJR%20SARB%202%202015.pdf.

2   Telzak, S. C. 2012. 'The Tithes of Apartheid: Perceptions of social mobility among black individuals in Cape Town, South Africa'. *Centre for Social Science Research* (CSSR), Working Paper No. 315, November 2012.

3   Writer, S. 2015. 'Shocking levels of poverty in South Africa revealed', *Business Tech*, 3 August 2015. Available online: http://businesstech.co.za/news/general/94849/shocking-levels-of-poverty-in-south-africa-revealed/.

In understanding the multiple layers and complexities inherent in socio-economic inequalities, using income inequality as a metric is limited in terms of what can be gleaned from it. Although useful and important in analyses of societal socio-economic changes, this metric can only reflect WHAT is changing in society, but offers less insight into WHO is benefitting (or not benefitting, or perceived to be benefitting) from these changes, and WHY. A useful perspective in this regard can be gained by considering social mobility, which provides a measure of changing opportunities, and can offer beneficial insights and facilitate a deeper understanding of inequality and of what can be done to address inequalities.[4]

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals to move up or down the 'social ladder' within their lifetime (also referred to as intra-generational mobility), or the ability of children to move up or down the 'ladder' relative to their parents (also referred to as inter-generational mobility). Social mobility – i.e. equality of opportunity – can thus be defined as the ability of an individual to achieve a better economic and/or social position for him/herself (and his/her family) through hard work and merit.[5]

It is important that existing conditions are taken into account in the establishing of equality of opportunities. Starting points matter, as a strong interconnectedness exists between inequalities in opportunities and inequalities in outcomes. Therefore, access to resources, services and opportunities matters – as drivers and/or as ameliorating forces to inequality[6] – because the ability to access these is what allows people to work towards (or not work towards) fulfilling their potential.

Popular approaches to investigating social mobility include placing an emphasis on class mobility (often defined in terms of movement between classes through occupational categories), looking at economic or income categories (both inter- and intra-generational) and changes in this regard, or investigating perceptions of social mobility. The latter approach is of particular relevance to the South African context, as perceptions of mobility (and inequalities) contain implications for political and social cohesion, and allow for understanding the psychological state of individuals with regard to social mobility (and not only their objective conditions, from which the former can be dissociated).[7] Understanding socio-economic realities as marked by multiple layers of access and advantage, and understanding barriers and aids to social mobility as experienced by individuals, offer vital perspectives that can inform efforts to address inequalities in South Africa's changing economic and political environment.

SARB and perceptions of access and advantage

The 2015 SARB survey explored various aspects of respondents' perceptions in terms of social mobility and socio-economic inequality. To establish a baseline, respondents were prompted to indicate whether the economic realities of their families, and general economic inequalities, have changed since the advent of South Africa's democracy (in 1994). Findings in this regard (captured in Briefing Paper 2 of this series) include that 35.7% of respondents

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4   Ibid.

5   Wilkinson, R., Pickett, K. 2009. Social mobility: unequal opportunities, in *The Spirit Level: Why equality is better for everyone*. Penguin Group.

6   *UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs).* 2015. 'Inequality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. Development Issues No. 4, 21 October 2015. Accessed online: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_dev_issues/dsp_policy_04.pdf.

7   Telzak, S. C. 2012. 'The Tithes of Apartheid: Perceptions of social mobility among black individuals in Cape Town, South Africa'. *Centre for Social Science Research* (CSSR), Working Paper No. 315, November 2012.

feel that the economic circumstances of their families have improved, while 60.8% of respondents indicated that the economic realities of their respective families have not improved. (24.5% indicated that their situation has deteriorated, while 36.3% indicated that their families' economic situations remain unchanged.) In terms of change in economic inequalities since 1994, over two-thirds of respondents felt that no improvement has been made since 1994, with 36.5% of respondents indicating that inequality has increased.[8]

These responses show whether respondents believe that the economic circumstances of their families and levels of inequality in South Africa have changed, but do not offer insights into whether individuals believe they have access to resources, services and the opportunities they need to achieve their own economic and/or social goals. To this end, the SARB survey of 2015 asked respondents to consider the goals they have in their own lives, and then to consider whether they have access to the **financial resources** they need to achieve their goals; whether they have access to **groups of people** who can help them achieve their goals; whether they have the **education** they need to achieve their goals; and whether they **can easily get (or travel) to** the places they need to be in order to achieve their goals.[9, 10] This is by no means a comprehensive list of possible barriers or aids to social mobility, but it does offer insights regarding perceived access to, and advantages in, some of the main drivers of social mobility.

It is important to mention that the four questions prompt responses to **perceived** access to resources and advantages that may enable individuals to achieve **self-identified** goals. This allows for individuals' own ambitions (or non-ambitions), and not only economic indicators, to determine the extent to which certain resources are required, and for what purposes (personal goals). Perceived access to financial resources and groups of people (i.e. social capital), in particular, does not mean that respondents already have the resources that they require, but rather that respondents believe that they can access the required resources to achieve their goals – whether by their own capital, through loans, or via friends and family, for example. Respondents' perceptions of having the education and the ability to easily get to those physical places instrumental in achieving their goals, however, captures whether respondents believe they already have (or do not have) certain advantages on the way to achieving their goals.

Perceived access and advantage: An overview

An overview of responses is captured in Figure 1, which shows that 43.6% of respondents feel they have access to the financial resources they need, 43.9% believe they have access to the groups of people (or social capital) they need, 45.2% believe they have the education they need, and 40.4% feel they can easily get to where they need to be in order to achieve their personal goals.

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8 Hofmeyr, J., Govender, R. 2016. 'Perceptions of Economic Security and Well-being.' *SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey Briefing Paper 2.* Accessed Online: http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/pdfs/IJR%20SARB%202%202015.pdf.

9 Response categories to all of the questions included 'Strongly disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neutral', 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'. 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were collapsed into 'Disagree'; 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' were collapsed into 'Agree'.

10 'Neutral' responses are not explored in depth as part of this Briefing Paper, although these responses were included in the analysis. Neutral responses can possibly be interpreted as: respondents not knowing to what degree they disagree or agree regarding their having resources to achieve their goals; respondents having access to the respective resources for some goals, but not for other goals; access to a specific resource not being relevant to the goals they aim to achieve; respondents not knowing the extent to which a specific resource is required to achieve their goals, and thus not being able to respond; respondents not being willing to offer an answer, and some respondents being neutral about the extent to which they disagree or agree on whether they have access to the respective resources.

Figure 1: Perceived access and advantages
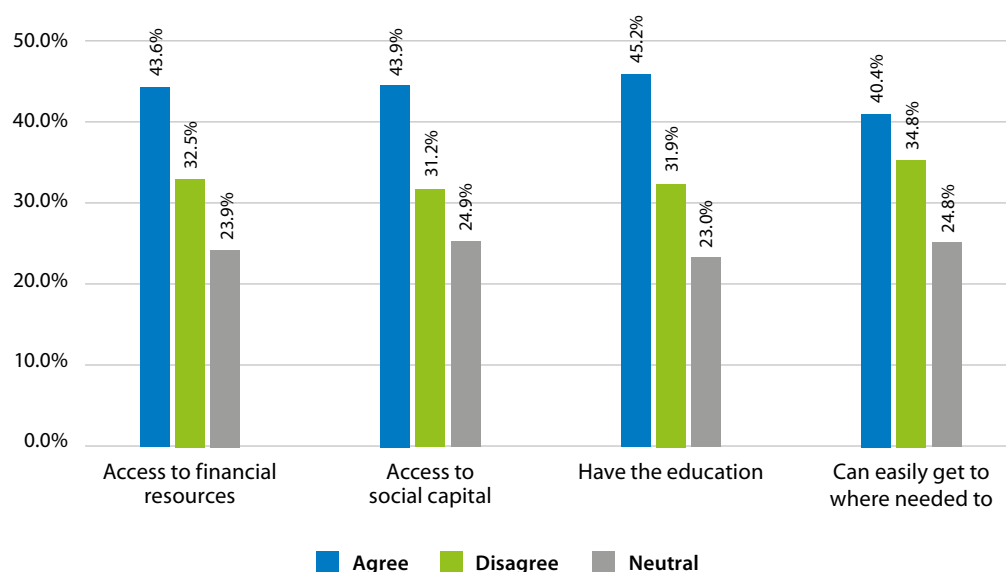
In exploring **who** believes they have access to resources and the advantages they need to achieve their goals, responses are further disaggregated in the following ways: Living Standard Measure (LSM) categories,[11] race groups, and employment status. This is done while bearing in mind the historical context and current socio-economic realities of South Africa, and with an appreciation that there are many other possible variables worth exploring (such as gender, geography and age).

Perceived access and advantage by LSM category

As could be expected, many more respondents from higher LSM categories agree that they believe they have access to the financial resources required to achieve their goals (58.7%) than is the case for the middle LSM categories (42.7%) and for the lower LSM categories (35.7%) – as is shown by Figure 2.

   This finding is similar to the findings pertaining to responses regarding access to social capital by LSM category. Figure 3 shows that a third (33.8%) of respondents in the lower LSM categories agree that they have access to the relevant social capital they need to achieve their goals, with almost 11% more respondents in the middle LSM categories (44.2%), and more than half of respondents in the higher LSM categories (59.9%) reporting the same. Only 15.7% of respondents in higher LSM categories disagree with the statement that they have access to the relevant social capital, while more than double the percentage of lower LSM category respondents (39.5%) disagree with the statement that they have the social capital they need to achieve their goals.

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11   The Living-Standard Measure (LSM) is a useful indication of degrees of wealth and material inclusion or exclusion experienced by South Africans. This composite score – which was developed by the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) – draws on a number of variables to provide a measure of individuals' standard of living. It takes into account individuals' level of consumption, access to services, social activities, ownership of assets, employment of household helpers, dwelling type, and degree of urbanisation (among other things). Higher LSM scores indicate a higher standard of living, and vice versa. For the purposes of this report, respondents with lower LSM scores (1–5), middle LSM scores (6–7), and higher LSM scores (8–10) were clustered together.

Figure 2: I have access to the financial resources I need to achieve my goals (by LSM)
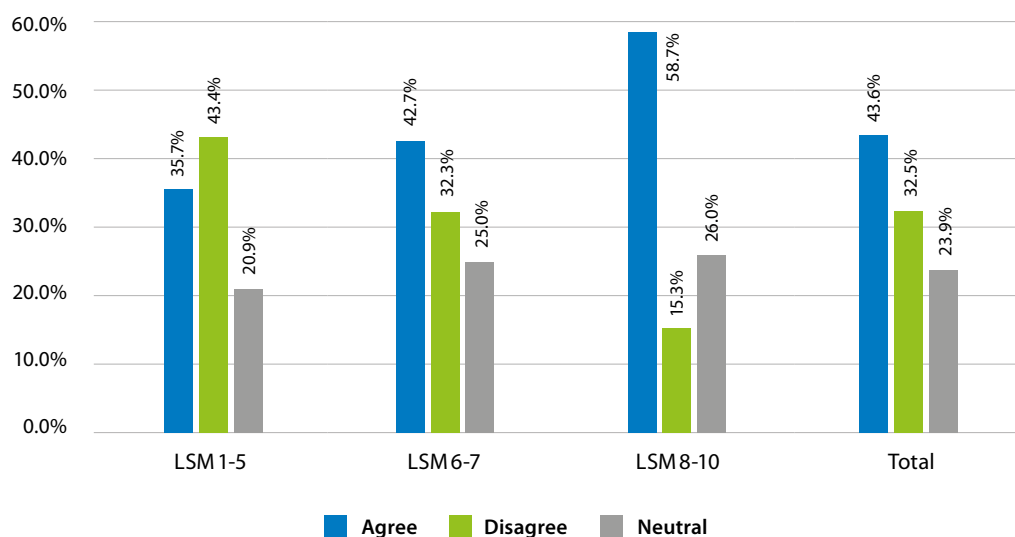
Figure 3: I have access to groups of people who can help me achieve my goals (by LSM)
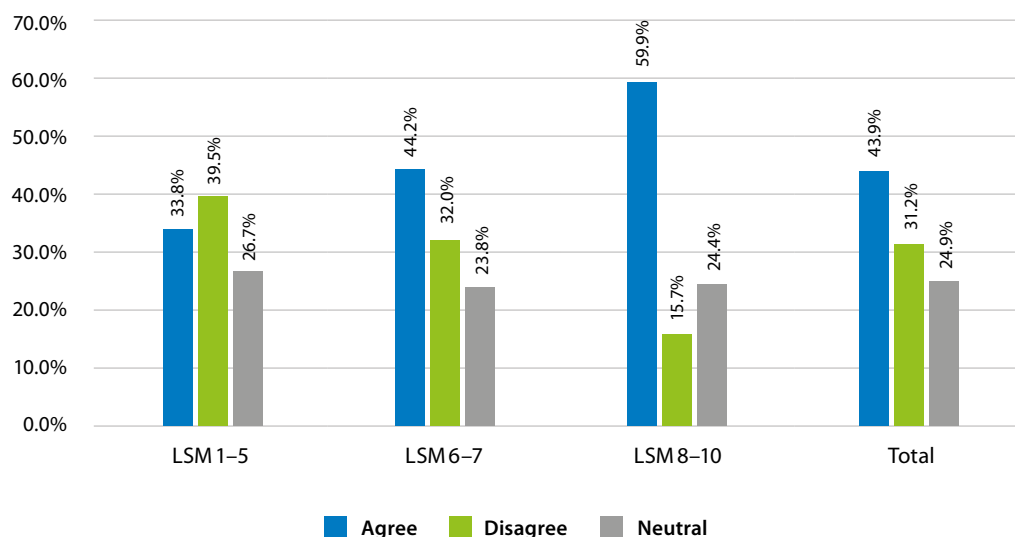
In terms of respondents' agreeing that they have the required education to achieve goals, differences between lower and higher LSM categories are stark, as shown by Figure 4. More than two thirds (69%) of respondents in the higher LSM categories agree that they believe that they have the education they need to achieve their goals, with only a third (33.3%) of respondents from lower LSM categories indicating the same. Only 10.5% of respondents from the higher LSM categories disagree with the education statement, while 44.8% of respondents from the lower LSM categories indicate the same. Although more respondents from the middle LSM category agree (43.2%) rather than disagree (32%) that they have the education they need to achieve their goals, the difference between respondents in the middle LSM categories and higher LSM categories in both regards is also evident.

The differences in perceptions regarding the ability to get to places easily to achieve goals are evident between lower and higher LSM categories, as shown by Figure 5. Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents in the higher LSM categories agree that they can easily get to where they need to be in order to achieve their goals, while less than a third (28.5%) of

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Figure 4: I have the education I need to achieve my goals (by LSM)
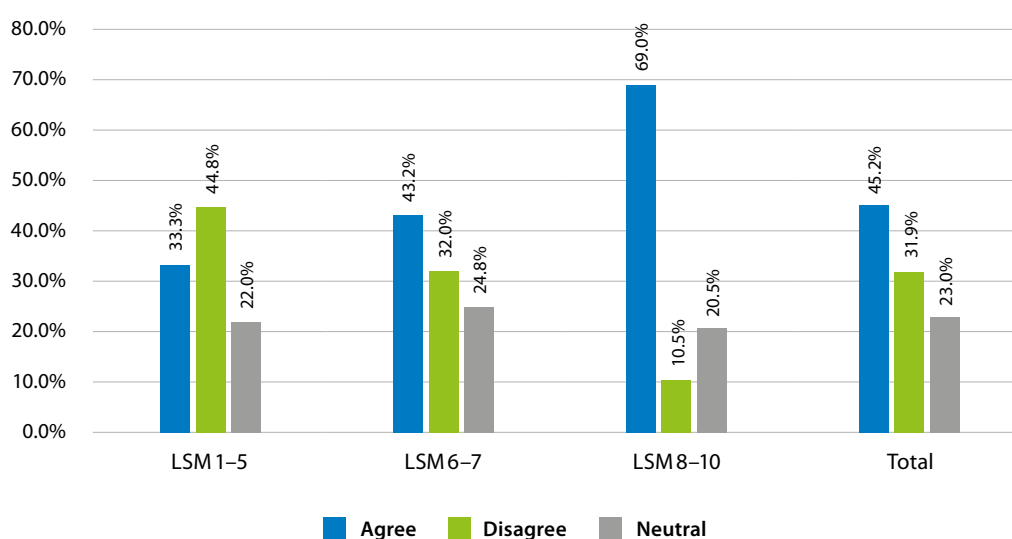
Figure 5: I can easily get (or travel) to the places I need to be in order to achieve my goals (by LSM)
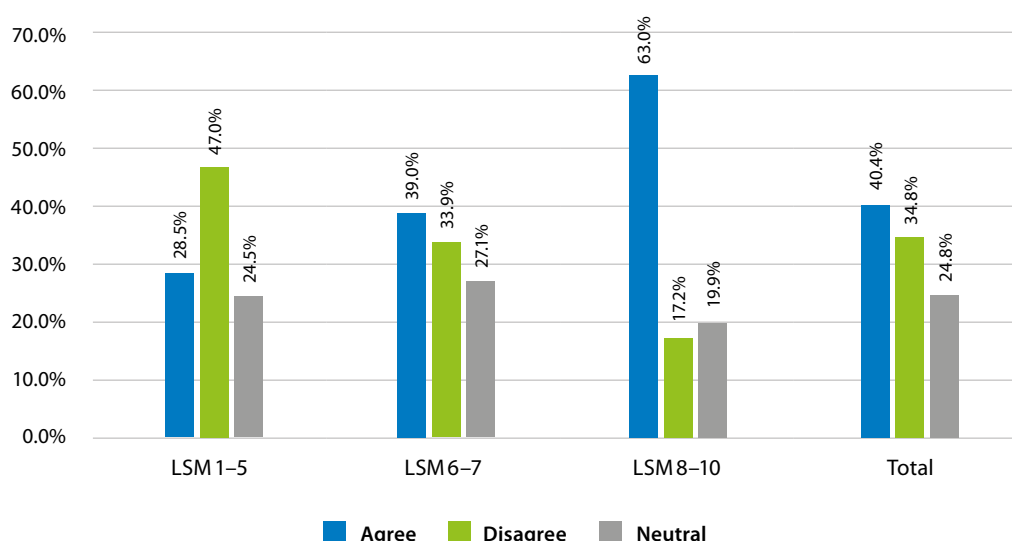
respondents from lower LSM categories indicate the same. Almost half of the respondents from lower LSM categories (47%) disagree with the statement that they can easily get to where they need to be, while almost a third (33.9%) of respondents from middle LSM categories and 17.2% of respondents from higher LSM categories indicate the same.

It is not surprising to find that more respondents in higher LSM categories believe that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals, while more respondents in lower LSM categories believe that they do not have access to the resources or the advantages they need to achieve their goals.
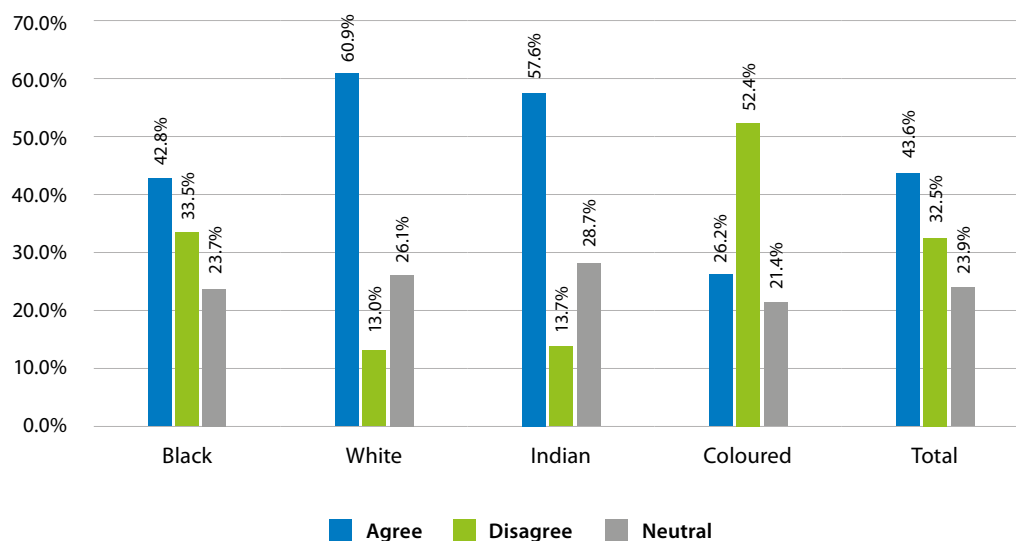
Perceived access and advantage by race groups

Understanding inequalities between and within race groups in South Africa requires not only an understanding of the continued impact of apartheid policies and of the failures of

post-apartheid policies to address these inequalities, but also a much deeper understanding of the perceptions among and within various race groups of access, and of the ability to advance in the realisation of personal goals.

Figure 6 below shows that 60.9% of white respondents and 57.6% of Indian respondents agree that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals, while less than half (42.8%) of black respondents and less than a third (26.2%) of Coloured respondents indicate the same. Notably, more than half (52.4%) of the Coloured respondents disagree with the statement that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals – far more than the black (33.5%), white (13%) and Indian (13.7%) respondents who report the same.

Figure 6:   I have access to the financial resources I need to achieve my goals (by race)

In terms of perceived access to social capital by race groups, Figure 7 shows that almost two-thirds (63%) of white respondents, and just more than half (53%) of Indian respondents, agree that they have access to the social capital they need to achieve their goals. The percentage of black respondents (43%) agreeing to having access to social capital is lower than the corresponding percentage of white and Indian respondents, but similar to the total respondents agreeing (43.9%), and higher than the percentage of Coloured respondents agreeing to the same (27.1%). Almost half (49.1%) of the Coloured respondents disagree with the statement that they have access to the social capital they need to achieve their goals. This stands in stark contrast with the percentage of black (32%), white (13.5%), and Indian (18.4%) respondents reporting the same.

Figure 8 show that more than two-thirds (77%) of white respondents and 56% of Indian respondents agree that they have the education they need to achieve their goals, while less than half (42.4%) of black respondents and less than a third (29.8%) of Coloured respondents indicate the same. Nearly half (48.7%) of the Coloured respondents disagree with the statement that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals – more than black (33.7%), white (7.2%) and Indian (14.9%) respondents who report the same.

Similar findings are shown in Figure 9 relating to the perceptions of respondents regarding being able to easily get to the places they need to be in order to achieve their goals. More than two-thirds (69.1%) of white respondents agree that they are able to easily get to the places they need to be, while more than half of Indian respondents (51.9%), more

Figure 7: I have access to groups of people who can help me achieve my goals (by race)
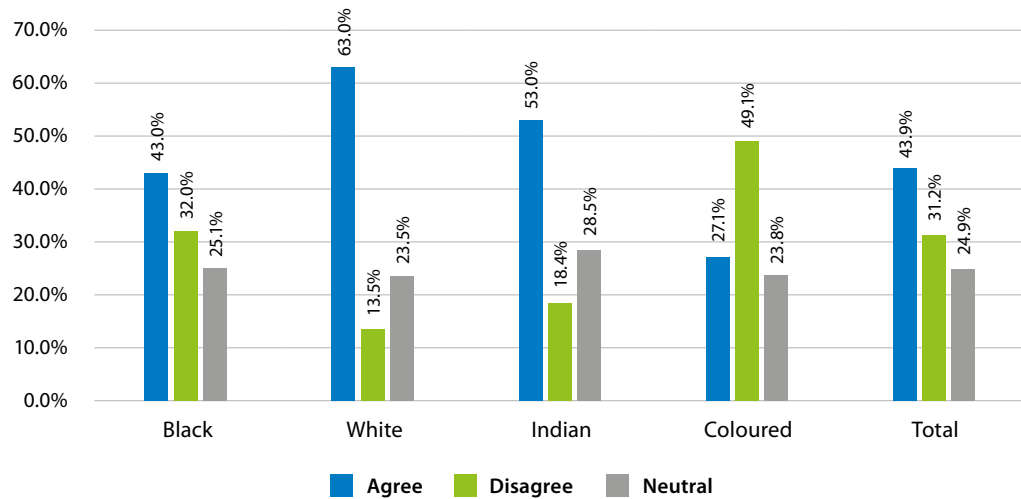
Figure 8: I have the education I need to achieve my goals (by race)
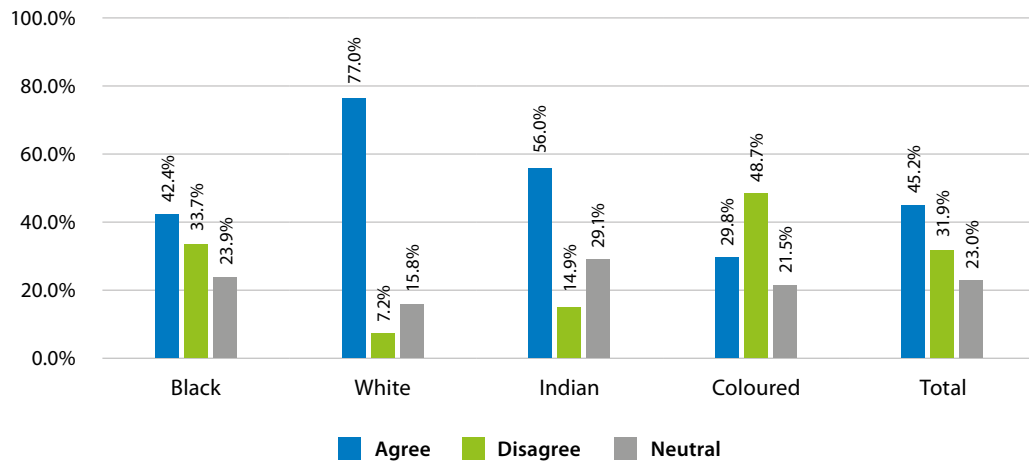
Figure 9: I can easily get (or travel) to the places I need to be in order to achieve my goals (by race)
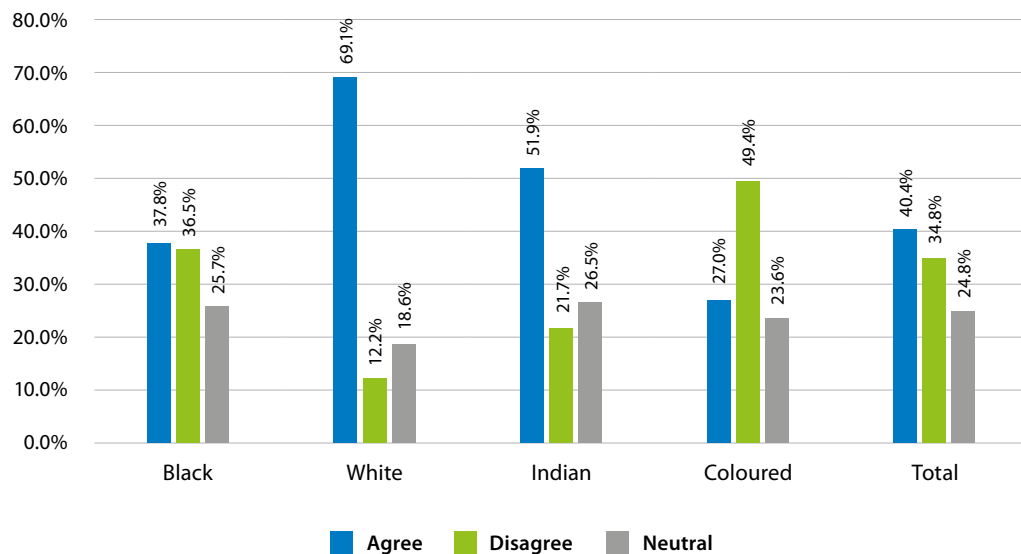
than a third (37.8%) of black respondents and only 27% of Coloured respondents agree with the same statement. Almost half of Coloured respondents (49.4%) disagree with the statement that they are able to easily get to places they need to be in order to achieve their goals, which stands in stark contrast to white (12.2%) and Indian (21.7%) respondents' answers, and is also higher than the percentage of black (36.5%) respondents indicating the same.

Differences in perceived access to resources and advantages in achieving goals among race groups offer some notable insights, although the findings are not entirely surprising. The fact that percentages of white respondents who believe they have access to the respective resources and advantages needed to achieve their goals is high is not surprising, given apartheid's unequal distribution of resources among race groups, which continues to impact on inequalities to this day. It is, however, interesting to note the findings relating to the relatively high percentages of Indian respondents believing that they have access to the resources they need, while it would also be pertinent to note that the corresponding percentages among black and Coloured respondents are much lower – possibly as a result of the lingering effects of apartheid, but also perhaps as a result of inter-racial inequalities that further divide those with (at least perceived) access and those without.

Most important to consider is the percentage of Coloured respondents who indicate that they do not agree that they have access to the resources they need in order to achieve their goals. Similar sentiments in terms of the experiences of Coloured respondents were captured in the second Briefing Paper in this series, in relation to perceptions of economic circumstances compared with the rest of South Africa. This paper also captured the sentiments of Indian respondents, who felt much more optimistic about their future economic prospects and the changes in the financial situation of their families.[12]

Furthermore, the findings pertaining to access to resources among black respondents can partly be explained by the rise of the black middle class, which has more than trebled over the past 12 years. This rise is driven by a variety of factors, including access to credit, improved education levels, BEE, and improved economic growth (until recently). However, the recent slow-down in economic growth, and a deficiency of quality education (and not only access to education) could dampen this growth,[13] as well as hamper social mobility for black South Africans. In addition, although the black middle class is growing, many black South Africans find themselves having to pay 'black tax', a convention that forces them to support family members with less access to resources.[14] As a result, financial and economic goals, and any assessment of whether black respondents have the required resources to achieve these goals, may be affected by these added pressures.

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12 Hofmeyr, J., Govender, R. 2016. 'Perceptions of Economic Security and Well-being.' SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey Briefing Paper 2. Accessed Online: http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/pdfs/IJR%20SARB%202%202015.pdf.

13 Brown, J. 2016. 'Black middle class floating the economy', *City Press,* 28 August 2016. Available online: http://city-press.news24.com/Business/black-middle-class-floating-the-economy-20160826.

14 Ibid.

Perceived access and advantage by employment status[15, 16]

Figure 10 shows that more than half (53.7%) of full-time employed respondents agree that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals, while almost half (46.9%) of part-time employed respondents (46.9%) agree with the same statement. More than a third of respondents who are students or learners (39.9%) agree that they have access to the financial resources they need. Of interest is that more than a third of unemployed respondents looking for a job (39.6%) agree that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals, while only 11.7% of unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job agree with the same statement. Notably, 59.4% of unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job disagree with the statement that they have access to the financial resources they need to achieve their goals – a higher percentage than unemployed respondents looking for a job (44.8%) and a much higher percentage than those who are in full- or part-time employment.

Figure 10: I have access to the financial resources I need to achieve my goals (by employment status)
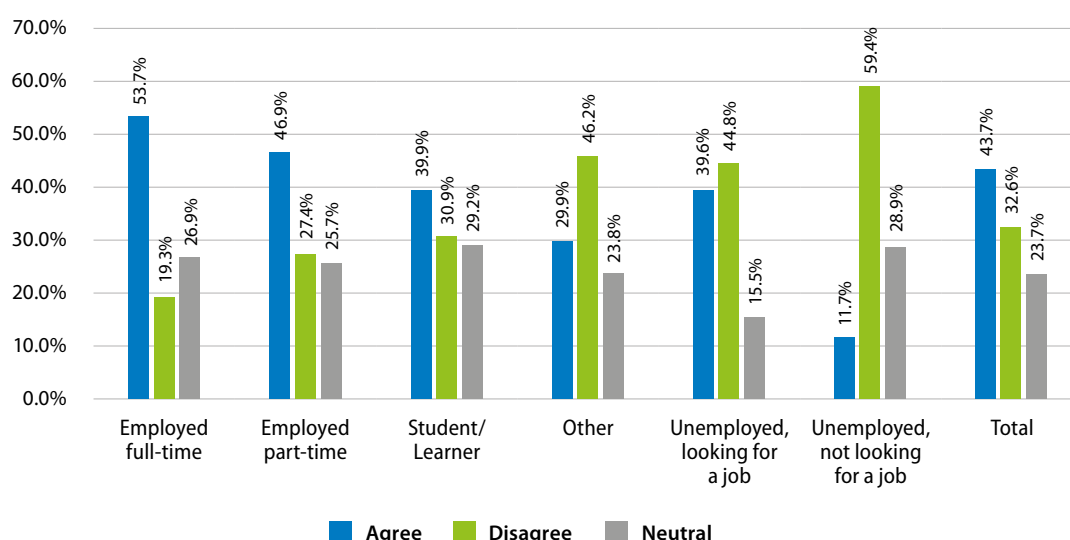
Similar to the findings in relation to perceived access to financial resources, Figure 11 shows that more than half of the respondents who are employed full-time (54.1%), and 44.4% of those employed part-time, agree that they have access to the relevant social capital to achieve their goals. More than a third (37%) of unemployed respondents looking for a job agree that they have access to the relevant groups they need, while only 22.1% of unemployed respondents not looking for a job agree with the same statement. Of the latter category, more than half (59.3%) of respondents disagreed with the statement

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15 Respondents included in the 'Other' category include: housewives or -husbands, retired respondents, and any respondents who indicated 'Other' as their employment status. Given the focus of the Briefing Paper, the findings regarding responses from this category are not explored in depth, but are included in the analysis to ensure a complete representation.

16 Respondents included in the category 'employed full-time' includes respondents who indicated that they 'work full-time or 30 hours a week or more for yourself or in your own business', and respondents who indicated that they 'work full-time or 30 hours a week or more for a company or individual'; 'employed part-time' includes respondents who indicated that they 'work part-time or less than 30 hours a week for yourself or in your own business' and respondents who indicated that they 'work part-time or less than 30 hours a week for a company or individual'.

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that they have access to the social capital they need. This is reason for concern, given the further exclusion from opportunities (real or perceived) that results from a lack of relevant social capital.

In terms of perceptions of having the education needed to achieve goals, the differences between those who are employed and those who are unemployed are clear. Figure 12 shows that 59.5% of full-time employed and 44.3% of part-time employed respondents agree that they have the education they need to achieve their goals, compared to 35% of unemployed respondents who are looking for a job, and 18.3% of unemployed respondents not looking for a job agreeing with the same statement. Notably, 57.2% of unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job, and 41.2% of unemployed respondents who are looking for a job, disagree with the statement that they have the education they need to achieve their goals. This is in contrast with the percentage of full- and part-time employed respondents who disagree with the statement that they have the education they need (18.2% and 34.8%, respectively).

Interestingly, 45.5% of students and learners agree that they have the education needed to achieve their goals, which is slightly higher than the percentage of respondents who are in part-time employment (44.3%) indicating the same.

Figure 11: I have access to groups of people who can help me achieve my goals (by employment status)
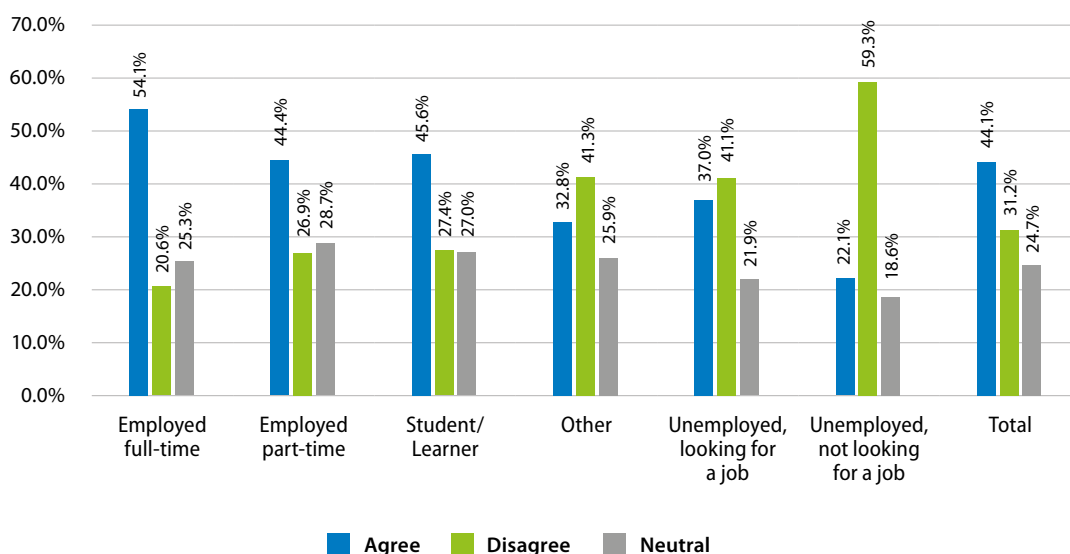
Finally, Figure 13 shows that more than half (53.3%) of full-time employed respondents agree that they are able to easily get to the places they need to be in order to achieve their goals, while 42% of students or learners and more than a third of part-time employed respondents (37.9%) indicate the same. Less than a third (31.3%) of respondents who are unemployed and looking for a job, and only 16.1% of unemployed respondents not looking for a job, agree that they are able to easily get to the places they need in order to achieve their goals. Notably, more than two-thirds (68.4%) of unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job disagree with the statement that they are able to easily get to where they need to be in order to achieve their goals.

Given the national student protests (ongoing at the time of release of this Briefing Paper) in favour of the elimination of fees for higher education in South Africa, students' perceptions of access to resources are of particular interest – especially given that the survey was conducted during 2015, when the first of the national protests regarding fees started to gain

Figure 12: I have the education I need to achieve my goals (by employment status)
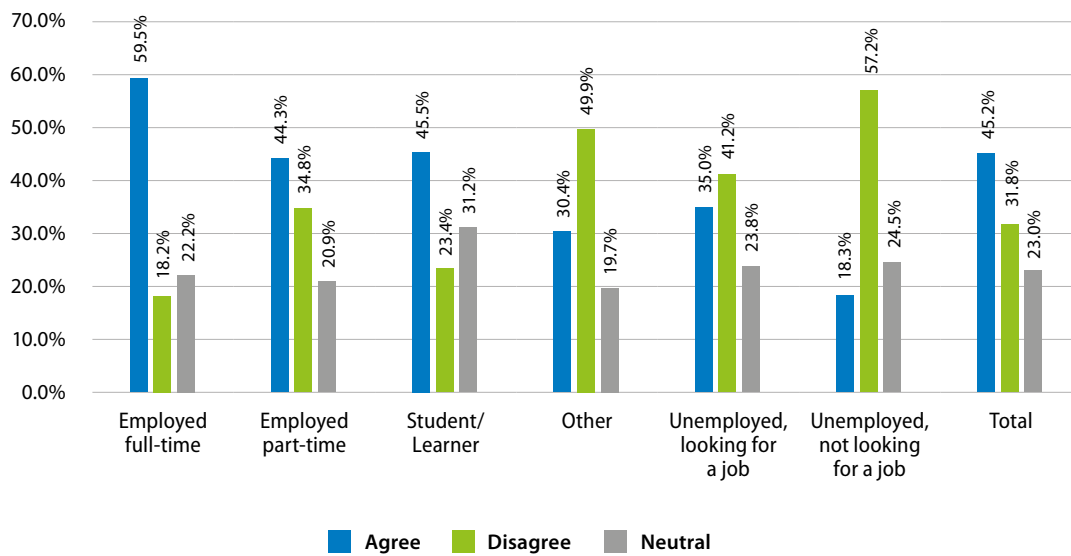
Figure 13: I can easily get (or travel) to the places I need to be in order to achieve my goals (by employment status)
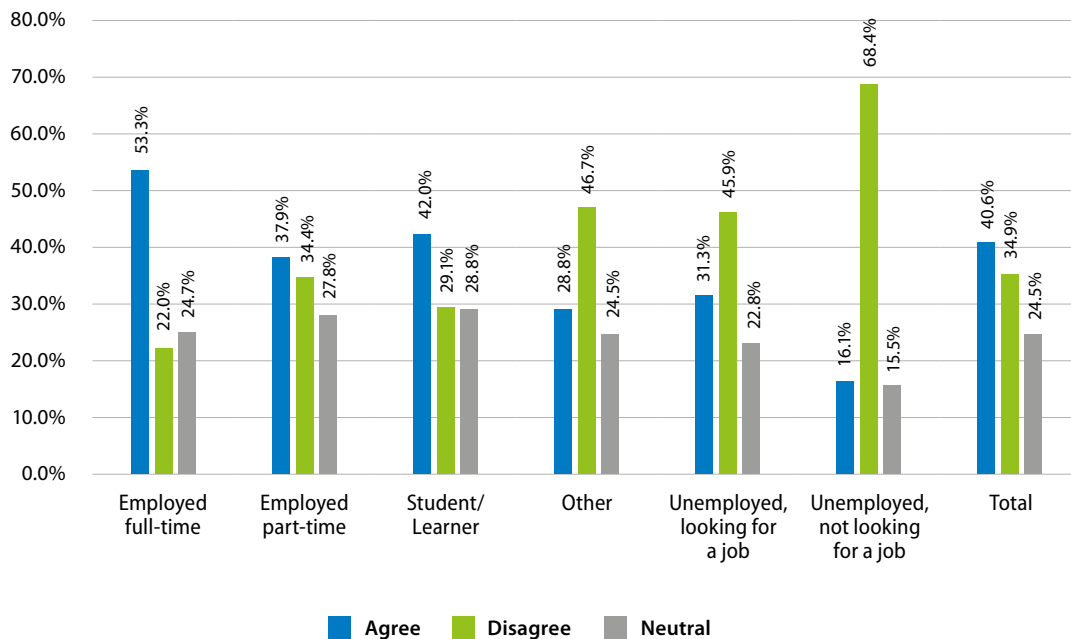
traction. Of interest is the finding that fewer students agree that they have the financial access to achieve their goals (39.9%), than agree that they have access to the groups of people they need (45.6%) to achieve their goals, and those who agree that they are able to easily get to where they need in order to achieve their goals (42%). Although these percentages are comparable to the total values across employment status categories, the percentages of students who do not believe (neutral and disagree) that they have access to the resources they need to achieve their goals are higher than those who agree that they have the resources they need. Furthermore, 45.5% of students agree that they have the education they need to achieve their goals – which is similar to the average value of responses to this statement, but worrying, as one would be warranted to understand that

educational goals should at least feature as part of the self-identified goals of students. If only 45.5% agree that they have the education they need to achieve their goals, what do the rest of the student respondents lack in this regard? It could possibly be that the level or quality of education they have is not adequate – a matter which deserves more investigation. There are stark differences between employed and unemployed respondents with regard to perceived access to resources and possession of certain advantages instrumental to achieving goals. Most important, however, is the perceived lack of access to resources and advantages among unemployed respondents who are not looking for a job. A majority of respondents in this category feel excluded from resources and feel deprived from the advantages that could allow them to access opportunities, a sentiment that may impact on their decision not to try to find employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The realities of socio-economic inequalities in South Africa extend well beyond mere differences in income distribution. Inequalities in terms of real or perceived access to (quality) education, opportunities and (basic) services, physical separation from or proximity to areas with more economic activities and opportunities, a high unemployment rate and underemployment, apartheid legacies (which continue to have an impact on variances in access to resources or advantages between races), as well as interracial inequalities, are just some of the factors that form part of a complex socio-economic environment, where both unequal outcomes and unequal opportunities are evident. Socio-economic inequalities, and the inability to address the gaps between rich and poor in South Africa, work to the detriment of achieving social cohesion, encouraging democratic values and guarding the reconciliation processes. As social relations among South Africans are further strained in the tough political and economic environment of 2016, understanding the experiences of South Africans in accessing the resources they need to pursue their goals becomes increasingly relevant to addressing inequalities in both outcomes and opportunities.

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) is an independent, non-governmental organisation, which was established in 2000 in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with the aim of ensuring that the lessons of South Africa's successful transition to democracy remain fundamental principles central to government and society as the country moves forward. Today, the IJR works to build fair, democratic and inclusive societies across Africa after conflict.

Since 2003, the IJR's Policy and Analysis programme has conducted the South African Reconciliation Barometer survey: an annual national public opinion poll that measures citizen attitudes towards reconciliation, transformation and national unity in post-apartheid South Africa. As one of the few dedicated social surveys on reconciliation in Africa and worldwide, the Barometer has become an important resource for encouraging national debate, informing decision-makers, developing policy and provoking new analysis and theory on reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

For more information, visit the IJR website at **www.ijr.org.za**, the Reconciliation Barometer blog at **www.reconciliationbarometer.org**, or follow us on Twitter at **@SABarometer**.