

**What Perceptions of Cross-Racial Adoption
Reveal about Notions of Race, Culture and
Identity: A Qualitative Study of Young White
South Africans.**

By

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Elspeth A. Miller, declare that this thesis is my own work. Any work done by other persons has been properly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted in the Department of Sociology in the faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is not about cross-racial adoption. Rather it is an examination into what perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal about notions of culture, race and identity held by some South Africans. This is a qualitative study of 20 young white individuals. Using cross-racial adoption as a tool, it explores the perceptions these individuals hold of race, culture and identity towards an understanding of how we become what we are, revealing the tension that exists in terms of perceptions of that which is inherited and that which is learned.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An Overview:

The apartheid structure, its policies, institutions and legislation, was built on the notion of group differences, where the major term that determined a person's life chances was that of 'race'.

Historically, the apartheid regime did its best to create separate individual, social and community identities based on 'race', which was defined stereotypically as a category within which people could and/or should be hierarchically ranked according to natural, physical distinctions. Creating boundaries of both inclusion and exclusion and determining group membership on the basis of specific criteria, these stereotypes carried such potency that as a result wielded a power to declare what was normal and what was not, so much so that any alternative to an established norm was viewed by many, or even most, South Africans as unusual or deviant.

Contemporary, post apartheid, South Africa is a society undergoing rapid social change. Included in these changes is an increasing prevalence of mixed race relationships such as those of cross-racial marriage and adoption. These changes have not only allowed for an increase in contact between 'race' groups, they have also encouraged a transgression of the limits set by boundaries which previously established membership of certain groups. An example of a mixed 'race' relationship that illustrates this transgression of boundaries, is that of cross-racial adoption which, apart from challenging the biological boundaries defining family membership and 'race' boundaries defining group membership, also allows for an investigation into how these relationships are perceived and what

these perceptions say about the notions we hold of 'race', culture and identity.

Despite changes in legislation, issues relating to intergroup relations continue to form the fabric of South African society. According to De La Rey (1986 : 56) South Africa is "a highly stratified society which is characterized by institutionalized separation between 'race' groups, where 'race' is the predominant criterion along which social categorization takes place". There is little doubt that the central feature of such a society is still that of 'race' and the notion of group differences, entrenching this system of stratification within all aspects of life: economically, socially and politically.

In the last quarter of 1998, as a run-up to South Africa's second democratic election, Reality Check, a joint project of Independent Newspapers and the Henry J. Kaiser family Foundation (USA) was undertaken. Its purpose was to take stock of South Africa's new democracy from the perspectives of the people. It explores their perceptions of democracy, the role of the government, and issues of race, reconciliation and national unity. The survey questionnaire was jointly developed by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) and Strategy and Tactics (S&T). A national household survey of 3000 adults was conducted in November and December 1998. Data analysis was led by David Everatt and Ross Jennings of S&T and by Mollyann Brodie, vice president for Public Opinion Research at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Richard Morin, Director of Polling at the *Washington Post*. (*The Mercury* 19 April 1999)

The sample is thought to provide statistically valid findings for the South African population as a whole, as well as for South Africa's major racial groups and its provinces. Several of these findings are worth mentioning.

According to Friedman, MacGregor, Soal, Zwane and Ntabazalila, (*The Mercury* 19 April 1999 : 4) findings show that "most South Africans are relatively optimistic, realistic and pragmatic in their assessment of the country's progress through the first five years of democracy, where a vast majority of South African's remain committed to basic democratic principles".

With regard to perceptions of unity, 63% believed it would take a long time but that unity would eventually occur, 22% believed South Africa would always be divided and 14% felt South Africa was already a united nation. Responding to the statement "blacks and whites will never trust each other", 44% agreed whilst 24% disagreed and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed. Where two-thirds of whites say they believe in reconciliation, only two in ten blacks believe them. Tria Venter, a participant in the study comments: "Reconciliation can only happen when black people stop blaming whites for everything and leave us in peace". (*The Mercury* 19 April 1999 : 4)

Reality Check found agreement among whites and indians that the quality of their lives has deteriorated since 1994 and that major concerns for all South Africans include crime, the economy and employment. Ultimately though, this study showed that whilst much has been achieved in the past five years and that racial divides are slowly blurring, "race remains the most powerful determinant of the lives of South Africans". (MacGregor, *The Mercury* 20 April 1999 : 1)

Understanding perceptions of 'race', culture and identity is a relatively under-researched area of study in South Africa. Reality Check is the most recent study of this kind. Profound changes occurring since the 1994 elections have resulted in both an increase and change in the nature of contact between 'race' groups on all levels, both in the work place and socially. South Africa has entered

a transitional phase in terms of the way in which people relate to one another and the use of perceptions of cross-racial adoption provides a suitable field setting for an investigation into how these changes are perceived and what these perceptions reveal about notions of 'race', culture and identity is provided. As opposed to the larger claim of the above research concerning all South Africans, which focuses largely on perceptions of race relations, this study specifically explores young white South African's perceptions of race, culture and identity.

Background:

Lesley Morrall (1994) in her unpublished doctoral thesis, 'Interracial Families in South Africa: An Exploratory Study', presents interracial contact as a barometer of social change. Despite the small sample size of seven interracial families living in South Africa, in her study, several emergent themes could be identified. Included in these were the following:

- individuals define themselves in more important ways than 'race';
- identity may be based on factors more important than 'race';
- despite changes in legislation, certain sections of society remain intolerant of interracial relationships;
- accepting mixed relationships may be fostered by a change of attitudes in mainstream society.

Guided by these findings, Morrall identifies specific issues as a basis for further investigation. Recurring as a primary theme was the need to examine the increasing prevalence of interracial relationships as a basis for changing the attitudes of broader society towards

identities previously defined by 'race' and 'racialized' differences. It is within this field that this study wishes to make a contribution.

Objectives:

Contributing to the theme "society in transition", this study provides an examination into perceptions of cross-racial adoption and what these perceptions reveal about notions of 'race', culture and identity. Specifically though, this is a qualitative study of young white South Africans and their experiences of the "New South Africa". Whilst this study is not longitudinal and only attempts a small scale examination, it is hoped that it will yield useful data which could form the basis for further research on a more extensive level.

This study had the following objectives. It aimed to:

- explore the extent to which a certain section of society remains intolerant of other race groups despite changes in legislation, and to
- investigate how young white South African perceive cross-racial adoption and what these perceptions say about notions of 'race', culture and identity;

Organization of the Thesis:

Chapter two provides a presentation of the theoretical assumptions and frameworks on which this study is based in the context of a review of related literature and research on the topic. Chapter three deals with preliminary issues surrounding theoretical and methodological orientations, describing and justifying more fully the methods of data collection in the field. Chapter four provides a presentation and interpretation of material collected in the field

followed by chapter five in which there is an assessment of the material gathered in relation to the theoretical frameworks used. Chapter six outlines conclusions with references to those stated objectives and offers suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An Overview:

In examining what perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal about notions of race, culture and identity, this chapter covers literature relating to such concepts, forming a theoretical framework from which to work.

The literature review attempts to address key issues related to this research. Investigating how individuals make sense of the world requires an understanding of issues relating to both 'self' and social identity and intergroup relations. For this reason, an exploration of identity ('self' and social), approaches towards understanding identity construction, group membership, categorization and theories of intergroup relations are assessed.

As the essence of this study is perceptions of cross-racial adoption and what these perceptions reveal about notions of race and culture, and the meanings attributed to such notions, an overview of theoretical arguments relating to such concepts is included, again towards an understanding of how we become what we are.

Also of relevance to this study is a discussion of the family, as findings will show the importance participants attribute to the family as an essential unit in the development of a sense of self. This discussion explores definitions of the family, the extent to which these have transgressed previously rigid, traditional definitions, the family's perceived role in society and the extent to which alternative family forms can fulfil these.

Concluding the literature review is a discussion of cross-racial adoption, one such alternative family type that transgresses not only biological boundaries created by traditional notions of family, but also, social boundaries created by notions of race and culture. This discussion introduces arguments for and against cross-racial adoption, both within a local and international context, and explores the underlying assumptions each reveals regarding that which is believed to be inherited and that which is believed to be acquired or learned. Thus, it addresses the issue of what perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal about notions of race, culture and identity.

The Individual in Society:

According to Anthony Giddens (1984 : 1-40), it is possible to talk about society as “a set of relationships with and between three orders of phenomenon”:

- the individual order, the world of embodied persons, considered as individual organisms, and ‘what-goes-on-in-their-heads’;
- the interactional order, the world of co-presence and relationships between embodied individuals, of ‘what-goes-on-between-people’ and;
- the institutional order, the world of systematized, patterned, organized and symbolically templated ‘ways-of-doing-things’.

Although this is only a way of thinking about society, and is not meant to suggest that there are really three separate social domains, put simply it says that society can be thought of as being made up of individuals, as being made up of the interaction between individuals and, as being made up of institutions, each being irredeemably implicated in the other.

Berger (1969 : 149) regards the individual as not being born a member of society, but rather being born with a predisposition towards sociality, and becoming a member of society. In this sense, in the life of every individual, there is a temporal sequence, in the course of which, the individual is inducted into "participation in the societal dialectic", where the beginning point of this process is internalization.

Internalization is referred to as the immediate interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to the individual. This internalization is, firstly, the basis for understanding fellow humans, and, secondly, the basis for "the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality". Only when an individual has achieved a level of internalization is that individual a member of society. (Berger 1969 : 149-150)

According to Berger (1969 : 150-151), the ontogenic process of internalization is brought about by socialization which he defines as "the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it", where primary socialization is the first socialization the individual undergoes in childhood and secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective social world of his/her society.

Primary socialization is regarded by Berger (1969) as not only the most important aspect of socialization but also as the basis for all secondary socialization and the development of a sense of identity. Berger explains that every individual is born into an objective social structure within which he/she encounters significant others, who are imposed on him/her, and who are in charge of his/her socialization.

Significant others are said to mediate this objective social world to an individual and in the course of mediating it, modify it, selecting aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure. As a result, where the child takes on the roles and attitudes of significant others, internalizing them and making them his/her own, identification occurs as "the child becomes capable of identifying himself, acquiring a subjectively, coherent and plausible identity" where the self is a reflected entity, reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others. (Berger 1969 : 151-152)

According to Jenkins (1997 : 19), an approach to understanding the individual in society means taking a view of the social world as being, among other things, a world of institutionalized social collectives or "unities" which appear in response to various stimuli. Collectives are thought not only to provide a system by which we can define our own place in society, they also provide a system in which others can be located, where people in their everyday social interaction systematically classify themselves and others. Foster and Louw-Potgieter (1991) write that in order to reduce the vast complexity of social situations, a process of social categorization is relied on. This refers to the perception of people in terms of categories or groups on the basis of criteria that have relevance to the classifier. At this point, in the following section, social groups and social categories will be considered.

Social Categorization:

Social groups and social categories can be understood as different kinds of collectives within the social world which are founded on the basis of membership and imply boundaries specifying inclusion and exclusion. Hogg and Abrams (1988 : 19) note that "while a society is made up of individuals, it is patterned into relatively distinct groups and categories, and people's views, opinions, and practices are

acquired from those groups to which they belong". They argue that the process of categorization "simplifies perception" as it structures infinite variety into manageable proportions. (Hogg and Abrams 1988 : 20)

Jenkins (1997) distinguishes between groups and categories in the following way: a group is a collectivity which is meaningful to its members, of which they are aware (for example a family) whereas a category is a collectivity which is defined according to specific criteria (for example 'race'). A group is therefore internally defined and thus self-generated as opposed to a category which is externally defined and therefore other-imposed. Whereas social groups define themselves, their name(s), their nature(s) and their boundary(ies), social categories are identified, defined and delineated by others.

A vivid example of this is Marx's contrast between a 'class in itself' (a category) and a 'class for itself' (a group). (Jenkins 1997) In this illustration, in understanding the development of class consciousness, the working class - a social category that was initially defined with reference to its alienation from the means of production - becomes a social group, in which the members identify with each other in their collective misfortune, thus creating the possibility of collective action on the basis of that identification.

According to De la Rey (1986 : 19), an important aspect of the social environment is the existence of collections of individuals who differ from one another along a number of dimensions. Wilder (1981) notes that in most social situations, we are overcome with an infinite amount of stimulation and as we cannot possibly process such a complex array of information, people develop short cuts by categorizing selected stimuli.

Wilder (1981) summarizes three important functions of categorization:

- it enables us to simplify and reduce the complexity present in our environment;
- categorization makes it possible for us to generate expectations about the properties of objects; and
- it permits us to consider a greater amount of information at any one time.

Tajfel (1978) argues that social categorization forms part of a fundamental cognitive process known as categorical differentiation. Tajfel (1978 : 61) explains social categorization as “the ordering of the social environment in terms of groupings of persons in a manner that makes sense to the individual”, helping to structure the causal understanding of the social environment as a guide for action. Tajfel describes social categorization as a cognitive tool that enables us to categorize, segment and simplify the social environment in terms of the discontinuous groupings of persons on the basis of criteria that have relevance for the classifier. Common criteria in our society are race, class, gender and religion. (Also refer to the discussion of ‘signification’ according to Miles (1989) in subsequent sections.)

Social categorizations, however, do not merely divide the social world into distinct categories in which others can be located, they also serve to define the individual’s place in society by providing a place of orientation for self-reference. Categories can, therefore, be considered as a system of orientation which helps to create and define an individual’s place in society. (Tajfel 1978)

According to Tajfel social groups provide their members with an identification of themselves in social terms where social identity is described as that "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social groups (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". (Tajfel 1978 : 63) Through the social categorization process, we place ourselves as members of some group(s), while excluding ourselves from other groups.

Turner (1982) hypothesized that group membership becomes internalized as one of two major subsystems of the self-concept: personal identity and social identity. The former refers to definitions of self in terms of personal attributes such as personality traits whereas the latter denotes definitions of self in terms of membership of various groups. Therefore, group membership is conceived as an aspect of the self-concept. This approach was also put forward by both Billig (1976) who understands social identification as the process which binds an individual to his/her social group and by which the social self is realized and, by Jenkins (1997 : 70) who also believes that categorization plays a significant role in the construction of identity, referring to this as "internalization". In this sense, the categorized individual is exposed to the terms by which another defines him/her and assimilates that categorization, in whole or in part, into self-identity, where categorizing 'them' is part of defining 'us', as our identification of 'us' is entailed in and by a history of relationships with significant others.

At this point it is necessary to acknowledge social categorizations as being intimately bound up with power relations rooted in social organization and stratification and relating to the capacity of one group to successfully impose its categories of ascription upon another set of people.

According to Jenkins (1997 : 167) identifications, such as those of race, are typically rooted in categorization, "in ascription and imposition, rather than in subscription" and reflect a power relation as the individual is identified in a particular way by significant others, who by virtue of their power or authority, impose a labeled identity. Here it is important to distinguish between power and authority. Basically, power is the capacity to make other people do what one wants them to do, most typically through the use of coercion. Authority, on the other hand, is the legitimate and delegated right to command obedience. Power is therefore rooted, ultimately in the use of force; authority in law and custom.

Jenkins (1997 : 60) understands the consequences of this identification by others as, in some respect, a version of labeling theory, where social interaction at and across group boundaries will necessarily involve categorizations: of 'us' by 'them' and of 'them' by 'us', and, as a consequence, will reflect our interactions with others: how those others categorize and behave towards us in relation to how they label us.

As has been shown, social categories form an integral part of the identification process of both the self and the social. Attention will now be turned to leading theories exploring identity construction in relation to categorization.

Identity Construction:

According to Billig (1976 : 54) identification is a process which is social, "it is not an isolated individual act". As previously stated, identification is firstly transitive because we do not simply identify, but identify with something or someone; secondly, it is dialectical because collectivities (as identification agents) may actively attempt to ensure identification, transforming the individual and finally, it is

a process which takes place within a specific historical context. Social identity involves the process whereby "the individual becomes part of a social group and the group becomes part of the individual's self-concept". (Foster and Louw-Potgieter 1991 : 44)

Babad (1983 : 37) views a person's identity as a "complex integration of personality attributes, unique experiences, personal choices and the individual sense of 'self', on one hand, and social identities which are the products of various group membership on the other".

One view of identity construction is presented by Richard Jenkins. Jenkins (1997 : 62-64) argues that it is within the course of earliest socialization that each human being develops a unique personality or "sense of self", which is in turn created in the course of early verbal and non-verbal dialogue between the child and significant others. And that it is this interactional learning process of primary socialization that develops the individual's sense of who he/she is.

Jenkins (1997 : 72) explains that social identity can be understood as two interacting but independent entailments which unite in the ongoing production and reproduction of identity and its boundaries. These are: a name (the nominal) and a practical experience (the virtual). The latter is, in a sense, what the name means, and "is primarily a matter of consequences for those who bear it", and can change while the nominal remains the same (and vice versa). This nominal-virtual distinction recognizes that identity is a practical accomplishment rather than a static form; that it is immanently, although not necessarily, variable.

In the practical accomplishment of identity, Jenkins (1997 : 73) identifies two mutually interdependent but theoretically distinct social processes at work: internal definition and external definition.

Identity, according to Jenkins (1997 : 54) can be located within a two-way social process: an interaction of 'ego' and 'other', inside and out where identity is the practical product of the interaction of ongoing processes of internal and external definition. These processes will be expanded on shortly. It is proposed that it is in the meeting of internal and external definition that identity is created. In this sense, identity is produced and reproduced during social interaction and interaction is always situated within context.

The Process of Internal Definition:

In a process of internal definition, actors, whether as individuals or in groups, define their own identity and signal to in- or out-group members this self-definition of their identity. Jenkins (1997 : 53) explains that this can be an "ego-centered, individual or a collective/group process". Although conceptualized in the first instance as internal, Jenkins argues (1997 : 80) that these processes are necessarily transactional and social because, even in the case of the introspection of the solitary individual, they are predicated upon the assumption of an audience (without whom they would make no sense) and an externally derived framework, drawing upon a socially constructed repertoire for their meaning.

The Process of External Definition:

Processes of external definition are other-directed processes during which one person or set of persons defines other(s), "the definition of the identity of other people". (Jenkins 1997 : 80) This may be as simple as the validation of the others' internal definition(s) of themselves, or as complex and conflictual as the attempt by one actor or set of actors to impose an identity on another. Although external definition may be thought of as an individual act where one person defined another person, Jenkins (1997 : 80) argues that, for two reasons, external definition cannot, even in theory be a solitary act.

In the first instance, more than an audience is involved as the others here are "the object(s) of the process of definition, and implied within the situation is a meaningful intervention in their lives". (Jenkins 1997 : 53) Thus external definition can only occur within active social relationships. Secondly, the capacity to intervene successfully in other people's lives implies either the power or authority to do so. The exercise of power implies access to and control over resources, while authority is, by definition, only effective when it is legitimate. Jenkins (1997 : 53) argues that power and authority are necessarily embedded within active social relationships where relations of power and authority provide a link between identity and social class. This point will be expanded on at a later stage.

Jenkins, in his explanation of identity as being located within a two-way social process (an interaction of ego and other), creates an impression of individual and group identity as being one and the same thing. Although Jenkins (1997 : 54) realizes that this suggestion of homology between collective and individual identity may be objected to as being misleading, that the boundaries of the self are secure and unproblematic in a way that is not true of social identity, Jenkins explains several reasons for persisting with an approach that treats individual and collective identities as similar in important respects.

First, Jenkins believes it seems clear that a relatively secure sense of the boundaries of individual self-hood is acquired, as the individual separates itself psychologically from the significant others in its life through the early interactive process of being defined and defining. Secondly, there is a well established understanding of self-identity that sees its content(s), boundaries and security as variable over time in interaction with changing circumstances. Finally, even if the boundaries of self are, most of the time, stable and taken for granted, then this is true only as long as it *is* true. When it is not, when the

boundary between the self and others weakens or dissolves, the “result is a range of more or less severe, and not uncommon, disruptions of secure selfhood, which in Western cultures are conceptualized as psychiatric disorders”. (Jenkins 1997 : 54) Extending the logic of this point, the boundaries of a collective identity are also taken for granted until threatened or crossed.

Social Identity Theory:

The concept of social identity as defined by Tajfel (1978) refers to a dynamic and fluid entity and is a mechanism which plays a causal role in determining the structure of intergroup relations. The social relationships between groups are also considered neither fixed nor unchanging.

Tajfel explains social identity as “the individual’s knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance of his/her membership”. (quoted in Campbell 1992 : 279) In other words, an individual’s self-image and self-concept may be thought as, to some extent, dependent on his/her group memberships, and in particular, on the differentiation which exists between his/her own group and others.

Social identity theory rests on two pillars: the interlocking cognitive processes of social categorization and social comparison. It is this comparative perspective that links social categorization with social identity. According to Abrams (1992 : 58), developing an explanation of social phenomena through examining social identities, carries with it an assumption that “social categories influence behaviour”. Understood in this sense, social categories provide members with an identification of themselves in social terms. This has already been discussed.

As early as 1969 Tajfel proposed that intergroup bias may be "a direct result of the perception by individuals that they belong to a common social category" where people define themselves in terms of categories or groups on the basis of certain criteria that have relevance to the classifier. (Discussed in Foster and Louw-Potgieter 1991 : 43) Through this process of social categorization, we place ourselves as a member of some group(s) while excluding or distinguishing ourselves from other groups. The process of categorization of individuals into groups, providing "a system of orientation that creates and defines an individual's place in society", is achieved by the process of comparison between that individual's own group and other groups, within the context of the individual's place within a given social structure. (Tajfel 1981 : 255)

Through the concepts of social categorization and social identity, social identity theory takes cognizance of the divided, hierarchical nature of social reality. Thus, social identity theory is able to view social life in terms of a number of large-scale categories which stand in relation to one another and which are subject to change.

Critics such as Hogg and Abrams (1988 : 34) have commended social identity theory for attempting to account for the macro-social relationships between groups. However, this does not mean that social identity theory is beyond criticism. Several problems areas can be identified revealing limitations of the theory.

Billig (1976 : 24) has been instrumental in pointing out the inadequacies of Tajfel's definition of social categorization. These inadequacies relate chiefly to the question of the source of social categories. According to Billig (1976 : 26) the importance of 'race' as a criterion of categorization, particularly in South Africa, is not merely a function of perceptual needs.

Categories are products of social activity in specific historical contexts, rather than just as "expressions of individual perception". Although Tajfel was aware that the origins and development of concepts of identity and categorization are intricately bound up with the social settings in which they function, sufficient attention was not given to the "dialectical relationship between the objective-social and the subjective-psychological levels of analysis". (Billig 1976 : 45)

Social identity theory merely states that certain criteria are selected because they have relevance to the classifier without examining the factors that determine relevance of criteria. Billig (1976 : 45) pointed out that identification between the individual and the group is not merely a passive process, but is an active process whereby the individual is transformed. Subsequent research has demonstrated the complexity of social group identification. Zavalloni (1975); Breakwell (1978); and Kitzinger and Stainton Rogers (1985), are a few examples. The study by Kitzinger and Stainton Rogers (1985) showed that although people may define themselves as belonging to the same category, the sets of meaning they ascribe to this identification may differ substantially.

Furthermore, the theory tends to have an "individualistic-psychologistic bias", not giving adequate attention to the role of ideology in examining where people get their perceptions from. According to Foster and Louw-Potgieter (1991 : 48) ideology, constituting the dominant set of ideas in society, is "an instrumental factor in producing perceptions of reality". And that in order to avoid "retreat into individualization", the role of ideology needs to be further developed within the theory as it is necessary to acknowledge the impact of ideology on an individual's subjective perception of reality. Extending the theory to incorporate a more complete focus on the role of ideology in "informing the subjective perceptions of the

social order" would adequately address this gap. (Foster and Louw-Potgieter 1991 ; 48) Ideology is also linked to power relations within society, to be expanded on shortly.

The most significant short-fall of social identity theory is presented by Tajfel's notion of perceived status. By relying exclusively on perception as an index of differentiation between groups, the reality of power differences is ignored. This point is made by Campbell (1992 : 24) who refers to social identity theory as being ahistorical in its approach and lacking "an explanation of power". The pattern and form of the relations between real-life social groups is intimately bound up with the power relations in the society as a whole.

As Jenkins (1997 : 52) explains, power and authority are "necessarily embedded within active social relationships" and as identity formations is an active social process of interaction between self-imposed and other-imposed collectives, consideration needs to be given to the role of status and class. The status of hierarchy is not merely a result of individual perceptions, but must also relate to both the groups' and the individuals' position in society in terms of political, economic and social status. (Billig 1976 : 54)

Social identity theory fails to develop an adequate notion of society and, consequently, of a conceptualization of the individual-society interaction. Society is reduced to the notion of group, failing to accommodate the societal level of analysis, ignoring the fact that group memberships are located against the background of a social hierarchy of unequal power relations. Jenkins (1997 : 73) believes group membership cannot be understood independently of their location within a wider social power network.

In an attempt to expand Social Identity Theory, Leonard (1984) outlines a materialist framework for understanding human

According to Leonard (1984 : 11), society is structured around "a hierarchy of unequal social relationships based on the social divisions of race, gender and class". The power of dominant social groupings functions at two levels. At the material level superordinate race, class and gender groups have privileged access to political power and economic wealth. At the ideological level, the power of superordinate groupings is bolstered by an ideology or set of beliefs that justifies their hold on this power and wealth. Ideologies serve an important function in "the preservation of existing power relations, ensuring that the dominant social groupings continue to have privileged access to resources". (Leonard 1984 : 11)

Leonard (1984 : 12) argues that, under the influence of ideology, individuals often come to regard existing power relations as "immutable givens". Ideological beliefs qualify individuals for participation in the existing social order by inculcating a class, race and gender, informing individuals that such relations are both natural and right.

Ideologies, dominant or subordinate, interpellate or speak to the individual from his or her birth in the form of expectations concerning how to behave, think, feel and what objectives to pursue. These ideological definitions and expectations become part of the individual's world view, so as to produce a gendered class subject who is required to submit to the social order.

(Leonard 1984 : 115)

The effect of beliefs that current social relations are desirable and inevitable undermines the possibility of resistance to these social relations, undermining the likelihood of social change. The consciousness that people have of their existence does not always reflect their objective social conditions.

consciousness that people have of their existence does not always reflect their objective social conditions.

Individuals often voluntarily subscribe to beliefs and behaviours that serve to perpetuate their subordinate social position. This state is sometimes referred to as 'false consciousness' and will be expanded on shortly.

A final point on social identity theory brings us to the concept of social change. Tajfel often referred to the importance of including this concept in any account of social identity, suggesting that social identity be considered the "intervening causal mechanism between the individual and society in situations of social change". (Tajfel 1981 : 36)

Tajfel suggests that the process of social change happens in response to contradictions between an individual's norms and a society's values.

Despite Tajfel's frequent insistence that identity cannot be understood independently of the changing historical context, these insights were never formally integrated into social identity theory. In short, the reduction of 'society' to the 'group' and the failure to locate group membership against the background of social power relations, coupled with a failure to take account of the interaction between the individual and society and to integrate the notion of social change into the conceptualization of identity, leaves social identity approach "static and ahistorical in nature". (Jenkins 1997 : 56)

It is at this point that other approaches to understanding identity construction are considered.

The Essentialist Approach:

According to Hall (1992 : 275) the essentialist approach to identity construction can be traced to the "birth of the Enlightenment Man" promoting the understanding that a person is a

fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose "center" consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same, continual or identical with itself, throughout the individual's experience.

(Hall 1992 : 275)

By arguing that a person's actions and reactions are determined by the personality, tendencies, traits and orientations with which they are born, the essentialist approach advocates that social identification therefore occurs with others who have the same "inbred" characteristics. (Phillips 1996: 48) This implies that persons sharing the same or similar characteristics would instinctively identify with one another, creating rigid boundaries determining group membership.

Essentialists leave no room for agency on the part of the individual to "change or adapt" their identity or to "adopt new identities", thus implying identities formed on the basis of these shares characteristics create rigid boundaries which are difficult to transcend. (Marshall 1994 : 103)

Other criticisms of the essentialist approach come from Campbell (1992 : 10) who regards the essentialist approach as having "little practical relevance for understanding real social problems" as it is both "individualistic. and reductionist". Furthermore, Campbell believes that it is not possible to fully understand the human experience without considering the role of the social order.

The Constructionist Approach:

A constructionist approach to identity involves an appreciation of identity as being "situationally variable and negotiable"; as being a product of social activity within a specific historical context rather than being merely expressions of individual perception; and as being a collective based on definitions of distinction which are affected by popular consciousness and attitudes and informed by people's individual and social perceptions, intricately bound up within the social settings in which they function. (Jenkins 1997 : 50 ; Banton 1988 : 23)

A social constructionist perspective involves recognizing that the emphasis must be "accorded to the points of view of the actors themselves". (Jenkins 1997 : 50)

The social constructionist approach views identity as a social process, rooted in social interaction, which produces and reproduces itself. Identity is seen as "generated, confirmed or transformed in the course of interaction and transaction between decision-making, strategizing individuals". (Banton 1988 : 23)

Although not meaning to imply that identity is always transactional, definitively and perpetually in a state of flux, Jenkins argues that it can be. Human society is best seen as "an ongoing and overlapping kaleidoscope of 'group-ness' rather than a 'plural' system of separate groups" where 'group-ness' is not to be reified, as groups are not distinct things in any sense. Identity is regarded as an emergent product of the interaction and classificatory process in the definition of 'us', and the categorization of 'them'. It is viewed as contingent, diverse and "immanently changeable"; it is flexible and negotiable and therefore constructed. (Jenkins 1997 : 51)

A similar view is promoted by Barth (1981) who consistently promotes the social world as being a vision of social life, a perpetual coalition, fission and negotiation; as being a collective of social forms, of emergent patterns generated by the ongoing ins and outs of individual interaction, and as being a social construction.

Constructionists support the view that identity is variable in nature and therefore negotiable, a view which findings of this research support.

Identity as "False-consciousness":

According to Balibar (1991 : 94) "*all identity is individual*, but there is no individual identity that is not historical or, in other words, constructed within a field of social values, norms of behaviour and collective symbols".

They argue that although individuals "never identify with one another", nor "do they ever acquire an isolated identity", the real issue is "how the dominant reference points of individual identity change over time and within the changing institutional environment". (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991 : 94)

This argument is continued in the explanation that individuals "destined to perceive themselves" as the members of a single group are either "gathered together externally from diverse geographical origins or else are brought mutually to recognize one another within a historical frontier which contained them all". Either way, "a model of their unity must constitute the process of unification" whose effectiveness can be measured in terms of collective mobilization. (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991 : 94) This point will be expanded on in terms of a short discussion of both class consciousness and "false-consciousness".

An orthodox Marxist understanding of identity argues that ultimately everyone acts in their material class interests (where identities express the material, class relations which exist in modern societies), and that the "expression of non-class identities are distorted expressions of class struggle by individuals who are blinded by a false consciousness". (Phillips 1996 : 51)

Leonard (1984 : 115) explains that ruling social groups exercise control over social institutions, promoting ideological beliefs that are most likely to legitimate, justify and maintain existing power relations by suppressing the development of cognitive alternatives to the status quo. He continues to say that whilst any set of unequal power relations takes a "socially and historically specific form" and is in principal changeable, under the influence of ideology, individuals often regard such relations as given (as explained previously).

Power relations are then considered natural, essential features of human nature that are just and desirable and impossible to change, thereby undermining the possibility of resistance. The consciousness that people have of their existence does not always reflect their objective social conditions. (Leonard 1984 : 120)

Individuals often voluntarily subscribe to beliefs that serve to perpetuate their subordinate social position, hence a state of 'false consciousness'. It should be noted, though, that not all power relations are rooted in class relations.

Problems with this approach include the assumption that class identities are somehow master identities, that identities are manipulated by the ideologies of the dominant. Guy and Thabane (1989 : 259) argue that "identity is developed and maintained by more than ideological manipulation" and that "the role of ideology is not

in the construction of identity, rather it is in the determinant of action”.

Campbell (1985 : 308) argues that a theory based on individuals being “blinded by a sense of consciousness” assumes that one identity is “articulated independently of another identity”, whereas, in actual fact, one cannot speak of one identity, such as that of class, without recognizing that this identity is “contaminated by other dynamics such as ‘race’, ‘gender’, ‘age’, and so on”.

Identity as Reflexive:

In his book *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Giddens (1991) explores a process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives (the story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood) which he terms the reflexive project of the self. This explains narratives of self-identity as being shaped, altered and reflexively sustained in relation to rapidly changing circumstances of social life.

According to Giddens (1991 : 175) the individual appears essentially “passive” in relation to overwhelming external social forces, adopting a misleading view of the connections between “micro-settings of action and encompassing social influences”.

Giddens writes that it must be recognized that, on a general level, human agents “never passively accept external conditions of action, but more or less continuously reflect upon them and reconstitute them in the light of their particular circumstances”. In this sense, all human agents should be seen as standing “in a position of appropriation in relation to the social world , which they constitute and reconstitute in their actions”. (1991 : 175)

In this reflexive projection of the self, the narrative of self-identity is considered inherently fragile and has to be created and continually ordered against the backdrop of shifting experiences of day to day life and the fragmenting tendencies of modern institutions. Giddens (1991 : 215) argues that a reflexively ordered narrative of self-identity "provides the means of giving coherence to the finite life-span, given changing external circumstances".

Self-identity is therefore something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual where self-identity "is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography". (Giddens 1991 : 53)

As will be evident, findings of this research support this view of identity.

A Final Point:

In emphasizing social construction and everyday practice, acknowledging change as well as stability, and allowing us to recognize both individuality in experience and in agency, as well as the sharing of culture and collectivity, even the most private of identities cannot be imaginable as anything other than the product of a socialized consciousness and a social situation.

This section has attempted to give an account of the individual's experience in society, drawing on theoretical work exploring processes by which an individual makes sense of the world in which he/she lives towards the development of a sense of self.

For the purposes of this research, an adequate understanding of identity is one that views identity as a negotiation, as a "narrative of subjectification", in which individual agency is acknowledged as

being constructed through the "relative prioritizing of both our social contexts as well as our own personal investment in identifying with a chosen social category". (Hall 1996 : 3) The extent to which perceptions of cross-racial adoption support this view, and others explored in this section, will be examined through the course of this thesis.

Attention will now be turned to intergroup relations towards an understanding of how individuals operate in group situations.

Theories of Intergroup Relations:

The nature of our social interactions with those around us is largely determined by our membership or non-membership of some or other group, where group memberships plays an important role in our social relations, attitudes values and norms. According to De la Rey (1986 : 1) the "greater part of all present day relations is concerned with the processes of unification and diversification between groups".

Taylor and Moghaddam (1987 : 6) define intergroup relations as "any aspect of human interaction that involves individuals perceiving themselves as members of a social category, or being perceived by others as belonging to a social category".

It is important to note that whilst the focus is most often on larger social categories such as those of class, race and/or gender, this definition involves no limitations in terms of size or type of social category involved.

In a review of the social psychology of intergroup relations, Tajfel (1982) pointed out that investigation into group phenomena has been characterized by a number of approaches or perspectives rather than

any tight theoretical articulations. These will now be considered.

Individualistic approaches to intergroup relations assume that the uniformities displayed in group behaviour are explainable in terms of individual psychological processes such as motivation and frustration. Whilst individual perspectives consider the social settings of intergroup behaviour, the psychology of the individual is seen as the starting point for all social interaction. This approach presents inadequacies which will be illustrated in briefly outlining several of the more influential individualistic theories.

The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis:

According to Dollard et al (1939) frustration and aggression were believed to be the fundamental variables in the development of an explanatory model which would have direct implications for the understanding of intergroup behaviour. They proposed that the aggressive energy, produced by the inevitable frustrations associated with organized, social living is displaced onto certain out-groups, where out-groups provide a scapegoat function.

Evidence of the frustration-aggression theory is supported largely by a study by Hovland and Sears (1940) which suggest a strongly inverse relation between economic prosperity and the number of lynchings in the United States at that time. According to this analysis, bad economic conditions enhanced frustration, instigating aggression. Further experimentation did however not verify this relationship. The initial version, modified by Miller (1941) reported that frustration does not inevitably lead to aggression but rather that aggression is one of a number of possible consequences of frustration.

As an approach to intergroup behaviour, the frustration-aggression hypothesis is considered both too simple and too general to offer any genuine social analysis of group behaviour as it implies that large-

scale social phenomena can be wholly accounted for in terms of individual emotional states. Furthermore, Billig (1976) and Brown and Turner (1981) point out that it ignores important socially-determined variables such as conformity to prevailing norms and ideology. The question as to how and why certain groups become targets for displacement is also left unspecified.

The Authoritarian Personality:

De la Rey (1986) writes that an extensive enquiry by Adorno et al in 1950 into social attitudes towards Jews and other minority groups, led to the identification of the 'Authoritarian Personality' syndrome where it was claimed that racist attitudes and behaviours could be linked with a definite underlying personality structure. Briefly, the theory states that a rigid pattern of discipline during childhood leads to the arousal of anger and hostility when relating to others in society.

Whilst support for this theory has come from a number of studies such as those of Harris, Gough and Martin (1950), Lyle and Levitt (1955) and Baumrind (1968) who found that prejudice in children could be linked to strict parental control, Billig (1976) continues to argue that investigating the roots of social phenomena must extend beyond the psyche of the individual.

Belief Congruence Theory:

This approach assumes the beliefs of the individual to be the operative variables in intergroup relations where individuals are discriminated against not because of membership of a specific social group but because they are assumed to have different beliefs. According to De la Rey (1986 : 6) intergroup discrimination is therefore believed to result from "the perceived dissimilarity or incongruence between the beliefs of the out-group and the in-group".

As with the previous approaches, whilst this approach is able to account for social behaviour as it occurs between individuals, it does however fail to take into consideration the intertwining of social processes in context. Group-based approaches to intergroup relations will now be considered.

Both Sherif and Tajfel have developed theoretical formulations which approach the topic of intergroup relations from the group level of analysis, namely those of realistic conflict theory and social identity theory, which have represented important landmarks in an understanding of intergroup relations as they allow for "both the properties of the groups themselves and the consequences of membership on individuals". (Sherif 1966 : 62) As social identity theory requires a more elaborate discussion, this has been undertaken in a separate section. For now though, brief consideration is given to realistic conflict theory, social categorization, socio-cultural learning, cognitive consistency and genetic predisposition.

Realistic Conflict Theory:

According to Taylor and Moghaddam (1987), realistic conflict theory addresses three major issues in intergroup relations: how conflicts arise, the course they take and their resolution. This theory is based on a rational view of humankind where conflicts between groups are assumed to arise from competition for scarce resources.

The social psychological aspects of Sherif's research on intergroup behaviour concern the development of intergroup processes within the bounds of certain functional relations between groups, where the social relations between groups are accounted for by their functional goal relations. Sherif explains the formation of social groups in terms of the achievement of goals: cohesive group structure emerges from co-operative interdependence, in the attainment of goals, and shared ingroup-outgroup boundaries resulting from competitive goal-related

activity. (De la Rey 1986 : 12)

As opposed to individualistic approaches towards understanding intergroup behaviour, behaviour is no longer conceptualized in terms of any coincidence of individual emotional or motivational problems. Rather, relations are seen in relation to the surrounding intergroup setting. In this sense, realistic conflict theory has two important strengths: firstly, it is group orientated and has lead to research that deals with genuine intergroup interactions and intergroup processes. And, secondly, it makes intuitive sense that groups with real conflicts of material interests should experience greater potential conflict than in groups whose material interests do not conflict. The theory is however not without weaknesses. As Taylor and Moghaddam (1987) explain, the theory does not offer any definition of conflict and furthermore, it assumes all conflict is necessarily wrong and must therefore be avoided. Also, the theory is almost exclusively concerned with groups of equal power relations and needs to consider the implications of power differences within and between groups. Despite these, realistic conflict theory is considered one of the most influential in terms of research on intergroup behaviour and has led social psychologists away from the tendency to ignore the larger social context of individuals' behaviour.

Social Categorization:

Another perspective towards understanding intergroup relations involves the process of social categorization which has already been discussed at length. As a theory of intergroup relations, as we have seen, it bases its approach on the propensity of people to divide their social world into distinct categories of 'us' and 'them'. For a more detailed discussion, refer back to relevant sections.

Socio-Cultural Learning:

A different angle to intergroup relations suggests that relations

develop through a process of socio-cultural learning. According to Byrne (1991) a child acquires attitudes towards others from parents, friends, teachers and the mass media and are subsequently praised or rewarded in some way for adopting these views which further strengthen such attitudes until they become the cultural norm.

Cognitive Consistency:

This view holds that individuals mold their attitudes and behaviour according to pre-existing notions or stereotypes in which it is suggested that all members of a certain category possess similar characteristics. (Devine 1989) Once an individual has acquired a stereotype about a group of people, he/she tends to look for information which confirms this cognitive framework whilst tending to ignore or reject inconsistent or contradictory facts. (Byrne 1991)

Genetic Predisposition:

A final perspective, according to Rushton (1989), suggests that people are genetically predisposed in terms of attitudes towards members of groups other than their own. Rushton (1989) believes that genes can best ensure their own survival by encouraging reproduction with similar individuals.

As various theories of intergroup relations exploring explanations for intergroup conflict have been discussed, theories of how these relations can be improved will now be considered.

Improving Intergroup Relations:

Towards improving intergroup relations, several suggestions have been put forward, as it is interesting that those who participated in this research offered some of these of their own accord, which will be addressed in the findings, a brief overview of such suggestions

will be considered.

According to Berk (1989), one approach to improving race relations would be to change the socialization of children by encouraging parents, teachers and others to foster the development of positive views about all groups of people, coupled with, according to Cook (1985) and Byrne (1991), promoting increased contact between different groups which would lead to a growing recognition of similarities between groups, thereby altering stereotypes.

Alternatively, Bacon (1992) proposes the following:

- breaking the cycle of prejudice by teaching people not to hate;
- recategorization, shifting the boundaries between 'us' and 'them', and;
- increasing direct intergroup contact thereby reaping the benefits of close acquaintance.

In light of discussions of the individual in society exploring both self-identity and group relations, attention is now turned to a theoretical discussion regarding notions of race and culture and what these offer towards an understanding of a sense of identity and ultimately how we become what we are in terms of that which is inherited and that which is learned or acquired.

Notions of Race, Culture and Ethnicity:

An Overview:

The Apartheid regime ensured that all persons living in South Africa were classified in terms of one of four racial categories: Whites, Coloureds, Blacks and Indians. South Africa is a highly stratified society which has been characterized by institutional separation between race groups, where one's physical features have been (and still are) of prime importance in conferring race membership on individuals.

According to De la Rey (1986 : 56), in a society like South Africa where divisions are deep-seated, "the way in which people perceive one another is likely to be determined by their respective race groups". This section explores notions of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'culture' towards an understanding of how racial differences are perceived.

Notions of Race:

Much controversy surrounds the relationship between culture and biology in assigning meaning to the term 'race'. 'Race' has been understood in many ways, encouraging many levels of meaning: such as, scientific, administrative and popular (informed by people's individual and social perceptions). The meanings are so diverse, even contradictory, that some authors such as Simpson and Yinger (1985 : 27), believe the word ought not to be used.

This contradictory and diverse nature of the term was, for example, met by census enumerators in 1990 in the United States who came to discover that it was not possible to categorize people on the basis of appearance.

It was assumed that enumerators could assign members of the population into categories by observation, where conventional usage of terms concerning 'race' referred to individuals who could be differentiated on the basis on physical characteristics. Use of these terms concerning 'race' by the United States census between 1890 and 1990 became the subject of a study by Lee (1993).

Lee (1993 : 260) noted some important alterations to the census form over the years. Of particular relevance was the addition of a number of ethnic categories such as Eskimo, Aleut, Asian, Korean, Vietnamese and a host of others. This resulted in a medley of racial and ethnic terms all falling under the umbrella term of 'race'. Another important amendment was the fact that individuals were free to choose their own category and enumerators recorded the individual's chosen response. Following this, a marked increase in the number of respondents making use of the category 'other' became evident.

Lee's study illustrated the point that although enumerators impose specific categories, people define themselves in terms of their own categories based on self-identification, indicating people's perceptions of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'identity' to be fluid and changing. On this basis, Lee (1993 : 262) concludes that 'race' is a "construction that cannot be separated from the social and political context". Any analysis of 'race' requires consideration of the conception of its role within a specific social structure.

On this point, Rodriques and Cordero-Guzman (1992 : 380) concur, explaining that 'race' is a construct that changes in definition regardless of the physical characteristics of that group of people.

Guillaumin (1980 : 42) explains that prior to the nineteenth century people were referred to in terms of somatic characteristics. This encouraged a scientific and an administrative meaning of the term 'race'. The former was informed by biological explanations and the latter by assigned official categories and legal classifications. This made it easy to categorize people along racial divisions, based on physical difference. Recent research, however, reveals that this is no longer the case. Not only are differences vague and difficult to establish but one also needs to take into account a separation between the official, academic discourse and the popular perception of such terms, that is, how people identify themselves.

Malik (1996) writes that, in popular language, 'race' is usually synonymous with colour as we casually speak of Africans as one race, Asians as another and Europeans, or 'whites', as a third where "virtually everyone can distinguish between the physical characteristics of the major racial groups". He adds that many even believe they can tell the difference between a Gentile and a Jew, or an Englishman and an Italian by physical appearance alone. Based on this, Malik (1996 : 2) believes "the universal ability to distinguish between different human groups has given credence to the idea that races possess an objective reality".

Banton (1967) argues that the word 'race' is used primarily as a role sign, an approach to 'race' with which Miles appears to agree. According to Miles (1989) 'race', used in everyday discourse, usually refers to or signifies the existence of a phenotypical variation, that is variations in skin colour, hair type, bone structure and so on. What exists is not 'race' but phenotypical variation where 'race' is a word used only to describe or refer to such variations.

In his book *Racism*, Miles (1989) writes that the idea of 'race' is usually employed to differentiate collectivities distinguished by skin colour, so that 'races' are either 'black' or 'white' but never 'big-eared' or 'small-eared'. Miles (1989 : 71) argues that "the fact that only certain physical characteristics are signified to define 'races' in specific circumstances indicates that we are investigating not a given, natural division of the world's population, but the application of historically and culturally specific meanings to the totality of human physiological variation". A link can be made here to Malik's (1996 : 5) point that, "the fact that we use certain physical characteristics, such as skin colour, to define a race, but ignore others, such as hair texture, shows that the creation of a race is the product of a social need, not [a] biological fact". Thus, "the use of the word 'race' to label the groups so distinguished by such features is an aspect of the social construction of reality: 'races' are socially imagined rather than biological realities".(Miles 1989 : 71)

'Races' are imagined in the dual sense that they have no real biological foundation and that all those included by the signification can never know each other, and are imagined as communities in the sense of common feeling of fellowship. Moreover, they are also imagined as limited in the sense that a boundary is perceived, beyond which lie other 'races'. Consequently, 'races' are the ideological products of human intervention, generated and reproduced within a complex interplay of relations. (Miles 1989)

Miles (1989 : 70) writes that "in the everyday world, the facts of biological differentiation are secondary to the meanings that are attributed to them and, indeed, to imagined biological differentiation". In order to understand the significance of this, Miles explores the meaning of the concept of signification.

Miles (1989 : 70) uses the concept to "identify the representational process by which meanings are attributed to particular objects, features and processes, in such a way that the latter are given special significance, and carry or are embodied with a set of additional, second-order features".

Miles (1989 : 70) explains that "where the discourse of 'race' is employed", the process of signification involves two levels of selection. The first being "the selection of biological or somatic characteristics in general as a means of classification and categorization" and the second being "a selection from the available range of somatic characteristics those which are designated as signifying a supposed difference between human beings".

Miles (1989 : 71) adds that it is "the result of a process of signification whereby certain somatic characteristics are attributed with meaning and are used to organize people into groups which are defined as 'races' ".

Viewed as a "deterministic manner of representation", Miles (1989 : 71) believes "people differentiated on the basis of the signification of phenotypical features are usually also represented as possessing certain cultural characteristics", this results in that population being represented as "exhibiting a specific profile of biological and cultural attributes". In this sense, "all those who possess the signified phenotypical characteristics are assumed to possess the additional characteristics". Thus, 'race' as an ideology refers to a negative evaluation or representation of certain people whereby social significance is attached to human features, providing a basis for social categorization and acting as justification for exclusion and/or domination. It is considered part of a wider process of 'racialization' whereby "social significance is attached to certain (usually phenotypical) human features on the basis of which those people

possessing those characteristics are designated as a distinct collectivity". (Miles 1989 : 74) Findings of my research support this notion.

Consideration is now given to this concept of racialization which is viewed primarily in terms of the social process of signification of self and others whereby, as explained above, social significance is attached to human features providing a basis for categorization. In short, Miles believes 'race' as a biological or social entity does not exist. Rather, it takes the form of a social reality through the ideological process of racialization, where 'races' are socially imagined phenomena.

Miles (1989 : 75) uses the concept of racialization to refer to "those instances whereby social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectives". It therefore refers to a process of "categorization, a representational process of defining an Other" where signification (the attribution of meaning to particular biological features of human beings), is "dialectical" in nature. Dialectical because, according to Miles (1989 : 75), "ascribing a real or alleged biological characteristic with meaning to the Other necessarily entails defining Self by the same criterion".

'Race' has often been presented as a category whereby social structure, social change or the movement of history could be understood. According to Banton (1988 : 23), 'race' is not an objective culture-free designation of differences in appearance. It is affected by popular consciousness and attitudes, informed by people's individual and social perceptions, "focusing on exclusionary boundaries rather than commonalities". In South Africa the apartheid regime did its best to create separate individual and community

identities based on 'race' where notions of race were informed by what people perceived it to be, creating both social and cultural boundaries.

According to Omi and Winant (1994 : 54) there is a continuous temptation to think of 'race' as an "essence, as something that is fixed, concrete and objective". There is, however, also an opposite temptation to imagine race as a mere illusion, a purely ideological construct which some "ideal non-racist social order would eliminate".

Omi and Winant (1994 : 54) challenge both these positions, explaining that the effort "must be made to understand race as an unstable and decentred complex of social meanings, constantly being transformed by political struggle".

As use of the term 'race' does imply selection of particular human features for the purposes of identification, some understandings of 'race' invoke biologically based human characteristics. Omi and Winant (1994 : 55) regard selection of these particular human features as being "always and necessarily a social and historical process" and should be interpreted as a construct which has both a sociological and a historical meaning.

In this sense, the notion 'race' is fundamentally a social construction within sets of power relations, where 'race' implies a broad range of cultural, ethnic, social and political definitions which are viewed differently throughout various stages in history. 'Race' as a concept, continues to play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world. For this reason, Omi and Winant (1994 : 55) believe it necessary to avoid both the utopian framework that sees 'race' as an illusion and also the essentialist formulation which sees 'race' as something objective and fixed, a 'biological datum'.

'Race' should rather be thought of as an "element of social structure rather than as an irregularity within it". It should be seen as a "dimension of human representation" rather than as an illusion. (Omi and Winant 1994 : 55) It is these perspectives that inform the theoretical approach Omi and Winant (1994 : 55) call 'racial formation' which they define as the "socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed".

Omi and Winant (1994 : 60) believe "it is not possible to represent 'race' discursively without simultaneously locating it, explicitly or implicitly, within both a social structure and a historical context".

Views of 'race' as socially constructed simply interpret the meaning of 'race' in terms of its social structure, where an analysis of the meaning of 'race' is immediately linked to "a specific conception of the role of race in the social structure". (Omi and Winant 1994 : 57) This in itself implies the changing nature of the concept, that it is neither fixed nor centered, that it is possibly negotiable.

The idea of 'race' has, therefore, developed in parallel with that of the diversity of societies and social groups, and whilst use of the term can be both described and analyzed there is nevertheless enormous difficulty in clarifying what 'race' actually means on a general level.

According to Guillaumin (1980 : 59), the basing of human classification on physical characteristics derives directly from social relationships and not from some "universal abstract giving rise to pure taxonomic categories and ahistorical self-evidence". The notion of 'race' corresponds to an ideological analysis of social relationships and not to categories existing as physical objects. In this sense, Guillaumin argues that as a product of industrial societies,

the notion of 'race' itself is really only a set of "social relationships interpreted in racial terms".

It is this point that I find agreeable to a considerable extent, that the meaning of 'race' is ultimately linked to conceptions of it within the social structure. Findings of this research support this notion. It seems clear, however, that despite lengthy debates regarding the notion 'race', the term remains, in general use, as "a means of punctuation even though its meaning seems to have broadened to include more than simply biological and physical differences". (Morrall 1994 : 9)

According to Jenkins (1997 : 74) however, the physical differences with which we are concerned in matters of 'race' are only "differences which make a difference because they are culturally or socially signified as such". As a consequence, there is therefore "nothing objective about 'race'" as in the course of interaction, imagery, beliefs and evaluations about the Other have been generated and reproduced amongst all participants in order to explain the appearance and behaviour of those with whom contact has been established in order to formulate a strategy for interaction and reaction.

Race and Ethnicity:

The relationship between 'race' and ethnicity is an area about which there is little consensus, so much so that there may not always be agreement that the distinction is, in itself, valid or important.

Sandra Wallman (1986 : 229) dismisses the debate between 'race' and ethnicity as a "quibble", arguing that 'race', denoting phenotype or physical appearance, is just "one element or potential ethnic boundary marker among many". Floya Anthias (1992 : 421) offers a similar

perspective. She suggests 'race' is "simply one of the ways in which ethnic boundaries are created".

A similar position is taken by Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993a : 5) who states: "Ideas of 'race' may or may not form part of ethnic ideologies, and their presence or absence does not seem to be a decisive factor in interethnic relations". Van den Berghe (1981 : 240) argues that ethnicity is an extension of kinship, "a manifestation of an adaptive nepotism between kin which has essentially genetic foundations" and that 'race' has become "nothing more than a special marker of ethnicity; a visible folk test of likely common ancestry".

Jenkins (1997 : 74) regards these arguments as "unconvincing" for a number of reasons. These include the fact that "while 'ethnic' social relations are not necessarily hierarchical, exploitative and conflictual, 'race relations' would certainly appear to be".

He explains that although ethnic boundaries involve relations of power, hierarchical difference is not a "definitive" of ethnic relations. 'Race' however seems to be much more "a matter of social categorization than of group identification". Furthermore, while ethnic identity is part of a structured body of knowledge about the social world (as an aspect of culture), 'racial' categorization appears to be "both more explicit and more elaborate in its justification". (Jenkins 1997 : 75)

Ultimately, though, Jenkins (1997 : 79) believes ethnicity and 'race' to be different kinds of concept, "not actually constituting a true pair" and opposing one to the other does therefore not make much sense.

Rex (1986 : 18) considers ethnicity to be a more general social phenomenon than 'race' as, although ethnicity implies group

identification, it is "routinely implicated, through the signification of cultural or ethnic markers, in processes of categorization". 'Race' on the other hand is understood as a "historically specific facet of the more general phenomenon of ethnicity", characterizing situations in which an ethnic group dominates or attempts to dominate another set of people.

Distinguishing between ethnicity and 'race', Banton (1983 : 106) argues that "ethnicity is generally more concerned with the identification of 'us', while 'race' is more orientated to the categorization of 'them'". From this point of view, ethnicity depends on the necessity of group identification while 'race' is most typically a "matter of social categorization" where group identification occurs inside ethnic boundaries and social categorization, across them.

Banton's (1983) basic argument is that although both ethnicity and 'race' are socially constructed, 'race' is a categorical identification denoting 'them', based on physical characteristics, while ethnicity is the cultural group identification of 'us'. Membership in an ethnic group is thus usually voluntary while membership in a racial group is not; 'racial' identifications are imposed. Ethnicity is therefore "about inclusion (us) while 'race' is about exclusion (them): group identification as opposed to social categorization". (Banton 1983 : 12)

Wade (1993 : 243) criticizes Banton for taking physical variation for granted, neglecting the social processes of categorization "that denote and specify the differences which make a difference". In Wade's view, (1993 : 243) the physical differences of 'race' are "always highly (if not completely) socially constructed". According to Wade (1993 : 244), what ever else it is, 'race' is a set of "classificatory social constructs of considerable historical and contemporary significance".

It is this basic model (that 'race' is typically differentiated from ethnicity in terms of a contrast between physical and cultural differences) that underlies most social science discussions of the topic.

Race and Culture:

Of great significance to this study, and illustrated in its findings, is Malik's point (1996 : 130) that the discourse of culture "would seem to provide a powerful tool with which to challenge the ideas of immutable hereditary differences".

In most people's minds, the concepts of race and of culture would appear to be mutually exclusive. One refers to "imputed biological differences" which are regarded as permanent and which, within the discourse of race, give rise to theories of inferiority and superiority. The other refers to "historically or socially constructed differences which would seem to contain no connotations of permanent hierarchical distinctions". (Malik 1996 : 129)

Despite being so seemingly exclusive, culture, like race, is animated by ideas of human universality where cultural traits can be as powerful a marker of human groups as biological traits such as skin colour. In this study, this is probed through an inquiry into cross-racial adoption where the explicit link that opponents of cross-racial adoption make between 'race' and 'culture' (where the 'race' of a child determines the 'culture' in which he/she should be brought up), reveals a view of 'culture' as a predetermined, natural phenomenon.

According to Levi-Strauss (1987 : 27) culture is a "specific, transcendental category" appearing "outside of our immediate consciousness", being transmitted from generation to generation and defining "who we are by where we have come from".

This point is reiterated by Laufer's comment that "our present and future lie in our past". (in Degler 1991 : 102)

Culture, for Ember and Ember (1996), is considered one of the most powerful shapers of identity as it reveals not only what we have in common with one another, but also how we differ from one another. Simonson and Walker (1988 : xi) comment that contemporary visions of cultural difference seek to learn about other cultural forms "not to create a more rich and universal culture, but to imprison us more effectively into human zoos of difference in an attempt to preserve cultural differences", believing these differences to be "immutable and static".

For Levi-Strauss, the essence of being human lies in difference and as a consequence, Levi-Strauss (1987 : 63) regards culture as "expressing difference" where each culture is marked by certain features which are absent from other cultures, and possession of these features makes one culture different to another. Cultures are "sealed compartments which separate 'us' from 'them' and impose on us (even from before birth) ways of being and modes of thinking from which we cannot escape" (Levi-Strauss 1987 : 10) Here, Levi-Strauss explores the implicit similarity between the concept of race and culture, this relationship being the very core of his philosophy:

[C]ultures are comparable to irregular doses of the genetic traits that are designated 'races'. A culture consists of a multiplicity of traits, some of which it shares, in varying degrees, with nearby or distant cultures, and some of which distinguish it more or less sharply from others. These traits are balanced within a system that, in either case, must be viable if the culture is not to be gradually eliminated by other systems more capable of propagating or reproducing themselves. In order to develop differences, so that the boundaries enabling us to

distinguish one culture from its neighbours may become sufficiently clear-cut, the conditions are roughly the same as those promoting biological differentiation between human groups: relative isolation for a long period, limited cultural and genetic exchange. Cultural barriers are almost of the same nature as biological barriers; the cultural barriers prefigure the biological barriers all the more as all cultures leave their mark on the human body: through styles of costume, hair and ornament, through physical mutilation, and through gestures, they mimic differences comparable to those that can exist between races and by favouring certain physical types, they stabilize and even spread them.

(Levi-Strauss 1987 : 17)

Implied in this quotation is the argument that culture mimics race even to the extent that it stamps on its members physical marks of distinction which are passed on from one generation to another. Findings of this research indicate that participants believe this to be so.

Haralambos, however, (1990 : 3) believes that since humans have no instincts to direct their actions, their behaviour must be based on guidelines which are learned, and that in order for a society to function effectively, these guidelines must be shared by its members, as without a shared understanding, members of society would be unable to communicate and co-operate and confusion and disorder would result. In this way, culture has the important function of defining accepted ways of behaving for members of a particular society. Ultimately, then, culture has two essential qualities: "firstly it is learned, secondly, it is shared".

Likewise, Robert Thornton (1988 : 26-27) refers to culture, a changing resource, as "the *information* which humans are *not* born with but which they need in order to interact with one another in social life". Culture is, however, in accordance with Levi-Strauss's views, thought to create "the boundaries of class, ethnicity (...) race, gender, neighbourhood, generation and territory within which we all live". Thornton (1988 : 24) also makes the point that the past cannot be separated from the present and cannot simply be thought of as "history", as a set of events that "exist" that have already happened. Rather, it is that which we require in order to make sense of day-to-day living, part of "the *information* which humans (...) need in order to interact with each other in social life".

Recalling elements from previous discussions on identity and the individual in society, as people define themselves in terms of membership to a distinct social group or category, based on certain common characteristics, so too do shared cultural traits form the basis for membership.

As this has been explored in various ways at greater length, one point will be made here recalling this relationship in terms of Miles's theory of signification. We recall: "People differentiated on the basis of the signification of phenotypical features are usually also represented as possessing certain cultural characteristics, with the result that the population is represented as exhibiting a specific profile of biological and cultural attributes" where this manner of representation means that "all those who possess the signified phenotypical characteristics are assumed to possess the additional cultural characteristics". (Miles 1989 : 71)

As will be evident in the presentation of findings, in practice this theory, along with those presented by Levi-Strauss, holds true where participants are unable to separate notions of race, as inherited,

physical features, from culture, as a learned process through socialization. This then reveals significant underlying assumptions regarding an understanding of how we become what we are in terms of that which is inherited and that which is learned.

A Final Point:

The central objective of this discussion has been that of exploring the scope of terms such as 'race', 'ethnicity' and culture, in order to establish a theoretical grounding from which to work. Purposefully, emphasis has been more towards the social construction of 'race' and 'ethnicity', discouraging the intrusion of biologically-based conceptions into social analysis. This has been done in order to highlight the importance of the meanings actors themselves bring to such concepts and the individual perceptions that are attributed to them. As findings of this research will show, 'race' is ultimately linked to conceptions of the role of such categorization within the social structure and is affected by popular consciousness and attitudes; it is what people believe it to be. Furthermore, whatever the biological reality, race as a social concept is a powerful force uniting and dividing people. Whether visible on the physical surface or simply felt in the emotional depths, race provides the cohesive groupings in which cultures have been, concentrated, transmitted and carried around the world.

The Family:

An Overview:

Changes in family life have been described from various points of view, provoking questions relating to the "channels and mechanisms" by which family change comes about. (Kirkpatrick 1955 : 136)

Central to any discussion on family change is the influence of industrialization and resulting demographic changes. Muncie et al (1995 : 21) identifies a marked tendency for family and household size to decrease in all Western societies as they become more industrialized.

As Smith (1986 : 56) indicates, in Britain in 1860 the average marriage produced seven children; in 1980 the average was two. In 1900 the birth rate per 1000 population was 28.7; in 1976 it was 12. These changes have largely been attributed to reductions in the level of child mortality rates. Other changes in population structure have been brought about by increased life expectancy, successive waves of immigration and increases in marriage and divorce rates.

In first world countries, Leonard and Hood-Williams (1988) identify the most far reaching of these as the development of both industrialization and modern capitalism which led to large-scale demographic changes influencing the size and structure of the family. Another critical influence on the family (in the West) came from "life style politics" (Leonard and Hood-Williams 1988 : 10), which served to promote alternative family forms, thereby challenged previously accepted concepts of the family in its traditional sense, resulting in an awareness of the diversity of family structures.

Consequently, current studies of the family are faced with significant dilemmas. These include several areas of controversy which according to Muncie et al (1995 : 9) are as follows:

- the concept of the family (how the family has traditionally been defined and the contemporary relevance of such a definition);
- the family and social change (is the family a natural and universal feature of all societies, consistently changing in response to wider societal concerns?);
- the functions of the family (does it fulfill its members' needs? Does it produce stability in society and is it a cause of or solution to social problems?);
- power and family life (what power relations exist, how and by whom?).

The family is no longer the focus of one discipline within the social sciences. There has been an explosion of interest from many disciplines including those of anthropology and psychology providing stimulating developments in this field. Attracting much attention within the study of the family are questions relating to evident changes in the family in terms of both its structure and its form.

Apart from families changing in size and structure as a consequence of industrialization, there have also been profound changes relating to conceptions of family life. Whilst family patterns of the past have been affected largely by colonization, slavery, cultural and ideological influences and political circumstances, perhaps the most fundamental influence has been by the development of modern capitalism (Muncie et al 1995 : 125).

Modernization has often called into question earlier forms of family organization and new family types have been emerging which do not fit the traditional characteristics of family structure. With this reorganization comes a redefinition of social roles resulting in shifts in family forms making way for new varieties of family life.

These alternative family forms include:

- lone-parent families: In the United States of America, the proportion of single people marrying has halved since 1971, as has the proportion of divorced people remarrying while the proportion of people describing themselves as "cohabiting" is steadily increasing. Illegitimacy rates, in America, are also on the increase in 1990 nearly 30% of babies were born to unmarried parents; (Muncie et al 1995 : 130)
- extended families, communes and kibbutzim: These may include collections of people (either related or otherwise) co-residing and deliberately creating alternatives to family living;
- gay and lesbian relationships: The predominant challenge to the notion of the traditional family centers around sexual orientation. Gay liberation and feminist movements have played a significant role in the development of freedom of expression including that of sexual preference;
- foster families and adoptive families: Creating families for childless adults challenging biological notions of family and extending itself (in the case of cross-racial adoptions) to transcending cultural/ethnic boundaries.

Some, such as Meacham, (1985) regard these changes as a sign that the family no longer performs well, or that the social and economic situation makes it impossible for the family to fulfill its role effectively.

The family as an institution is one which generates a great deal of controversy. Although the family is often said to be a personal and private institution, clearly it is also one with a high public profile.

Considerable changes in the sociological study of the family have taken place over the last 20 years. Previously the family was a low status area of study in the field of sociology, and for this reason remained untouched by developments in other areas of sociology. According to Leonard and Hood-Williams (1988 : 2) the subject was treated rather uncritically as the study of a "more or less inevitable institution that was very largely a response to certain biological features of human life".

Undeniably, in most societies, the concept of family as being a 'traditionally nuclear structure' is changing, encouraging a new direction in now out-dated family research. Included in this new direction is the necessity to re-consider traditional definitions of what we understand family to mean and ways in which notions of family have transgressed these stereotypes. The following section focuses on discussions relating to definitions of the family.

Presenting the family as an institution whose limits have been transgressed by the increased prevalence and acknowledgement of alternative family forms, this section addresses several issues relating to the twentieth century South African family.

These include exploring problems relating to definitions of the family and what relation such definitions have to existing, diverse ways of living; investigating the extent to which notions of the family are

grounded in either biological imperatives or in more transient forms, changing in response to the wider, social environment and examining the functions the family is understood or perceived to perform.

Furthermore, this section examines ways in which notions of family (created by stereotypical definitions, by the media, by education and by socialization) and people's perceptions of family draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and the extent to which these may have been both challenged and consequently transgressed as a result of the emergence of alternative family forms.

Defining the Family:

Defining the family can be done so through the consideration of different approaches to the family.

One such approach, the interactional Approach, understands the family as "a unit of interacting persons, each occupying a position within the family and consequently fulfilling a number of roles". (King 1969 : 23) Similar to this, the structure-function approach views the family as a social system performing certain functions in society. Alternatively, situationalists view the family as a "unity of interacting persons who experience relatively continuing relationships". (King 1969 : 23) Those who adopt an institutional approach define the family as a social unit in which individual and cultural values are of central concern. Common to these preceding approaches, the developmental approach defines the family as "an arena of interacting personalities", viewing the family as an evolving system. (Anderson and Carter 1990 : 34)

Farmer (1979: 1) maintains that the family is essentially "a biological unit, centered on the function of reproduction and geared to perpetuate the species". Conventional definitions of the family such as this one, have restricted it to a biological sense, viewing family

terms of kinship.

In our society, people expect (it is part of the common sense stereotype) that companionship, sexual activity, co-habitation, mutual care, child-bearing, and the rearing, and support of children reflect a definition of what constitutes a family.

At first glance "what is the family" appears an easy question but large-scale changes over several decades have raised new questions about what constitutes a family, challenging previous conclusions based on traditional definitions which include two parents married to each other and their biological children.

Family constellations that were once rare or unacknowledged (blended families, homosexual parenting, never-married mothers) are now common and need to be better understood. With recent social changes and the empowerment of groups of people such as women, homosexuals and minorities, there is a need to question the assumptions of much existing literature relating to the family as these groups are now in a position to define the family in new ways.

Groups such as co-habiting units, adoptive families and foster families can no longer be confined within a biological definition. According to Muncie et al (1995 : 17), with this increasing acknowledgment of the contemporary reality of alternative "family forms" or "domestic living arrangements" and cultural variations, defining the family becomes more difficult.

Some writers, such as Elliot (1986 : 5), resolve definitional problems by arguing that "the family is what a particular social group believes it to be". Others like Berger and Berger (1983), locate themselves within a functionalist perspective, defining the family in terms of the functions it performs.

In an attempt to overcome this impasse, some argue for use of the term 'families' rather than 'family'. In this way, an acceptance of diversity and a "reluctance to ascribe moral superiority to any one form would be promoted". (Berger and Berger 1983 : 3)

Although this line of reasoning supposedly allows for the inclusion of alternative family forms, it does, however, not resolve all issues. It has been argued that the use of the term 'family' or 'families' in all of these different contexts continues to imply a "sameness which may be both unwarranted and unwanted by those people involved". (Muncie et al 1995 : 17)

Some gay and lesbian partners may actively reject the "family" connotation because of a conscious decision to live outside its traditionally perceived confines. In this instance, even the use of the term "families" continues to "underline the moral and ideological primacy of 'the family' as all divergent and different forms remain defined in terms of their relation to a presumed norm". (Muncie et al 1995 : 17)

Experimentation in the symbolization of family experience brings an increased awareness to problems relating to terminology, while countless definitions of the family are available, definitions remain relative to purpose as they are tools and hence a means rather than an end. "One may want to define a thing purely in terms of the operations by which it is observed, yet it should be argued that all things observable are described in terms of quantities, qualities and attributes". (Kirkpatrick 1955 : 13)

Assigning specific definitions in order to effectively describe what constitutes a family, creates stereotypical notions of family and influences what people perceive a family to be. This ultimately draws boundaries, setting limits as to those who are included and those who are excluded in such definitions. An interesting aspect relevant to

this study of perceptions of cross-racial adoption is an examination into the extent to which these perceptions are informed by notions of family and its role in society.

According to Cooley (in Park 1950 : 363), it is within the family that "most of the traits that we ordinarily describe as human, have their origin" and as a result, it is to the family as an institution that we owe the domestication of humankind.

For many of us the family constitutes not only our first experience of social life, but also the most enduring social group. The family is a living, evolving institution, adapting itself constantly to changing socio-economic conditions and the progress of humanity. According to Leonard and Hood-Williams (1988 : 5) functionalists argue that this continued existence and influence of the family as a social institution is accounted for in terms of the "functions it performs" on behalf of society thereby contributing to the maintenance of that society. As we have seen from prior reference to this approach, these functions include procreation, socialization, providing affection and emotional support. From this standpoint, family patterns of behaviour can be said to be related to the norms of the society, of which it forms part and, furthermore, it is the family that tends to uphold those normative patterns.

To a large extent, the family is thought of as "a concentrated reflection of the larger social group of which it is a part". (Elmer 1932 : 83) In this respect, a mutually interactive and supportive relationship exists between the family and society where every social institution is "inevitably influenced by all other social institutions and hence, in a general way, the family is affected by every change in any other phase of social life". (Elmer 1932: 83)

An analysis of the family from a functionalist perspective, answers the question: why are there families? Functionalists assume that society has certain functional prerequisites or basic needs that must be met if it is to survive and operate efficiently. The family is examined in terms of the degree to which it meets these functional prerequisites.

From his analysis of 250 societies, Murdock (1949) argues that the family performs four basic functions in all societies which he terms the sexual, reproductive, economic and educational. These are deemed essential for social life since without the sexual and reproductive functions, there would be no members of society, without the economic function there would be no provision for food and life would cease to exist, and without the educational (a term Murdock uses for socialization), there would be no culture. In this sense, the family is seen as a multi-functional institution which is indispensable to society yet, according to Morgan (1975), not only does Murdock assume universality in terms of the family, but he does not consider whether its functions could be performed by other social institutions. He does not examine alternatives to the family, assessing the extent to which these basic functions are inevitably linked with the institution of the nuclear family.

Another functionalist, Parsons, regards the family as retaining two basic functions: "the primary socialization of children" and the "stabilization of the adult personalities of the population of the society". Parsons argues that families are "factories" which produce human personalities and can conceive of no institution other than the family which could provide a context of warmth, security and mutual support necessary for such personalities to optimally develop. (In Haralambos 1990 : 462) Again, Morgan (1975) points out a similar criticism as with Murdock. Parsons fails to explore functional alternative to the family and assumes a sense of universality in terms of the family.

With their emphasis on universality, functionalist perspectives of the family present a conservative bias, which, according to Morgan (1975 : 3) lies in these perspectives "[emphasizing] the limits of human activity rather than the potentialities" and an inability to consider alternatives to the family, giving little regard "to the possibility that the human potential for creativity will find expression", especially since modern society has brought with it certain previously unknown pressures.

Political pressures, scientific revolutions, economic and environmental crises and ideological confusions of the twentieth century have exposed the family to unprecedented pressures. More specific factors having considerable influence on the family include improvements in transport and communications which have given most people access to information about lifestyles, values and behavioural norms different to those of their own societies. (Leonard and Hood-Williams 1988: 31)

Taken-for-granted and commonsense conceptions of how the family is constituted, founded in stereotypical definitions, clearly reflect traditional beliefs as to the way in which sexual and parental relationships "ought to be ordered". (O'Connell 1994 : 15) But, the family is not merely two or more people related by blood or marriage living together in a household. It is not a concrete "thing" that fulfils concrete needs. Rather, the family is an "ideological construct with moral implications presenting a set of social norms and expectations of how people should live together". (O'Connell 1994 : 16)

Stereotypical perceptions of the family carry such potency that as a result wield a power to declare what is normal and what is not. Not only is there a tendency for all other emerging family forms to be defined with reference to such stereotypes, but there is also a tendency to view alternative family forms as "unusual" or "deviant" and not able to effectively fulfill its necessary roles.

The Role of the Family:

The family, in one form or another, accepted as the basic unit of all societies, exists not only objectively as a recognized basic social unit, but also subjectively in the minds and imaginations of all people and individuals. All societies and cultures have families, mostly founded in kinship, which exists at a level between the society at large and the individual and which ideally, prepare people for life in the wider community. In this sense, O'Connell (1994 : 10) regards the family as "a useful and positive institution, essential for the emotional care and development of individuals".

There is broad consensus amongst academics regarding the role of the family in society and the functions it should perform. For Samovar (1991 : 45) it is "the most essential link between the individual and society in so far as it provides the individual with an identity in the wider society" as the family is thought to have a central role in the education, socialization and care of children. It is considered the primary site where young children learn to become "social beings, capable of operating effectively within the wider society". Samovar (1991 : 45) continues this argument by stating "the family begins the process of each child's socialization and lays the foundations from which relationships are built with people outside the family, providing an important function in both the transmission and maintenance of cultural norms and values".

The family unit, its formation patterns, structures and functions are shaped by a range of external forces. Samovar (1991) identifies culture as being one of the most direct and influential of those as it is culture that plays a central role in the value system and the norms of social organization of most societies.

Samovar believes culture serves the basic need of laying out a "predictable world in which an individual is firmly orientated". He defines culture as "an integrated system of learned behavioural patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society", it is the set of practices by which meanings are produced and exchanged, which are "not genetically predetermined and therefore not the result of biological inheritance". (Samovar 1991 : 47) Culture is believed to be both "transmitted and maintained solely through communication and learning" within the family unit. (Samovar 1991 : 48)

In terms of the family's functional role in society, supporting this argument, Mosikatsana (1995 : 623) states that "human beings are products of their environment and develop their sense of values, attitudes and self-concept within their family structures" and that the transmission of culture within this structure, enables people to make sense of our surroundings, giving meaning to events, objects and people in the environment. (For a more detailed discussion on culture, see relevant sections)

This sentiment is shared by groups such as the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) in America who believe, according to their 1971 standard (see discussion on cross-racial adoption), that these important functions of the family can only be effectively fulfilled within the biological nuclear family structure; that families should exist in their traditional sense where members are both racially and culturally compatible as it is only within this environment that its members can effectively develop a sense of their identity in terms of their race and culture. (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 21)

There are however those who dispute the idea that family can only effectively function in its 'traditional' sense. These include groups in support of alternative family forms; lone-parents, lesbian couples, adoptive parents who argue that the function of the family is still

there, no matter what form it takes and that alternative family forms provide and fulfill these functions just as effectively as a traditional family. (Simon and Altstein 1994)

Broadly speaking, families are based on the idea of mutual solidarity and exchange of services whereby each family has an elaborate system of expectations, delivery and exchange of varying kinds of support, where the diversity and divergence in families becomes a "faithful reflection of the cultural pluralism of the individuals that constitute societies". (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 23)

A Final Point:

As has been evident, many sociologists have regarded the family as the corner stone of society, forming the basic unit of organization and seen, in general, as a universal and inevitable social institution. Still relevant today, Park (1950 : 362) writes that "the fact is, family is not the same in all human societies" and therefore does not exercise its influence in the same way. Supplementing this point, Strathern (1992 : 145) believes modern "family living can be seen as a lifestyle of sorts".

The family should be thought of as an institution which is part of a larger social structure involving other institutions which regulate varied aspects of social life. Families take numerous forms around the world and because of this diversity of family forms, it is impossible to arrive at a structural definition of the family that is universally accepted. For this reason, the family is more practically defined in functional terms, that is, in terms of the functions it is thought to perform. Findings of this research will illustrate the tendency participants have towards defining the family in its functional form.

Cross-Racial Adoption:

An Overview:

Cross-racial adoptions in both South Africa and abroad have been met with much controversy where the essential question remains: Can a white family in a racist society provide an environment which would allow a black child to form a healthy racial and ethnic identity and grow up into a well adjusted adult? (Lawson 1995)

Academics are divided on the issue. One side of the argument, opposing such adoptions, believes that the important functions of the family can only be effectively fulfilled within the biological nuclear family structure; that families should exist in their 'traditional' sense, where members are both racially and culturally compatible, believing that it is only within this environment that an individual can effectively develop a sense of their identity in terms of their 'race' and culture.

The 1989 British Child Care guidelines warn that white parents cannot provide a black child with an environment enabling the development of a healthy racial and ethnic identity and that "a child should be brought up by a family of the same 'race' and 'ethnicity'". (Lawson 1995 : 57)

One such academic who supports this view is Professor Ruth McRoy, believing that the "development of an unambiguous positive racial identity is problematic for children who undergo cross-racial adoption and such placements should therefore only be considered when in-racial placements have been sought unsuccessfully". (Lawson 1995 : 57)

Alternatively, arguments for cross-racial adoptions rest largely on the moral belief in a child's right to live in a caring, loving family of his/her own and that "no child should be relegated to years of foster care or institutionalized living based on the fact that they are racially and culturally different from prospective adoptive parents". (Lawson 1995 : 57) There are those, such as Professor Rita Simon who visited South Africa at the invitation of the Johannesburg Child Welfare, who say: "Something special seems to happen to both black and white children when they are reared together as siblings in the same family...cross-racial adoptions causes no special problems among adoptees or their siblings". (Lawson 1995 : 57)

These views of cross-racial adoption do however make several underlying assumptions about 'race', culture and identity which have significant implications regarding what people believe to be inherited and what people believe to be learned. As this is my area of interest, it is this aspect that this thesis attempts to explore: What perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal about notions of race, culture and identity.

The following discussion examines arguments both for and against cross-racial adoption and the underlying assumptions each make regarding notions of 'race', culture and identity, revealing what is perceived to be learned and inherited towards an understanding of how we, as individuals, become what we are. It should be noted however that the majority of literature available is American which has proved problematic. The little information relating to South Africa is largely in the form of case studies. There is little relevant information and related research examining how cross-racial placements are perceived, which serves to reinforce the significance of this study.

The Case Against Cross-Racial Adoption:

In the United States of America, adoption policies have fluctuated over time. In 1958 the adoption policy followed by America's leading adoption agency, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) stated that "children placed in adoptive families of the same colour, can become more easily integrated into the family group and community". (Mosikatsana 1995 : 620)

The prevalence of cross-racial adoptions had steadily increased. This was largely due to the combination of a move towards desegregation and a decrease in the number of white babies available for adoption coupled with an increasing number of black babies seeking homes. As a consequence, the CWLA changed its standard. This revised standard stated that:

"It should not be assumed by the agency that difficulties will necessarily arise if adoptive parents and children are from different racial origin. In most communities there are families who have the capacity to adopt a child whose racial background is different from their own, such couples should be encouraged to consider such a child".

(Mosikatsana 1995 : 620)

In the 1970s the discussion of racial issues in America became more sophisticated as American law, in terms of s33(1) of the Constitution, advocated that in terms of the best interests of the child, the right to equality "might justify a race-sensitive decision". (Mosikatsana 1995 : 622) Within this context, in the early 1970s, organized opposition to cross-racial adoption in America re-emerged as, in 1972, the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) made its position clear, stating that it is only within the nuclear family structure that a sense of racial and cultural identity may be cultivated and demanded a child-placement policy that was "racially and

culturally sensitive", asserting this to be a basic human right. In a position paper dated April 1972 the association said "black children belong physically, psychologically and culturally in black families in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future". (Mosikatsana 1995 : 623)

Placing reliance on the testimony of mental health professionals and as a result of this statement from the NABSW's, as well as due to pressure from other black leaders, the CWLA changed its policy. The CWLA 1973 standard indicated a preference for "in-racial placements, because the children could be integrated into the average family and community with relative ease". (Mosikatsana 1995 : 623)

Most black writers opposed to cross-racial adoption challenge two main hypotheses: (1) that there are insufficient black adoptive parents willing to adopt black children; and (2) that the benefits a black child will receive even in an institution outdo those benefits received in a white family. (Mosikatsana 1995 : 622)

In a September 1987 *Ebony* article entitled "Should Whites Adopt Black Children?", the president of the NABSW reported that many of those who oppose cross-racial adoption see it as "tantamount to racial and cultural genocide" and claim that there "is no way a black child can develop as a total black person if he/she lives in a white family". Furthermore, the practice of cross-racial adoption was seen as nothing more than an "insidious scheme for depriving the black community of its most valuable resource: its children". (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 21) One of the strongest arguments against cross-racial adoption is, however, that white families cannot teach a black child how to survive in an essentially racist society.

In more moderate attacks on cross-racial adoption, Leon Chestang (1972) posed a series of critical questions for white parents who had adopted or were considering adopting a black child, believing the

central focus of concern in cross-racial adoptions should be the prospective adoptive parents.

These questions include the following:

- “are white parents aware of what they are getting into;
- do they view their act as purely humanitarian, divorced from its social consequences;
- are they interested in recognizing the personal consequences for the child placed in such circumstances;
- are applicants hoping to solve a personal or social problem through [cross-racial] adoption;
- what of the implications for the adoptive family itself of living with a child of another race, and;
- are negative societal traits attributed to blacks likely to be passed on to the adoptive family?”

(Chestang 1972 : 57)

In light of concerns such as those mentioned above, according to Simon and Altstein (1994 : 48), very few, if any, responsible organizations or individuals argue that cross-racial adoption is preferable to in-racial adoption. “Were there sufficient black families for all black children and Asian families for Asian children and so on, there would be no need for cross-racial adoption”. Simon and Altstein (1994 : 57) propose that increased efforts to locate minority families will no doubt be welcomed and supported by all reasonable people.

Organizations such as NABSW comment that because most black and coloured families reside in less affluent areas and are unable to afford the expensive fees charged by adoption agencies, many potential non-white adoptive parents are disqualified.

They argue that traditional agency policies and practices based on bygone white middle-class assumptions should be altered accordingly, thereby increasing the likelihood that larger numbers of potential minority adopters would be located. (Mosikatsana 1995 : 617)

According to Mosikatsana (1995), the solution to the issue of placing black and coloured children, both locally and abroad, therefore lies in altering existing agency policies. Mosikatsana (1995 : 619) argues this requires "engaging in an aggressive on-going recruitment effort" in black and coloured communities and in developing a family policy that creates economic stability for these families. Such a policy could be in the form of providing housing grants and income subsidies to prospective adoptive parents who wish to provide racially compatible homes for these children. There is no literature regarding the extent to which these suggestions have been implemented.

According to Simon and Altstein (1994 : 48), most, if not all, who see cross-racial adoption as a viable arrangement see it only when a child's only other options are non-permanent types of placements such as foster care or group homes. In fact, rarely, if ever, are arguments heard in favour of cross-racial adoption that do not define it as second best to permanent in-racial placements.

In the United States of America, by the beginning of the 1990s, it appears that the major child welfare and adoption organizations remain strongly committed to the idea of recruiting minority adoptive parents for similar children. According to Simon and Altstein (1994 : 76), in all likelihood, these agencies would abandon support for cross-racial adoption were there a sufficient number of racially-

similar parents to accommodate waiting nonwhite children.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) in its 1988 publication of the *Standards for Adoption Service* reaffirmed once again, as it has consistently done since changing its standard in 1973, that cross-racial adoption should be considered only after all efforts at in-racial placement have been exhausted. (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 48)

Under the title "Factors in Selection of Family: Ethnicity and Race", the standards read as follows:

"Children in need of adoption have the right to be placed into a family that reflects their ethnicity or race. Children should not have their adoption denied or significantly delayed, however, when adoptive parents of other ethnic or racial groups are available. In any adoption plan, however, the best interests of the child should be paramount. If aggressive, ongoing recruitment efforts are unsuccessful in finding families of the same ethnicity or culture, only then should other families be considered".

(Standards for Adoption Service, Child Welfare League of America, New York, 1988 in Simon and Altstein 1994 : 49)

Organizations like NABSW continue to cling to the policy that 'race' should be the primary determinant of a child's placement, regardless of the child's age, even if the child has already been placed with and integrated into a family of another 'race'. So determined is the NABSW to end the practice of placing black children in white homes that they proposed that the 1993 Congress enact an "African American Child Welfare Act" forbidding, by statute, the adoption of black children by non-white families. Those who support cross-racial adoptions believe that should such efforts prove successful, it will relegate even more numbers of black children to years of foster care

or institutionalized living. Black children will thus be deprived of stable and caring family life on the basis of their 'race'. (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 49)

The heart of such arguments opposing cross-racial adoption re-asserts stereotypical notions of family, 'race' and identity, drawing set boundaries; advocating that children need racially and culturally suitable role models to teach them positive aspects of their own culture and to re-enforce their sense of social identity, enabling them to locate themselves within the social world. This however reflects underlying assumptions of 'race', culture and identity being inherent.

Where a black child growing up in a white home is thought to experience a loss of cultural identity, there is the assumption that the child's identity was already there to begin with. The arguments that assume this position imply one's sense of identity as being attributed largely to nature as opposed to nurture, rejecting a constructionist perspective, that identity is generated, confirmed and/or transformed as a social process, rooted in interaction. On this point, Simonson and Walker (1988 : xi) write "the explicit link that opponents of transracial adoption make between 'race' and 'culture' – the 'race' of a child determines the 'culture' in which he/she should be brought up – reveals a view of culture as a predetermined, natural phenomenon".

The Case For Cross-Racial Adoption:

The moral argument for cross-racial placements is based on the belief in the child's right to live in a caring, loving family of his/her own and on empirical evidence which suggests the nuclear family environment is most suitable to a child's healthy development, showing clearly that cross-racial adoptions satisfy the standards of the "best interests of the child". (Simon and Altstein 1994 : 56)

For those who support the courts' standard of seeking to serve the best interests of the child, cross-racial adoption (permanent placement in a family) is considered a better solution than institutionalized foster care. Simon and Altstein (1994 : 116) support this view, believing that adoption, even cross-racially, does serve the best interests of the child, and that the continued and expanded use of subsidies should be encouraged, thereby allowing more families to adopt.

Studies of cross-racial adoption in the United States include research conducted by David Fanshel in 1972. The study entitled *Far from the Reservation*, concluded by showing that cross-racial adoptees do not lose their racial identity, they do not appear to be racially unaware of who they are, and they do not display negative or indifferent racial attitudes about themselves. "It appears that cross-racially placed children and their families have as high a success rate as all other adoptees and their families". (Fanshel 1972 : 145)

In *The Chosen Child: New Patterns of Adoptive Relationships* Feigelman and Silverman (1981) used a mail survey to compare the adjustment of 56 black children adopted by white families. It was concluded that the child's age, and not the issue of it being adopted cross-racially, had the most significant impact on a child's development and adjustment. They found no relationship between adjustment and racial identity; and that racialized differences between the child and the parent had no significant impact on the child's adjustment or development within the family.

In Womack and Fulton's (1982) comparative study of cross-racial adoptees and non-adopted black preschool children, entitled 'Transracial Adoption and the Preschool Child', no significant differences in racial attitudes between the two groups of children was found. The non-adopted black preschool children showed no sign of

being more racially aware of their identity as a black child than those of the cross-racially adopted black children.

In 1983, McRoy and Zurcher reported the findings of their study, 'Transracial and In-racial Adoptees'. The study included 30 black adolescents who had been cross-racially adopted and 30 black adolescents who had been adopted by black parents. They found that 60% of parents who had adopted cross-racially seemed to have taken a colour-blind attitude to racial differences between the adoptee and the family. They reported that 20% of the cross-racial parents acknowledged the adoptees' racial identity and the need to provide black role models for them. (in Simon and Altstein 1994 : 42)

In Barth and Berry's 1988 study 'Adoption and Disruption', it was reported that cross-racial placements were "no more likely to disrupt a child's development and their sense of identity than other types of adoption", and that the adjustment and development process experienced by children who have been adopted in-racially is no easier than the experiences of cross-racially adopted children. (Barth and Berry 1988)

To date, the most significant research in support of cross-racial adoptions is that of Simon and Altstein. In 1971, Rita Simon and Howard Altstein began a twenty year longitudinal study of cross-racial adoptees and their families. Families were surveyed four times, in 1971/2; 1979; 1983 and 1991. At each phase of the study, problems, setbacks and optimisms were reported on.

Over the years, Simon and Altstein continued to ask about and measure racial attitudes, racial awareness and racial identity among the adopted and birth children.

Results of the report revealed a positive outcome, showing the "baselessness" of the warnings and fears of the those opposing cross-racial adoptions on the basis that adoptees would grow up not only isolated from his/her peers but confused and ambivalent about their racial identity.

Simon and Altstein (1994 : 115) stated that data did not suggest that cross-racially adopted children were lost to the black community, and that the fear of some blacks about cross-racially adopted black children developing into adolescents and adults who were confused as to which racial group to identify with, had not been realized.

Despite these findings, there are however no signs that organizations such as the NABSW have either softened or changed their stand against cross-racial adoption, not even in spite of suggestions offered by the 1977 *Ebony* article which encourage "extending successful black adoption programmes in the hope of creating a new society in which the racial identity of potential adoptive parents is irrelevant". (Morris 1987 : 78)

Even as thousands of black children continue to spend years in institutions and foster care, the NABSW continues to adhere to its 1971 position that institution and foster care are better than cross-racial adoption.

The 'Forum on Adoption Issues' reports that in 1996, however, "federal law in America was amended to require that adoption agencies no longer give any consideration to race, culture and ethnicity in adoptive placements". The policy is believed by its proponents "to be critical in ensuring that the thousands of African-American children in foster care waiting for adoptive families, will be adopted". Others contend that this policy is "not likely to have much of an impact" on the number of children being adopted cross-racially and that such a policy "detracts from efforts to address more

pressing problems affecting children of colour and their families". Because the policy is only now being implemented, the actual impact remains to be seen. No mention is made of the NABSW's position on this policy, it is, therefore, assumed that its views remain unchanged. (<http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/proed/forum.html>)

Within a South African Context:

South African research on cross-racial adoptions has yet to emerge due to the "newness" of the phenomenon. Despite living in a race-conscious society, characterized by rigid societal boundaries, South Africans have not contributed much to the debate on the subject of white families adopting black babies. It was only some eight years ago, in June 1991 when section 40(b) of the Child Care Amendment Act of 1983 made cross-racial adoptions legal, that the matter became an issue of public concern. (Mosikatsana 1995 : 616)

Within the South African context, Ledderboge (1996 : 19) believes perceptions as to the desirability of cross-racial placements to be intimately linked to perceptions of 'race' and culture. Lawson (1995: 57) regards the deep issue of cross-racial adoptions as being a mirror to the question we must ask of this new nation: "In the pursuit of a colour-blind society, will ethnic and racial diversity be trampled or will we, at last, be able to celebrate our differences without favour?"

In this sense the eventual success or failure of these adoptions will be an "indicator as to whether the wounds of the past have healed", assessing the extent to which boundaries created by stereotypical notions of the family and 'race' have been transgressed.

The South African adoption market is considered to be one regulated by supply and demand. In South Africa there is a larger demand for white babies and younger children for adoption than the supply. On the other hand, there is a larger supply of black and coloured babies

and older children for adoption than the demand. (Joubert 1993 : 728)

By July 1996, 24 black and coloured adoptees had been placed with white families through the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society alone. (Mosikatsana 1995 : 618) And from 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995, Durban Child and Family Welfare placed 18 children in cross-racial adoptions. (Ledderboge 1996 : 34) Despite the rapidly increasing number of such placements, South African's remain divided on the issue.

According to Lawson, in her article 'The Colour of Our Love' (*Millennium*, August 1995), the factor tipping the balance in favour of cross-racial adoptions in South Africa, was apartheid's socio-economic legacy of homeless black children. "Nationally, there are over 13 000 in children's homes and places of safety, and over 10 000 living on city streets". Government statistics for 1992/1993 showed that there were "nearly ten black children abandoned daily", many being left on door steps, in dustbins and the open veld, and that to argue against cross-racial placements in this context may be to say that "it is better for a baby to die than to risk having a disturbed identity later on". Lawson (1995 : 57)

Christina Scott, in an article 'Adoption: A Black and White Affair', (*South African Cosmopolitan*, July 1996) argues that children who are racially different from their family and peers often find themselves caught in an "identity crisis" and that black children growing up in a white home run the risk of being subject to racism on a daily basis. Consequently these racialized differences "not only isolate a child from his or her contemporaries, but these children are also likely to suffer from a loss of cultural or racial identity". This appears to support those views of the NABSW as discussed previously, that it is only within the nuclear family structure that a sense of racial and cultural identity may be cultivated and that "black children belong

physically, psychologically and culturally in black families in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future". (Mosikatsana 1995 : 623) Scott also appears to support the view that white families cannot teach a black child how to survive in an essentially racist society such as that of South Africa.

Supporters of cross-racial adoptions in South Africa generally argue that placing black or coloured children with childless white couples is a simple exercise in supply and demand. There are large numbers of abandoned black babies with few black families willing or able to adopt them. At the same time, there are many childless white couples eager to adopt these babies in light of the limited number of white babies available for adoption. (*South African Cosmopolitan*, July 1996)

Within the South African context, Mosikatsana (1995 : 617) is of the opinion that adoption in South Africa originated "not as a way to care for indigent children but as a service provided by private voluntary adoption agencies to childless white couples". Furthermore, that the myth that black and coloured families are not willing to adopt was "propagated to justify the white adoption agencies' inability to find homes for black and coloured children".

Mosikatsana (1995 : 618) identifies several barriers experienced by black and coloured families in South Africa seeking to adopt through the formal channels of adoption agencies.

These include:

- expensive fees charged by adoption agencies;
- a restricted involvement with adoption agencies based on historic suspicions of such organizations;

- the fear of being turned down due to residing in less affluent areas and being either unemployed or underemployed;
- and the fact that most adoption agencies are controlled by whites and do not involve black communities in reaching potential black families.

Despite opposing views regarding adoption in South Africa, Sukasha Singh in a newspaper article writes: "Adoption across the cultural barrier, once a social taboo, is catching on fast" as South African families become "more reflective of the rainbow nation". (*The Mercury* 1 Feb 1997)

There have however been several cases in South Africa regarding cross-racial adoptions that have generated much discussion on possible problems associated with the cultural identity of the child.

In 1997, seven year old Mpho Mbele found herself at the center of a legal tug of war involving her British foster mother, Kerry Keegan, who wanted to adopt her, and her Eastern Cape grandmother, Jokiwe Siqebengu.

After South African welfare authorities had placed the child in Keegan's care, declaring her biological mother to be unfit, Keegan took Mpho, then three years old, to the UK in 1993. Since the death of Mpho's biological mother, her grandmother, whom Mpho had never met, wanted Mpho to join her and her three brothers in their village in the Eastern Cape. When asked if Mpho could adapt to life in South Africa, despite not having any recollection of her life here, her grandmother replied: "She's black, she's a Xhosa...this is where she belongs". (*Sunday Times* 13 July 1997)

A court case involving Sifiso Mahlangu, a Zulu boy who was taken out of the country by his Afrikaans-speaking foster mother also made the news. In this controversial case, the boy's mother, Selena Mahlangu, who worked as a maid, agreed that her employer, Salome Stopford, could take Sifiso to England to educate him.

Four years later, however, Mrs Stopford decided she wanted a more permanent arrangement and applied to adopt him. On hearing of the pending adoption, his natural mother in South Africa objected and with the help of Black Sash, was able to arrange legal representation.

It was decided by a British Appeals Court that the boy should be reunited with his natural parents and that his development should be Zulu rather than English or Afrikaans. The boy, who was then ten, could not speak a word of Zulu. He had bonded psychologically with his white foster mother and considered her daughters to be his sisters. (*South African Cosmopolitan* July 1996)

Both case studies suggest an assumption that there is a cultural uniqueness to being black that white people can never understand and that a black child raised in a white home would experience having this cultural uniqueness denied, raising concerns as to the development of that child's identity.

In 1996, Ledderboge completed her Masters Thesis, 'Transracial Placements of Children in the Durban Metropolitan Area'. The study provided an assessment of a number of cross-racially placed children in the Durban area and the degree to which these were successful.

Findings of the study showed that cross-racially placed children "derive valuable benefits from being placed with families and cross-racial placements should therefore be considered where no in-racial family is available". (Ledderboge 1996 : 66)

Recognizing that concern for the child's identity was still a matter of public debate, Ledderboge, in her concluding recommendations for further study, proposes a comparative study between in-racially married South African parents and their cross-racially adopted children and mixed race South African marriages and their biological children with the aim of helping to "contextualize the ethnic/cultural identity debate". (Ledderboge 1996 : 70)

Of significant interest to this study is Ledderboge's final comment that ultimately "perceptions as to the desirability of placements are linked intimately to perceptions of race and culture and the surrounding formation of identity". (Ledderborg 1996 : 19)

It is within this area that this study presented here makes a contribution, examining what perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal about notions of race, culture and identity towards an understanding of how we become who we are. Findings will indicate that perceptions of cross-racial adoption and the extent to which it is desirable are linked to individual interpretations of race and culture, notions of family and perceptions regarding the formation of identity. Coupled with this, where Lesley Morrall, in her 1994 doctoral thesis entitled 'Interracial Families in South Africa: An Exploratory Study', presents interracial contact as a barometer of social change, this thesis will also assess the extent to which, despite changes in legislation, certain sections of society remain intolerant of cross-racial relationships.

Conclusion:

This theoretical overview has attempted to explore key issues relating to my own research. Areas covered are thought to provide a firm theoretical base from which to work. Included in it has been an overview of theories concerning intergroup relations as well as an in-depth look at the question of the identity of an individual in broader society, considering the contributions of a variety of approaches towards understanding identity and its construction.

This review of literature has also covered a discussion of race and culture and problems associated with various definitions. Attention has been given to the family as a unit of socialization and its presumed role in modern society. Concluding this chapter is an overview of cross-racial adoption, positions taken as to the desirability of it and the assumptions underlying these.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

An Overview:

This chapter gives an overview of the methodology employed in this research. The characteristics of the sample are discussed as well as the specific research procedures used and justification of these.

Qualitative measures not only describe the experiences of people in depth but they also explore what people's lives, experiences and interactions mean to them in their own terms and in their natural settings. Lofland (1971 : 36) describes the qualitative study of people as a "process of discovery". He believes this to be a process of "learning what is happening" and that since "a major part of what is happening is provided by people in their own terms, one must find out about those terms rather than impose upon them a preconceived or outsider's scheme of what they are about". (Lofland 1971 : 37)

In light of this, the methodological approach chosen to work within has been done so as to capture, examine and understand as much as possible the perceptions participants hold of cross-racial adoption and what these perceptions reveal about notions of race, culture and identity. The nature of this research, in order to fulfill these conditions, is therefore within a qualitative framework. In an attempt to obtain both realistic and valid information, providing insight into the complex issues surrounding notions of family, race, identity, culture and perceptions of cross-racial adoption, personal semi-structured, face to face interviews were conducted with 20 white individuals.

This chapter gives an overview of qualitative research, justification for its use and an account of the research design employed.

Research Design:

The choice of a qualitative framework as opposed to a quantitative one is because of the inability of quantitative techniques to adequately tap unobservable and numerically immeasurable social phenomenon. (Mouton and Marais 1988)

Qualitative research methods are generally used in the following situations: to probe complex processes, to gain new insight for which relevant variables have not been identified, to determine issues for future research, and to identify and explore individuals in a particular context. (Mouton and Marais 1998) In light of this, since this study seeks to probe individuals' personal perceptions of race, culture and identity within their particular and individual contexts thereby determining related issues that may allow for further research, this method appears most suitable.

According to Janet Finch (1986 : 164) qualitative data yields data superior to quantitative data as it not only studies social processes and social actions in context, but it also reflects the "subjective reality" of participants.

The use of such qualitative methods enables a researcher of human events to listen to how persons, in given situations, present to themselves, and to others, the realities and contexts of their lives, correlating what is both "seen and heard from persons who stand in different relationships to each other and to the whole situation". (Schatzman and Straus 1973 : 5) This enables participants to:

- take a perspective of oneself;
- in diverse situations, simultaneously hold several perspectives of oneself as well as of other things and events, even seemingly contradictory ones, then in new situations, still create other

perspectives;

- consider personal perspectives which are social in origin and emanate from definitions of countless social situations and processes in which one finds oneself and with which one can identify;
- present him/herself with perspectives and definitions that become (some of the) conditions for his/her own actions; therefore the “forces” which impel him/her to act are substantially of his/her own making.

This, in turn, allows the researcher to develop an abstract, logical and empirically grounded representation making this choice of method a “virtually logical imperative”. (Schatzman and Straus 1973 : 6)

As this study is exploratory in nature and deals with uncovering and understanding social patterns and meanings in context, a research method emphasizing involvement, mutability and rapport between researcher and participant has been chosen. The nature of this research therefore falls within a qualitative, interpretive framework.

“Much of the best work in sociology has been carried out using qualitative methods without statistical tests. This has been true of research areas ranging from organization and community studies to microstudies of face to face interaction and macrostudies of the world system. Such work should be regarded as neither weak nor ‘initial exploratory’ approaches to those topics”. (Collins 1984 : 340)

According to Neuman (1997 : 420), whilst qualitative data analysis is less standardized and does not draw on a large, well-established body of knowledge from mathematics and statistics, “words are not only more fundamental intellectually, one may also say that they are necessarily superior to mathematics in the social structure of the

discipline. For words are a mode of expression with greater openness, more capacity for connecting various realms of argument and experience, and more capacity for reaching intellectual audiences". Explanations tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context and capable of showing the complex processes or sequences of social life.

Qualitative research is based on "tight, pre-structured qualitative designs and loose emergent ones", where research becomes a "well planned and systematically organized system of investigation", related to a certain topic and aimed at collecting valuable information and analyzing it in the context of a certain framework. (Sarantakos 1996 : 98 and 101)

According to Judd et al (1991: 299) a qualitative research design has been known to take many forms. One form consists of open-ended questions "embedded in a structured or semi-structured" interview or questionnaire. Other forms include participant observation and ethnography. These rely "almost entirely on open-ended explorations of people's words, thoughts, actions and intentions".

In order to facilitate the richest store of subjective information, the method of data collection used in the study reported on here, was the extended personal interview, based on a loosely structured interview guide. Interviews have the advantage of "richness of detail and reliance on the respondents' own words". (Copeland and White 1991:33) The use of open-ended questions embedded in a semi-structured personal interview or conversation was therefore deemed not only the most appropriate but also the most beneficial method of facilitating the collection of information as one was able to explore not only the perceptions held by participants, but also the base for such perceptions.

Composing the Interview Guide:

The use of an interview guide allowed me as the interviewer to rephrase questions in keeping with an understanding of the situation. This permitted the expression of questions in a manner most easily understood and enabled me to probe more deeply when the occasion demanded, permitting a more adequate interpretation of material collected. The purpose of designing an interview guide was not so that it could be rigidly followed but rather to act as a means of direction in guiding the subject matter of the actual interview.

This was done in order to allow for maximum expression on the part of the individuals and to encourage them to speak freely and uninhibited on any subject. This emphasized "involvement, mutuality and rapport" between participant and interviewer in an endeavour to not only obtain realistic and valid information, but also to identify the emergence of comparative themes, patterns and trends. (Copeland and White 1991:11)

The intentional loose structure of the interview guide was also to counteract areas that were perhaps not covered by the interview guide that participants would have liked to explore and similarly, areas of the guide that participants wanted to elaborate less on. The guide was therefore loosely structured around the following areas: notions of family, contemporary South African society, race relations in South Africa, interpretations of the terms race and culture, perceptions of mixed race relationships such as marriage, perceptions of cross-racial adoption and what these reveal about notions of race, culture and identity.

As is characteristic of a qualitative research design, no attempt was made to formulate hypotheses. Certain general questions were, however, identified as relevant, serving as a basis for the study.

These questions are outlined below:

- How would you define family?
- How do you feel about contemporary South African society?
- What are some of your major concerns?
- How do you feel people of different race groups relate to one another in South Africa?
- How tolerant are you of people of colour?
- How do you feel about mixed race relationships, such as that of marriage?
- How would you define race?
- How would you define culture?
- How do you feel about cross-racial adoption, why?

Sampling Techniques Used:

Proposed specifications for this thesis included 20 white individuals, ten females and ten males. Considering the qualitative nature of this research and that it is not the intention of the researcher to make claims of representativeness, 20 was considered an adequate number of participants. Further specifications for the sample included that participants range in age from 20-35 years old. This particular age group was selected as it is individuals within this age group that have experienced transitional changes occurring in South Africa over the last ten years and are of a suitable age to both recall and express how these changes were/are perceived, allowing for a comparative account. In addition, it is within this 20-35 age group that issues relating to family, child bearing and rearing, race relations and an increasingly integrated society are most relevant.

Again, as I am not intending to make generalizations, bearing in mind that the purpose of the study was not to utilize an entirely representative group, but rather to gain thoughtful, intense insight

into the views of a selected few, a non-probability sampling technique was used.

Several approaches were used in compiling the group of participants. These included: a purposive sampling technique, a quota sampling technique and a snowball sampling technique. A purposive sampling technique involved purposely selecting subjects who, in my opinion, were thought to be relevant to the research topic.

As this thesis is specifically a qualitative study of young, white individuals (ten males and ten females aged 20-35), within the context of this research, these intensive interviews were considered a device for generating insights and paradoxes enabling a better understanding of individuals' perceptions of race, culture and identity.

The quota sampling technique, a version of a stratified sampling technique, involved setting a quota of respondents to be chosen from specific groups. In this case, the quota necessitated the sample including ten white females and ten white males, of middle class standing, falling between 20-35 years of age. Complementing quota sampling, snowball sampling was used in order to fulfill these set quotas. In this instance, some participants involved in the study were contacted through participants already interviewed.

Ethical Considerations:

According to a dictionary definition (Webster's 1968), to be ethical is to conform to accepted professional practices. Bulmer (1982 : 3) regards ethics not only as a matter of "principled sensitivity to the rights of others", but also as limiting the choices we make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, "the respect for human dignity leaves one ignorant of human nature". (Bulmer 1982 : 4)

Major topics of ethical concern relate to objectivity and integrity in research, a respect of the research subjects' right to privacy and dignity, protection of subjects from personal harm, preservation of confidentiality of data and honest presentation of research findings.

Central to this research are issues relating to informed consent, confidentiality and correctness of presentation.

Informed Consent:

Informed consent essentially entails making the subject fully aware of the purpose of the study, its possible dangers and the credentials of the researcher.

According to Punch (1994 : 34), informed consent, a principle of self-determination, comprises three aspects:

- sufficient information for making a decision;
- a voluntary decision;
- the person must be capable of making the decision.

All participants were made fully aware of the exact nature of the study, its purpose, its particular research design and the areas of interest that what would be investigated. This ensured voluntary participation. Informed consent also includes the right of the participant to withdraw at any chosen time. Participants were made aware of this. Also, each participant was given a copy of an official letter from my supervisor, authenticating my research and providing a contact for any questions or comments. A copy of this is included in the appendix.

Anonymity:

Ensuring the identity of all participants remains anonymous is a way of honouring the participant's trust and the professional relationship. (Punch 1994) Whilst some specific demographic details were required such as age, gender, profession, monthly income and marital status, no names or addresses or any other identifying characteristics were used. Within the context of the write-up of information generated from the interviews, individuals were referred to only as 'this' or 'the participant' in order to protect anonymity. Anonymity was further be ensured by honouring any requests not to make a tape recording of the interview. The use of a tape recorder was only with the complete agreement of the participant. Care was taken not to divulge any identifying details in this case.

Correctness of Publication:

Correctness of publication of the data is part of the researcher's accountability and influences the value of the study. Researcher bias can never be totally eliminated. In order to offset one-sidedness or misinterpretation, more than one mode of enquiry needed to be chosen. For this reason, a combination of case summaries and transcribed interviews were used to encourage a more balanced understanding of the issues at hand and a more accurate interpretation of them. Interviews were transcribed word for word but as emphasis was placed on content rather than on method, transcribed interviews were 'cleaned up'. It should be emphasized that this had no influence on the content of the interviews, it merely served the purpose of interviews reading coherently, aiding an analysis of them. To further ensure correctness of publication, every participant had the opportunity to read their transcribed interview.

The Interviews:

Personal face to face interviews were conducted with all 20 individuals at a venue of their choice. This was done in order to allow the participant the freedom to choose a place in which he/she felt most comfortable, there was also the matter of being at a location most convenient to the participant.

Longer interviews allowed for the participant to ease slowly and sociably into the heart of the interview. Interviews of short duration limit not only the conversational territory that can be covered but also the leisurely exploration of conversational byways, the permitting of digressions, and the exchanging of views, thereby obtaining additional information. Considering this, the length of the interviews were dictated by the participants themselves, lasting between 30 minutes and 1 ¼ hours, the majority falling somewhere in between.

Interviews were conducted in areas free from distractions and interruptions, in a separate room, with only the researcher and participant present. Participants were relaxed and spoke freely, several commented on appreciating the opportunity to speak their mind.

To ensure an accurate account of the data collected, each interview was recorded, with the permission of the participant, and transcribed by myself in full. As explained above, transcriptions were to emphasize content rather than method and were 'cleaned up' to ensure an in-depth content analysis. To further ensure accuracy, as mentioned previously, participants were given the opportunity to read their transcribed interviews.

Supplementing these 20 interviews, a further five follow-up interviews were conducted. Due to time constraints, not all 20 interviews could be followed up but since all of the initial 20 interviews showed common recurring themes, this was not necessary. The five follow-up interviews were done to investigate whether additional information could be given to further enhance some of the recurring themes. These five individuals were selected at random based on those that were immediately available, from the initial base of 20. These interviews were based on the individual's previous interview and served the purpose of further clarifying perceptions of cross-racial adoption and what they revealed about issues relating to race, culture and identity on a more in-depth level.

It also needs to be said that interviews were conducted in 1998 and participants responses may be thought of as relatively context specific, a point expanded on within the findings, where reference is made to particular current events, thought to be topical at the time the interview took place. This is illustrative of participants not only being up-to-date regarding current affairs but also being influenced, to a certain degree, by such events.

Limitations of the Methodology:

Although limitations of this method exist which include a lack of generality and little opportunity to replicate, the ability to generalize is seldom the concern of the researcher using this approach. The intention of qualitative research is to search for meaning rather than to provide quantitative statistics.

With interpretation being the key to qualitative research and replication of procedures being low, Selltitz et al (1976) argue that the reliability of data collected is also therefore relatively low. Reliability, (the consistency of results), is however not the purpose of qualitative research as has already been established. The case of

validity (the success of a test in measuring correctly what it is designed to measure), is considered far more important. Janet Finch (1986:164) argues that the reliability and validity of qualitative research depends on the "capacity of the researcher to produce relevant work which adequately blends theory and data". This thesis endeavours to do just that.

There are also possible limitations in terms of my own orientation as a young, white South African female. Despite being both aware and conscious of this orientation, it did, however, work to my advantage as participants presumed a common ground of shared and familiar perceptions which allowed for uninhibited conversation. In turn, though, this common ground did necessitate being able to stand back from this shared space in order to remain as neutral as possible in the analysis.

It follows that the exclusive use of interviews poses methodological problems when thinking situationally about the people being studied. The interview is a fine tool that reveals people's constructs of themselves and their words: people tell what they do and why they do it.

Two major difficulties flow from reliance on such a research technique which include the following: Firstly, any given person may be no more able to describe and explain his/her own actions than any one else's. To a certain extent this did prove problematic as participants, when confronted with their own contradictions in exploring perceptions of cross-racial adoption, were unable to explain themselves and consequently could not provide a concrete response. This was, however, the intention of the research, to explore contradictions of meaning and the tension that exists between perceptions of that which is inherited and that which is learned.

Therefore responses may be reflective of that particular situation. Whilst this may be the case, participants were particular in locating themselves within the social context of who they are and the society in which they live. The responses were in no perceivable way reflective of the situation constituted by the interview itself.

Another possible limitation relates to sampling techniques employed. Self-selected participants may have resulted in the unavoidable presentation of a distorted or less accurate picture of the perceptions of young white South Africans. It should however be recognized that this research examines the perceptions of a select few. Data collected and interpreted is not intended be representative of any population.

A final limitation necessary to mention is the number of participants used. Although 20 participants were considered adequate, a larger number would have generated more comparative results, such as with regard to the degree to which perceptions of cross-racial adoption and notions of race, culture and identity are informed by gender differences. I am confident however, that this in no way detracts from the contributions of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION & INTERPRETATION OF DATA

An Overview:

This chapter is introduced with an overview of the sample. The overview provides a brief account of the demographics of the sample. This is followed by, firstly, an account of each of the initial 20 individuals interviewed, and, secondly by the five follow up interviews. This is done in order to give substantial insight into the differences as well as the similarities between the participants, allowing for a comparative interpretation of the material. These are the personal opinions and experiences of each participant. Following this, is an interpretation of the data and a discussion of the findings, arranged according to themes which coincide with both the theoretical framework and the issues under scrutiny.

Concluding this chapter is a brief overview of the main points concerning the perceptions and discussion.

Demographic Overview of the Participants:

No:	Gender:	Age:	Marital Status:	Children:	Occupation:	R*:
1	male	25	single	0	Builder	-
2	male	22	single	0	Technical rep	3-6
3	female	26	single	0	Manager	6-9
4	male	28	single	0	Manager	6-9
5	female	34	married	2	Works from home	-
6	male	34	married	1	Minister	-
7	male	27	single	0	Administrator	10+
8	female	35	married	2 adopted	Creditors clerk	6-9
9	female	23	engaged	0	Bank clerk	0-3
10	female	23	married	0	Manager	3-6
11	female	23	engaged	0	Beauty therapist	6-9
12	male	25	engaged	0	Sales consultant	3-6
13	male	27	single	0	Ships agent	10+
14	female	28	single	0	Legal secretary	6-9
15	female	33	single	0	Teacher	-
16	male	33	married	0	Engineer	10+
17	female	35	married	3	Works from home	6-9
18	female	33	married	1	Teacher	3-6
19	male	28	single	0	Accountant	10+
20	male	29	single	0	Manager	6-9

R* denotes income bracket in thousands of Rand per month.

- denotes refusal to answer.

The Participants Categorized in Brief:

Gender:

Males	10
Females	10

Age:

20-24	4
25-29	9
30-35	7

Marital Status:

Married with children	5
Married with no children	2
Engaged	3
Never married	10

The Initial Individual Interviews:

Italics indicate participants' own words.

Interview Number One:

A single, 25 year old male, working as a builder who lives with his mother and has an older brother who is soon to be married. He has lived in South Africa all his life. This participant defines family as *those who are always there for you no matter what*. Although acknowledging the possibility of families not necessarily being blood related, families are still viewed in the traditionally nuclear sense: *when you say family, I think my mother, my brother and my father. I think of blood relatives.*

This participant is very skeptical about South Africa in terms of the economy and rising unemployment and notices a general decline in the whole country itself saying *it has not changed for the better*. This general decline is pin pointed to the 1994 elections where the country *instead of improving just went down*. This general decline is not regarded as being specifically for the whites: *there was no actual benefit for anybody*. This participant is very critical of affirmative action: *you take a successful man out of a position and put someone there who can't even write his own name. There must be something wrong with that.*

In terms of race relations, this participant sees blacks as having a *power attitude* and views relations as tolerant in the work place but comments: *it's still very black, blacks stay with blacks and whites with whites.*

This participant is against mixed race relationships believing people of different races get involved with one another because *it's the in thing to do. Nine times out of ten the person is only in it for the*

attention. He holds very definite views of race, defining race as *more than just colour: it's your whole way of life, it's the traditions you are brought up with...it's your culture*, and strongly opposes mixed race marriages on the basis of having children who *will be neither black nor white*. Race is viewed as an important feature of identity, *eventually there will be no such thing as race, we are just going to all be a bunch of mongrels...who are we then, what are we then?* The participant believes *we are born Black, White, Indian or Coloured for a reason*, justifying this in terms of religion: *In the Bible itself there has always been that separatism, there should definitely be different race groups and each to his own.*

In terms of cross-racial adoption, the participant recognizes that every child *deserves an equal chance*, but questions their sense of identity: *Who or rather what is he? What about his own native background, his culture, his race...probably he won't even be able to speak his own language... how is he supposed to relate to other people of his own race?* The participant regards being black as incorporating a *black culture and language*. He does not imply you are born with this culture, rather that *the race you are born with determines the culture you will grow up in and learn as your norm.*

This individual is hopeful for the future: *As we, the older generation, slowly move on and go out to pasture and let the younger generation come up, then we may see some improvements.* He does, however, not believe in ever being able to see beyond race: *South Africa is about race, it's all to do with the colour of your skin because it hits you right in the face...you can't ignore it.*

Interview Number Two:

This participant is a single 22 year old male who works as a technical representative, earning within the category R3000-R6000 per month. He was born in Zimbabwe and has lived in South Africa for 12 years.

He has one brother, divorced parents and a step father, whom he *accepts as part of [his] mother's life but resents his tendency to play the role of father* to him. The participant has never really considered him as part of his family. He defines family as a unit that *shares a very close bond through relationships of trust and communication and work together to achieve a common goal*. He does not regard families as necessarily requiring being blood related: *Families are about love and understanding...not blood*. For this reason, the participant supports all alternative family types such as in the case of adoption: *It's nice when people who don't have real families get the chance to be part of someone else's*.

The participant's immediate response to South Africa at the moment is: *It's a shambles*. This is attributed to concerns over education and conflict between people as a result of poor communication. He feels that people are *just too busy living in the past instead of concentrating on the future*. South Africa is identified by this participant as having changed with the new government coming into power, regarding these changes as both *for the better and for the worse*. For the better because *now people are more free to express themselves*, but worse because *there is less regulation and order in society and as a result, too many people are only worried about themselves*.

This participant feels that life in South Africa is *like a pressure cooker* and that people's basic attitudes towards one another haven't changed believing people *rather choose to blame somebody else rather than find a solution*. He regards people in South Africa as being *quick to judge and comment yet refusing to experience another person's social beliefs and culture*. The participant is very critical of affirmative action, believing it to be responsible for making whites *upset and resentful* because it is not being implemented properly. It is regarded as *taking away from the whites to give to the blacks...whites won't tolerate things like that*.

Race relations are seen as being influenced by *people's own experiences of one another and by poor media propaganda which promotes misunderstandings*. This participant notes there is *a lack of understanding of one another's way of life, most especially along language lines*. On the issue of mixed race relationships, the participant *does not believe it's right because of cultures, customs and beliefs being so different*. He also comments on a *loss of identity* in the case of having children believing *integration on a social level is healthy as it promotes an understanding of different cultures*, and firmly believes that *different groups shouldn't share intimate relations with one another*.

Discussing cross-racial adoption, this participant admits to not having thought much about it but feels it *denies a person their own culture*. *Adopting children of another colour results in that child losing their mother tongue, their native language, a sense of where they have come from, their history*. Cross-racial adoption is seen as *denying a person their own culture* and for this reason, this participant is against it. The participant does, however, express a concern for the fact that *we are all losing our identities* in what he calls a move towards *a common culture*, culture is about *a sense of who you are, where you've come from*, commenting: *Who would want to lose that?*

This participant places much emphasis on identity in terms of culture; more so than race, as race is regarded purely as colour: *It's your obvious physical appearance...what else would it be?* There is, however, an attempt to relate both race and culture as it is stated: *adopting children of another colour denies them their culture and along with that, their mother tongue*. The participant clearly contradicts his firm belief that race is only about colour.

For this participant, there is a positive feeling about opportunities of businesses and entrepreneurship still being available for those who

really want to achieve.

Future prospects in terms of race relations in South Africa are poor but the participant regards *learning to accept and understand one another* as a way beyond that. He does however feel that people have a problem letting go of the past: *Feelings that have generated over generations are not something you can just throw away*, but says that *starting at grassroots level is a different issue altogether*. The participant gets annoyed with the fact that although race is an issue, *people make more out of it than they should and by doing so continue to keep the bad feelings associated with race and South Africa's apartheid history alive*.

Interview Number Three:

This participant is a single 22 year old female who works as a human resource manager earning within the category of R3000-R6000 per month. She has one brother who lives in London, regarding this as *the smart thing to do*, adding that South Africa is *not exactly the best place to be at the moment*. This is attributed largely to crime and the economy, specifically inflation, the high cost of living and education: *This is not a country I would bring my children up in*.

South Africa is regarded as having got worse, *particularly for the whites*. She is very critical of affirmative action, seeing it as *discrimination against whites* and putting pressure on the extent to which blacks and whites tolerate one another: *People initially supported the notion of redistribution and equal opportunities but things have just got out of hand... now it's down to hand-outs*.

This participant regards things as having got *progressively worse over the last five years*, feeling that there is *little law and order*. The participant regards blacks as *considering themselves above the law, having little or no regard for human life*. Despite this, she does,

however. not consider herself a racist: *I'm all for equal opportunities, I don't think anyone, regardless of the colour of their skin, should be deprived of anything, it's just that I don't have time for anyone, black or white, who doesn't behave in a socially acceptable way.*

This socially acceptable way includes: *a basic respect for others and their belongings and a conformity to the standards of the society in which they live.* The participant doesn't speak much of race relations in South Africa but regards affirmative action in particular as having *made whites resentful towards other race groups.* She goes on to say that *most people pretend they are all for the New South Africa but that it's all a big joke: I think if whites could have it their way, it would be all whites, and if blacks could have it their way, it would be all blacks.*

When questioned about race, this participant considers race as *more than just the colour of your skin...it's also about your culture, your heritage, your traditions and your beliefs.* South African society is thought of as being *a relatively conservative society where people don't take well to change...they are afraid of it and that sudden forced changes put people's backs up.* The participant still believes *people don't want to be with anyone other than their own* and that the majority of people are *uncomfortable* with mixed race relationships that extend beyond a social level. For this reason, this participant *just cannot reconcile mixed race marriages, saying it's just not right and anyway, how can anyone find anyone other than their own kind attractive. Each species should stick to their own.* This is justified in terms of religion: *God never intended it...it's morally wrong.*

Cross-racial adoption is also strongly opposed: *I just don't think races should mix on a personal level...it's fundamentally wrong. The extent to which race groups should mix is limited, there is this imaginary boundary that establishes what is acceptable and what*

isn't in terms of contact between race groups. It is believed these boundaries are established by the standards, norms and morals that regulate society which are dictated by history and religion.

The participant does not believe that having a black child grow up in a white family can ever work: *How is that child supposed to place itself in terms of its identity? What about its own culture, traditions and beliefs...suddenly those all fall by the way side and that child has to learn a traditionally white way of life...that's not right.*

This participant regards family as *the closest form of human relations...in its most simplest form is about being related by blood*, seeing family in the traditional nuclear sense. She does, however, believe families *extend themselves through marriage and homosexual unions* but adoption is not accepted as a family type: *Families are more than just close relationships, you can't just adopt a child and pretend they're your own...there's no blood bond, that child can never really be family.*

In terms of the future, the participant expresses concern for issues relating to politics and crime. She does not see any way around race-related problems but feels that sometime in the future *race may just be an issue not be talked about as much*. As with other participants, she makes reference to hope in a new generation growing up together and sees this as having the potential to enable us one day to relate on pretty much the same level.

Interview Number Four:

This participant is a 28 year old single male working for an internet service provider, earning within the category of R3000-R6000 per month. He regards family as being *a close bond between people who are related either by blood or by marriage...more by blood because it's a physical thing you can't change*, and thinks of family as a

special institution that shouldn't be distorted to fit any type of relationship. This participant believes people don't know what family means any more and attributes South African problems of crime, lawlessness and corruption to this. He believes that it is within the family that integrity, loyalty and respect are learned and that those who have not been brought up in such an environment become the misfits of society.

The participant thinks things have got progressively worse since the 1994 elections, feeling that things changed very quickly: *Suddenly came the new government and with it a whole turn around in how people were expected to relate to one another...we were all thrown in the deep end. This is regarded as making people antagonistic, resentful and intolerant of others: There wasn't the intensity that there is now. The participant believes people relate on a superficial level with a need to be politically correct. We are all so race orientated, race relations shadow every aspect of life in South Africa.*

With regard to race, this participant comments that for him, *it never used to be an issue but now everything about South Africa is about race and the colour of your skin. The participant doesn't only see race as colour, rather viewing it as referring to your heritage, beliefs and culture. This participant sees South Africans as very self-absorbed and narrow minded but enjoys being able to meet people who have a different culture and beliefs to your own.*

On the subject of mixed race relations, this participant believes *intimate contact should be between people who share a common culture, beliefs and skin colour and feels that marrying across the colour bar is something that should not be promoted or encouraged. This is justified by arguing that religion does not condone it and by questioning the identity of children produced as a result of such a union: That child grows up without any particular sense of belonging, what culture, heritage, race does it belong to?*

For these same reasons, cross-racial adoption is also not supported: *Your culture is part of who you are, where you are from and mixed race relationships such as marriage or adoption that result in a loss of identity or link to your heritage, just aren't right.* This is suggestive that one's heritage and identity is something you are born with, which determines your culture and your origin.

Acknowledging that he lives in a white residential area which doesn't lend itself to much interracial contact and that his contact with other race groups has been limited to the work place, this participant is complimentary of the non-whites he has been in contact with. He does not appear negative towards affirmative action, believing that *there are many non-whites who are good at and deserve their position but have been second guessed as a result of horror stories relating to affirmative action.*

In terms of the future, the participant is hopeful, especially *when seeing the younger generation growing up side by side.*

Interview Number Five:

This participant is a 34 years old married female who works from home. She did not wish her monthly income to be known. Family is defined in the nuclear sense, as *a husband, wife, their children and grandparents extending itself to cousins aunts and uncles...a more enlarged family but the nucleus remains the children, mother and father.*

It is believed that the ideal family is a blood relationship but that the essence of family is *a unit on an emotional level where there is love and companionship bound together by something other than blood.* This includes all alternative types of families...gay couples, single parents.

On the issue of South Africa, this participant comments that it is a *hotpot of bitterness, mistrust, grudges and dislikes that need to be diffused*. She believes whites have *always been brought up to believe that they are superior to anyone different to themselves*, making particular reference to Afrikaners.

In terms of race relations, this participant *prefers dealing with whites: I am more relaxed dealing with one of my own kind*. She is sceptical of the ability of others: *When a black answers the phone I am overcome with feelings of despair and mistrust...are they capable of conversing with me, will they understand?* The participant does however acknowledge that this may be a result of poor communication: *Maybe it's a language thing, when I come across a black that speaks fluent English, that apprehension immediately lulls*.

This participant is accepting of those who are *as educated and as well spoken* as herself but resents those non-whites in positions of authority when *they can hardly even speak or write*. Differences between groups are accepted to a certain extent but this participant sees the need *to maintain certain Westernized standards that should be conformed to*. No mention is made of affirmative action.

Race is thought to be about *having a different culture, being a different colour and having a different origin*. Race is regarded as a *contentious issue in South Africa which won't change until whites get rid of this guilt they have for past atrocities and until the blacks get rid of this chip they have on their shoulder*.

In terms of mixed-race relationships, the participant feels *it is perfectly possible to integrate on a work or social level provided you both have the same standards and are able to communicate*, but has a problem with it *going beyond that*, saying she finds it difficult relating to another race group on an emotional level and cannot come to terms with it: *It's not something I could reconcile*.

This participant believes *the majority of South Africans want to marry and be with their own kind.*

Concerning adoption, this participant battles with the whole idea of adoption, not just cross-racial adoption: *I find it difficult to give someone outside the family my name, but admires those who accept a child as their own despite them never really being part of your family.* Issues relating to identity are not discussed neither are issues relating to a child as a result of a mixed-race marriage. It is more of a personal preference towards one's own race group and the way in which the participant relates as an individual to others.

In terms of South Africa's future, this participant believes there is a *need to build up a basic earned and mutual respect for one another and their race as well as a need to change in the mind set of people.* She comments: *Legislation can initiate change but if people aren't prepared to change, and there are those who aren't, the bitterness and tension is fueled.* Hope is seen in little children growing up at grassroots level as *they will develop a different concept of race without this awareness of race being instilled in them by their parents.*

Interview Number Six:

This participant is a 34 year old married male who is a minister. He did not wish to reveal monthly income. He is the eldest of three brothers.

Family is seen in terms of a normal Western approach: *grandparents, parents and their children and whatever relationships develop from marriage.* He does not see family as being restricted to a blood bond but rather as some kind of emotional relationship. Family is viewed as *the building blocks and foundation of society,* and the deterioration of the family is thought to have had a negative impact

on communities. This disintegration of the family is believed to be happening more and more and *not just to white Western families but touching all cultures as a result of migrant labour.*

This participant feels perceptions of life in South Africa *are determined by who you listen to or what you read*, suggesting that *we have always lived in a violent society but are now just more aware of it because it's affecting us all more directly.* Reference is made to the past: *In the past it was the blacks who were affected, now it's the whites too.*

This participant feels the way in which people of different race groups relate to one another *depends on what one has been exposed to*, which determines the extent to which you are tolerant of one another. He believes whites *fear blacks based on popular perceptions and stereotypes which portray them all as being involved in hijackings, murders and rapes where people are tarred with the same brush.* Race relations are thought of as being *strained due to language and communication problems.* However, this participant believes people are beginning to see one another as human beings: *We are beginning to discover each other, hearing many more views other than our own.* This participant feels this promotes *positive change and an understanding of other cultures.*

On the whole this participant is positive about South Africa: *We are now all on the same equal footing, but still tend to associate with the colours and cultures we are most comfortable with.*

This participant feels race and culture *dominate the way the world thinks.* Race is seen as being a *different colour and having a different language.* This is linked to culture which is thought to *incorporate race but includes a community of some kind which share a certain background and a certain world view and way of relating to one another.*

In principle the participant has no problem with mixed-race relationships but in terms of practical reality deems them difficult especially considering problems of communication in language differences: *Marriage is hard enough between people of the same race and culture, it would probably simply mean working that much harder at it.* South Africans are regarded as still getting used to the idea. No mention is made of children in a mixed race relationship.

On the issue of adoption, this participant explains that a black child growing up in a white home, grows into the culture of that family which may be different to the culture of their own biological family (the culture into which they were born), and as a result may suffer a cultural identity problem. *Growing up in a white Western society that child would lose out on their own cultural identity of being black.* The participant clearly states *you are born into a culture which is reflective of the race you were born with,* implying culture to be inherited

In terms of the future, the participant is not sure: *One would hope for an improvement.* Things are thought of as having improved in South Africa, *especially for the blacks as a result of changes in legislation.* This participant suggests a way forward *in celebrating the uniqueness of cultures and trying to better understand the differences that exist.* He does, however, not elaborate on suggestions towards achieving this.

Interview Number Seven:

This participant is a 27 year old single male who works as a network administrator earning in excess of R10 000 per month. His parents are divorced, he has a step father and five brothers. He regards family as *more of an emotional bond than anything else, it is a close knit bond, you are always there for each other, regardless, a family is about people who will always stand by you.*

This participant appears frustrated with contemporary South African society: *It's a terrible situation, there are so many things that aren't right. People are talking about making changes but nothing ever happens. I can't really say we're making any progress.* He does agree with affirmative action but not *tokenism*, believing that people *should work for their positions and that someone should not be promoted beyond their capabilities.*

In terms of how people relate to one another, this participant feels *there is much resentment between blacks and whites.* Blacks because of what they have been deprived of and whites because of *what they stand to lose.* He feels a lot of people don't see beyond colour and will probably bring up their children that way: *People always bring it down to colour and assume the worse of those who are different, those die-hards will never change.*

He regards people's tolerance of one another as *being determined by the situation you find yourself in with one another* and thinks race relations *depend on the individual and one's own approach to different race groups.* He explains that whites *didn't know what it was like to be on the other side, to be black and live in South Africa, and still don't.* He comments: *A lot of white people don't realize just how much damage the previous government did.* The participant expresses much empathy regarding past treatment of black people.

This participant feels that being exposed to one another in both social and work situations improves relations between people...*then people can see that not every black person is a criminal.* He does however believe that people *prefer to stick to their own,* largely as a result of how they have been brought up, and that *change and acceptance are not things that happen over night.*

Race is seen as *both a person's colour and culture*. The participant has no problem with mixed-race relationships: *If two people are comfortable with it, that's their own business...I would do it if I was really happy with the person*. No mention is made of children resulting from a mixed-race union.

On the issue of cross-racial adoption, the participant is torn between giving a destitute child a chance at a better life and the loss of culture it would experience, but offers a solution: *I don't think a child's possible loss of cultural identity is a reason not to adopt, as long as that child grows up knowing who they are and are given the chance to learn their history*. Culture is thought of as something that is learned but the participant notes that although this is the case, *you are born with your history and have to know your past...you have to know where you have come from*. Although stating that culture is learned, he believes that adopting cross-racially possibly means a loss of cultural identity, implying being born with a culture or at least already having one. This interesting contradiction is common to many interviews.

This participant is uncertain of South Africa's future and is especially upset about crime in the country. He believes attitudes of people need to change *because regardless of what happens, with the wrong attitude we're never going to get anywhere*, but doesn't see there ever being a time when race won't be an issue...*there are always those who will never see beyond the colour of your skin...race will always be an issue, even in the most developed countries. Some people only just tolerate one another, others accept, but most will just tolerate*.

Interview Number Eight:

This participant is a 35 year old married female and works as a creditor's clerk, earning a monthly income of between R3000 and R6000. She and her husband have two adopted children, ages seven and four, who were adopted at the ages of two and three days old respectively. She says her perception of family is *not the one she grew up with*, she always felt *there wasn't the support system a family should offer*.

She defines family as consisting of *two parents and their children*, very much in the nuclear sense, but acknowledges that *family is more about the feelings between the members and not about blood relations: We are a family in every sense of the word and yet my children are not biologically my own*.

Her immediate concerns for South Africa are for education and crime and she feels that things have got *progressively worse* in the country. Here she makes reference to the past, a common trait in many interviews: *Before you read about it happening to someone else, now it's happening to the people we know and that's scary*.

This participant feels that matters have got worse within the last five years and doesn't feel particularly positive about recovery any time soon. She feels that relations between people of colour are *tense* but adds that *since finding more non-whites in more social situations, things are improving*. Based on this, the participant sees increasing contact between race groups as a positive step forward but comments that *there is still a lot of hatred and resentment between races as a result of apartheid*. She adds that *whites feel guilty at having had such a protected existence at the expense of someone else: I do feel guilty that they had the same needs as us and were denied. It's all very complex, there are so many differences to iron out*.

On the subject of affirmative action, the participant comments: *Affirmative for whom?* She strongly opposes it, believing *colour shouldn't come into it, you should get the job if you are the best person for it.*

Her concept of race *is a mix of colour and culture and with that comes your upbringing and your beliefs and religion, it's part of your culture.* Culture is defined as a way of life.

This participant's negative views on mixed race marriages and relationships are based on the children that would result from such a union: *They are neither one nor the other.* She illustrates by remembering a child with a white mother and indian father being at school with her own children and how nasty the other children were to him. *There was much confusion as to the religion he followed and the beliefs he adopted.*

On the issue of cross-racial adoption, this participant sees no problems with it. There is a concern for a loss of cultural identity in that the participant believes that the child is *losing out on its culture but that this is not a good enough reason not to adopt: I don't think anything should hinge on that loss of identity.*

The participant doesn't expand much on issues relating to culture being learned and the influences of either the family or society but still, as others do, implies that being born a particular race incorporates a particular cultural identity as she considers race and culture one and the same thing. Also, her suggestion of a loss of identity as a result of cross-racial adoption implies already being born with an identity to lose.

Her thoughts on the future are that it is *not promising especially since race is still a very characteristic feature of our society.* This participant feels that *unless the government does something, people*

just aren't going to take it anymore, suggesting whites in particular will take matters into their own hands.

Interview Number Nine:

This participant is a 23 year old female, engaged to be married and working as a bank clerk earning less than R3000 per month. She has a social science degree and is currently studying commerce. She lives at home with her parents, has a brother and two remaining grandparents. Again, family is defined in the nuclear sense, *parents and children*, but, family is also seen as *a relationship between people...you can build a family around anyone that you love.*

In discussing South African society, this participant is aware of her location as a white female, being most concerned about education, crime, the cost of living and the future in general. She feels there is *a lot of apprehension and fear in South Africa that it may go the way of other African countries.* It is felt that things *have definitely got worse for the whites since the change in government* and, again, reference is made to the past: *Then we were protected, we had better policing, we had more police in white areas, now we are not being protected enough.*

This participant has little problem with race: *My problem is more with class.* She believes *people socialize with those who are of the same class, sharing the same social standards.* This is related to the extent to which she is tolerant of black people, saying that *it is more a certain class of non-white that she is intolerant of, it's not about the race.*

Although she disagrees with affirmative action largely due to the way in which it has been implemented in that *putting people in positions they can't handle just makes fools out of them*, she does, however, believe that most people are accepting, although reluctantly, of the

fact that things have to change. This acceptance is, however, based on the fact that *there's nothing that can be done about it anyway*.

She believes the resentment that whites feel towards blacks is founded in feeling threatened: *Our jobs are threatened, our security, basically our species*. She feels there is a lot of blame going around where *whites blame blacks for ruining the country and blacks blame whites for the past*.

Race, for this participant, specifically means *colour*, and culture refers to *your upbringing and your background, your sense of who you are*.

Her views on mixed race marriages and relationships are also based on concern for children: *What are the children going to feel like? Are they going to be accepted because they are neither black nor white. Marrying someone so different you need to consider more than just what you want*. It is also felt that many get involved across races *for the attention...just to be seen as being politically correct*.

On the whole, this participant believes most whites *are still racist and although they say they accept the integration of race groups, don't really, especially when it's their daughter who brings home a black boyfriend...then it's a different story altogether*. Furthermore, she suggests *everybody has a degree of racism in them...we all prefer our own species*.

The participant's views on cross-racial adoption are similar to those on mixed race relationships: *It's not just about adopting a child, there's a lot more to consider. You have to be ready for how society is going to react, for how the child is going to cope*. It is not felt that the identity of the child should be an issue, believing that although there is *a possibility of that child losing their culture, the child can always follow up on who he is when he's old enough*.

Again this implies already having a culture to lose and although being raised learning one culture, the culture of that family into which you have been adopted, the child already belongs to a different one, expressing the assumption that you were born with a culture. This participant also comments that *most people prefer a white being raised in a white home and a black in a black home*, and that *it is important for people to know who they are in terms of the race groups to which they belong*. She reiterates: *People like to stick to their own*.

This participant feels South Africa *still has a long way to go* but that people *need to first change their mind sets*. She recognizes that this is *probably not possible for the older generation to do*, but sees future generations possibly the key to better relations as they grow up together at a grassroots level.

Interview Number Ten:

This participant is a 23 year old female who works as an accounts clerk, earning within the category of R3000-R6000 per month. She has been married for one year. Both her parents have remarried since divorcing. She sees family as, *on a practical level, the mother, father, children and all the attachments...aunts, uncles...but beyond a blood relation...family is an emotional tie*.

Her major concerns in South Africa are for the violence, which is specifically separated from crime: *We don't have a crime problem, we have a violence problem*. This participant feels things have got worse for whites in this country and better for the blacks but sees this as happening before the 1994 elections.

She believes the way in which people relate to one another depends *on the type of person you are, whether you are either open minded or narrow minded* but feels blacks are resentful towards whites because *of their missed opportunities and what white people have*.

She characterizes relations between races in South Africa as *tense and resentful*, believing both whites and blacks on the whole to be relatively *intolerant of one other*. Affirmative action is thought of as *racism in reverse* and it is felt that *this accounts for much of the resentment whites feel towards blacks*.

This participant is frustrated and angry that blacks are *still harping on the past instead of making the most of what they've got now and using it to further better themselves*. She states: *It's not like you can change the past anyway*. Also, she regards herself and white people as being *less and less tolerant of the declining state of affairs*. This comment is directed especially at the government and their *inability to provide any real solutions to crime, violence, education and the economy*.

Mixed race relationships and marriage are regarded by this participant as the *in thing to do*, although she feels *society struggles with it*, believing that *most of the people I know frown on it*. This is attributed largely to the past and South Africa's apartheid history. She herself does not agree with mixed race relationships, offering no reason for this other than: *I'm just not comfortable with it*.

Her interpretation of race is *something you fill in on a form...a classification that somebody invented to put people into categories*. *It's just a practical term based on colour that is used for statistical purposes...it doesn't matter what you are, you are still human*. Culture on the other hand refers to *your upbringing and the class to which you belong*.

Cross-racial adoption is thought of as being *a big mistake because the child will want to find its culture and its upbringing*. This again implies the child already had and belonged to culture. The participant goes on to state that a child adopted cross-racially is *no longer just looking for a biological person, it's looking for a whole lifestyle*.

This is thought *not only* [to] *confuse the child as to a sense of their identity but also to create resentment between the child and their adoptive parents.*

This participant doesn't believe people will ever be able to see beyond colour basically because *people find it hard to see beyond differences in general, be it colour or class or religion.* She believes that the intolerant people in South Africa have either left or are leaving, leaving those who are committed to making an effort towards improving the country. This participant feels about 15 years is required for any effectual change to occur as this is when the new generation will be in a more influential position. She feels that people need to be *more accepting of life in South Africa and need to come to terms with the changes that are taking place, everyone should make the effort to play their part.*

Interview Number Eleven:

This participant is a 23 year old female who is engaged to be married. She works as a beauty therapist and product educator and representative. She earns within the category of R6000-R9000 per month. She has one younger sister and lives with her partner in their own flat.

Family is seen as being a relationship rooted both in blood as well as in emotion: *You have an understanding between blood relatives that is beyond words, but my mother and sister-in-law to be are my family just as much as my biological parents are.*

Thinking about South Africa, this participant immediately locates herself as a white female, saying her main concern is for her own safety in terms of crime, especially considering the fact that she frequently travels alone. She does feel certain aspects of the country have got worse, particularly in terms of poor basic daily services such

as those from government departments, locating this specifically within the last year or two prior to this interview taking place (1996/1997). Again crime is an issue as *it always used to happen to somebody else, now it's happening to people you know*. This participant feels she is *better off financially than ever before* mainly due to being self employed, considering this country to hold a lot of work prospects for her.

Her views on race relations are that *people are relating to one another much better than they used to*. She does, however, recognize the fact that in her position (providing a luxury service), she only deals with *more affluent upper and middle class people of all race groups*. On the whole though, she feels generally *whites are becoming more accepting and tolerant of non-whites* this is largely due to the fact that *where ever you go there is a mix, so you pretty much have to tolerate it and besides...people are realizing that we are all the same, there's no difference between us*.

She feels that we have *been taught to believe certain things about certain people* through *what other people say* and through what is *portrayed on television and in films*, which creates stereotypes. However, she remarks that dealing with people personally *makes you see the similarities we share*. This participant again reinforces that fact that she has *only ever dealt with a certain class or type of person* and acknowledges that *your attitude is based on your experiences*. She, therefore, has a limited opinion on affirmative action as *it has never affected her* and she can only recount the bad experiences of her contemporaries. On the basis of these, she does not think affirmative action is fair, saying it *perpetuates resentment*.

Race to this participant means *colour as well as background and culture*, whereas culture refers to *religious beliefs, upbringing, the traditions you have, the way you are taught to live...very much something that is learned*.

She has no problem with mixed-race relationships, although she admits to initially *being horrified*, horrified because *she was never told that it was okay*, but now just thinks of it as *two people who love each other*. She does consider the possibility of children saying that the child may experience *racism as it is not one specific colour but that people are now more accepting*.

This participant also has no problem with adopting cross-racially. She doesn't see why someone with a different colour skin *can't learn to grow up with different beliefs and ideas*. She adds that: *It's fine if he loses some of his culture but he is so much better off in a loving home*. This appears to present a contradiction, recalling culture as specifically something you learn yet considers growing up learning a different culture means losing some of you own. She does, however, feel that ultimately *people would rather adopt one of their own kind*. This participant still believes race is an issue in South Africa, especially for minority groups such as the Afrikaners and farmers who are badly affected by crime.

The participant levels frustration at the government for *doing nothing about crime*. She feels *the law protects the criminals more* and that change has to start at the top with the government taking charge. Although there is skepticism about the future, this participant believes South Africa *has great potential*.

Interview Number Twelve:

This participant is a 25 year old male who is engaged to be married. He works as a sales consultant, earning in the category of R3000-R6000 per month. He has two sisters and a step father. Although the participant admits his first reaction to family is *a blood bond*, believing *blood relatives to be everything*, he sees family more as *where you fit in: You can't define family in the traditional nuclear sense because it's more than that*.

On the subject of South African society, it is considered very interesting: *There are a lot of things that absolutely annoy me but I've got used to the changes...it's exciting, interesting and scary, it's a challenge.* Annoyances include affirmative action and the way it is being implemented, the economy and especially the violence which is seen as totally out of control. Things have got *slightly worse over the last five years*, particularly with regard to crime, although he believes crime has increased *but not by that much, it's just more exposed now.*

This participant feels people of different race groups living in South Africa *don't relate at all: They work with one another, but they don't relate to one another.* This is attributed to there being *too much history between the blacks and whites...we just don't understand each other and don't see eye to eye.* He explains that *whites are scared of blacks and hate them because they were taught to*, and that *blacks hate whites also because they have been taught to and because they were the oppressors for so long.*

This participant regards himself as *very tolerant* of others: *Individuals annoy me, but you can't generalize. I like to think I see a person, whatever his colour, for who he is as a person.* He believes *most people are full of hatred and assume the worst about one another as a result of being brainwashed by the way they have been brought up.* He does, however, believe society is more divided *along class lines than racial lines.*

Race is regarded as *heritage, not so much colour*, whereas culture refers to *your traditional way of life, your socialization: You are brought up in a certain way and that becomes your culture.*

On the subject of mixed race couples, this participant feels *it still upsets a lot of people, both blacks and whites*, commenting that *most people believe cultures shouldn't mix in that way. I think it's still an*

oddity, you still look twice but I am very neutral.

Personally it doesn't appeal to me, but if two people are happy then why not. Considering children in a mixed race relationship, this participant sees no problems in children born to mixed parents: It's been happening for hundreds of years...that's where the Coloureds came from.

Considering cross-racial adoption, this participant believes it's something that society will have to think more about as society has to look after its own. He feels though that society doesn't like it because people were brought up with the idea that whites are raised by whites and blacks by blacks.

In terms of identity, this participant states: *Race doesn't build into you certain characteristics, you bring any child up, black or white, according to your culture...there's no in-built cultural background already there...it's not in him or stamped into his genes. Most adopted children reach a time in their lives when they want to know their biological parents...it's no different.*

This participant believes, like many others, working to understand each other at grassroots level, as in young children going to school together, is *the only way to go*. He is generally quite optimistic and proud to be South African: *I admire the diversity*. He feels South Africa needs strong leadership to create a sense of unity and that change is up to people's attitudes. He comments though that race is a huge issue in South Africa, that most social issues are turned into racial issues and that there are many people who believe race groups should stick to their own. He feels South Africans concentrate on all the negative aspects of living here...you have to be more positive and not to focus on individual needs at the expense of South Africa's needs.

Interview Number Thirteen:

This participant is a 27 year old single male who works as a ship's agent earning in excess of R10 000 per month. He lives with his girlfriend and has one brother who is recently married. He does not consider his brother's wife part of the family: *For the simple reason that she's not, we accept her as his wife but she's not family.* Family is seen specifically as a blood bond...*it's about the unit, bound by blood that you are born into, a family is your own...these funny alternative family types undermine that blood tie.* This participant believes the family plays an important role in socialization: *It's where you learn a sense of decency.*

Thinking about South African society, concerns such as unemployment, poverty, crime and education are mentioned. Again there is reference to the past: *I have lived in the same house for 15 years. I can remember going to the shops, leaving your car unlocked and windows open...these days you can't even be sure you're going to make it to the shops or even that your car will be there when you return.* Things are felt to have become progressively worse, *starting roughly ten years ago and spiralling downwards.*

In terms of the race relations in South Africa, this participant feels people *are really trying but there's a lot of resentment, hatred and blame going around.* This is seen to be more directed by blacks towards whites because of the past which in turn makes whites angry: *None of us* (referring to his own generation) *had anything to do with apartheid yet we are forced to pay the price.* He also feels that there is *little common ground between people of colour which results in poor relations and intolerance.* He goes on to add that *people react slowly to change...it scares them because they are threatened by it.* Affirmative action is seen as *a bad move that white people have reacted badly to as their job security, families welfare and lifestyle is threatened.* This is thought to breed resentment.

This participant's immediate response to race is colour, but adds: *With a different colour comes a different culture, different beliefs and a different lifestyle. It's about what makes up the entire person and where they've come from.* This he relates to culture: *Race and culture go hand in hand. Culture is the way you are brought up, the values and customs you learn...it's definitely something you learn whereas race is something you are born with.* He goes on to explain: *Different races have different cultures, people from a different race group have a different culture. Children learn their culture and build their sense of identity on the family and society into which they are born but the culture you learn is determined by the race group into which you are born, being born one race and learning another culture is when you get a identity crisis.* Such a perception again reflects a common theme, but is heavily contradictory as it was previously stated: *Culture was learned yet the race you are born with determines your culture.*

Considering mixed race relationships, an immediate comment is : *I don't think it's as simple as two people wanting to be together and then there is the need to consider children. Children look to their parents for a sense of who they are, where they've come from, their sense of identity. A mother and a father are all a child has in the world and if they can't be looked to for a sense of their place in the world then what?*

This participant also feels at the moment mixed race relationships are *very fashionable*, but that *most people are shocked as they believe people should stick to their own kind...that's just the way society is.*

On adopting cross-racially: *Why are South Africans so bent on this mixed race thing...there's no need for it, it wasn't meant to be that way...it's not natural, God made us different for a reason.* Again reference is made to the identity of a child as the participant believes *that you are born into a race group which determines the culture and*

the way of life you learn, thereby developing a sense of who you are and where you belong...you shouldn't tamper with that. Apparently he holds very definite views on the race you are born with as determining your culture. He feels people who do adopt cross-racially, *do it out of guilt and to compensate for the past.*

He comments: *Race seems to be the topic of the day* and believes race *will always be an issue as it's the first thing you notice about a person.* He also believes race to be *an important part of your identity: I don't just want to be seen as South African, I am a white South African.* Many of this country's race relation problems are attributed to stereotyping people and having preconceived ideas. This participant feels that *once we understand one another better, we may then become more united.* This is deemed achievable through contact between races at grassroots level. The government is also thought to be responsible for addressing issues of crime and education.

Interview Number Fourteen:

This participant is a 28 year old single female. She works as a legal secretary, earning in the category of R6000-R9000 per month. She comes from a divorced family where both parents have remarried and has many step siblings. Family is defined as *a unit of closeness and sharing: To a degree it has to do with blood, but it's more about a feeling towards one another and a sense of unity.* She feels strongly that the family plays the largest role in the socialization of an individual.

At the moment she sees South African society as being *divided and in turmoil.* This is especially due to the major changes taking place. She refers to the past when whites were striving for separate structures and ideals and *now suddenly have to consider unified structures and working together to achieve common goals.*

This participant regards things in South Africa as *having improved for the blacks but worsened for the whites*. Affirmative action is thought to be *one of the things that have made life more difficult for whites*, although she feels it is *the right way to go...it is a necessary tool used to set the wheels in motion and people should just accept that*. She feels though that affirmative action has been *the main source of tension and resentment between blacks and whites*.

People are thought not to relate particularly well mainly because *there is still a lot to learn about different cultures as there is a poor understanding of different beliefs and values*. In addition, there is a communication problem: *The channels of communication between race groups are generally bad, there is also of course the language barrier that doesn't help either*. It is felt that people are *too quick to judge and condemn* which stems largely from little communication and contact between races for this reason, increasing contact between race groups is thought to improve relations. *Having contact with those who are different to you in race and culture helps you understand each other better and in that way we can learn to live together*.

This participant's concept of race refers to colour which she separates from culture, *your background and heritage*. She has no problem with mixed-race relationships as she feels *it depends on the people involved and their ability to accept one another. I actually think it would be interesting, you would have so much to learn from one another*. No mention was made of children. The participant comments though that *most whites are too narrow minded and conservative to see past the colour of one's skin because of the way they have been brought up* and for this reason, South African society isn't open to mixed race relationships at all.

Considering cross-racial adoption the participant feels *the race issue isn't a problem but the culture issue is. A Zulu baby growing up in a white home is deprived of his Zulu background...how would you instill his heritage? Fundamentally he is different to you and needs to develop a sense of who he is in terms of being a black person because that's what he is.* In this response she has coupled race with culture, implying that being black denotes a specific heritage and background, contradicting her initial definite separation of race and culture, one being inherited and one being learned.

This participant feels *race will never not be an issue in South Africa, especially since our entire past is built on racial differences and because race is a feature of most countries.* She feels change will take *a long time* and has concerns for crime and violence, but is however optimistic about the future. Again, positive change is thought to be through a change in people's attitudes and having blacks and whites grow up together from day one, relating on an equal footing.

Interview Number Fifteen:

This participant is a single 33 year old female who lives on her own and who works as a secondary school teacher. She preferred not to disclose her monthly income. She has one sister who is married with one child. Her concept of family is that *it is more than just being related by blood, it's a mutual, emotional relationship between those involved that provides unconditional love and support.* Family is considered *a vital part of society as it lays the foundations in terms of who you are and where you've come from.*

As a teacher, this participant believes education to be the corner stone of any society, finding teaching in South Africa *extremely challenging, stimulating, frustrating and stressful.* She talks in depth about how education has changed over the years.

Her primary concern regarding South African society is education as she believes *this country needs an educated, thinking workforce in order to move forward*. In terms of progress, this participant feels that *politically and as far as integration goes, there has been good progress but not in areas relating to education*. Although being supportive of affirmative action, it is felt that *the implementation of it is all wrong*. Having people hold vital positions when they don't actually know what they're doing not only frustrates people, it makes them resentful and invites trouble.

Commenting on South African society, this participant feels *we are living in very turbulent times as remnants of past attitudes effect the way people interact and relate to one another*. I think people are ignorant and scared of each other... *apartheid did an excellent job of instilling fear and mistrust in people*. For this reason, she doesn't feel people relate well to one another as *the differences between them are too vast breeding an air of disrespect and intolerance*. She believes *the rapid changes that have occurred have inspired frustration, contempt and intolerance as people, whites in particular, have felt threatened*.

This participant *doesn't really consider race as an issue*, as she says she *migrates more towards those who are similar in terms of values, intelligence and lifestyle*. She does not see race in terms of colour, but rather *as a way of identifying different people*. She regards culture as *more significant*. Culture is understood as *your life experiences, your history, your religion, your beliefs, your traditions and your rituals*.

She feels mixed-race relationships are *more accepted* and has no problem with them: *If that person makes you happy and you are able to share a unique bond then why not?* She did not mention children. Considering cross-racial adoption, the participant comments: *I don't see it being a problem in terms of race but it's the cultural*

differences that do cause problems. It's more about your background in the sense that within a mixed family structure there are different mind sets operating and I'm not sure how you would reconcile those. I think people identify themselves with their culture, that it's an important part of who you are. A child identifies with groups that share features similar to those of his own and would be confused growing up in a white home. Again, a confusing relationship between what is learned and inherited as culture is referred to as your life experiences, among other things yet it is thought that a black child growing up in a white home has, as a black individual, a different culture and mind set that he would want to identify with.

The participant comments that living in South Africa is like *being on a roller coaster ride, where experiences constantly challenge you, leaving you with every possible emotion*. She admits not having much faith in politicians, feeling decision making is currently *very corrupt*. Also, she believes *too many people have alternative agendas* and that *there are too many small-minded people in positions of leadership that have the interests of only their racial group at heart*. It is felt that *blacks and whites need to consider what is really important and work together towards achieving it*. No solutions or suggestions towards achieving this are mentioned.

This participant is unsure of the future. She sees herself as being *both pessimistic and optimistic*, having social, political and economic concerns but is hoping that *South Africa has learnt from the mistakes other African countries like Zimbabwe made*.

Interview Number Sixteen:

This participant is a 33 year old married male with no children. He has a Masters degree and works as a systems and electronics engineer earning in excess of R10 000 per month.

Thinking about family, this participant admits: *I'm not sure where family begins and ends. He regards family as a mother, a father and their children, then those related through marriage.*

He comments though that *it's a personal thing, it's an emotional connection between people that gives you a sense of who you are, where you've come from...a sense of origin.* He feels strongly that knowing your origin is *a vital part of who you are and helps you to function well in society.*

This participant regards *violence and a basic intolerance of others* as the major problems in South Africa today, believing that *violence is a result of the intolerant way in which people relate to one another.* This intolerance stems largely from *whites feeling superior to blacks and from ignorance which is related to South Africa's past history of separatism, distorted tales and believing blacks to be basically inferior.* He does, however, attribute this to the fact that, until recently, *the majority of whites only ever interacted with their black servants who did assume a subservient role.* This participant feels people struggle to come to terms with the differences between them and people of other races as *we all have our own set ways of thinking.* Since the new government though, it is felt that relations have improved largely due to *Mandela's approach to all people,* but that *there will always be those who refuse to compromise or negotiate.* Also, there is a general comment, and this appears in many interviews, that, in terms of contact between race groups and the way in which they relate, *a work situation is very different to a social situation.*

Affirmative action is referred to as *discrimination in reverse* which makes whites *resentful.* The participant does not actually give an opinion but feels it has both its good and bad points although commenting: *The country can't afford to have incompetent people running it.*

This participant admits to having a problem with racial interaction on a more social or personal level: *I don't know why, it just doesn't feel right...I can't find a rational explanation for my feelings.*

This participant sees *race in terms of culture* but doesn't go on to explain what he means by this.

On the subject of mixed race marriages, he feels the *differences between racial and cultural groups are too large. The origins of where those people have come from and the differences in their cultures is just too vast, and the children that would result from such a marriage wouldn't know whether they were black or white and wouldn't fit into either group.*

This line of thinking continues into comments on cross-racial adoption: *A black child in a white home will lose out on its history, its way of doing things, and when it comes to interacting with people from its own race group, there will be no common ground, there will be barriers, you won't have the same cultural background.* Again this implies that being born black entails having a certain culture and having a certain way of doing things. The participant ends this conversation saying that *there are so many other things to worry about apart from adopting cross-racially.*

Concerns for this participant include crime, the violence, the education system and intolerance. He feels some things in the country have improved, such as discrimination against women, but for the most part, *things have got worse, especially in the last two or three years.*

This participant comments: *Right now I am not optimistic about the future, there are too many problems like poverty and unemployment, and believes it will take a couple of generations of both blacks and whites to pass on before things will improve.* The solution is seen in starting at grassroots level, *where you can encourage acceptance and*

tolerance. South Africa is thought to be hanging in the balance, teetering towards going down hill like just another African state... there are times when I see South Africa becoming just another poor African state and that's scary.

Interview Number Seventeen:

This participant is a 35 year old married female. She has three children and works for her husband from home earning in the category of R6000-R9000 per month. This is her second marriage. She does not see family in terms of a blood relationship as she feels *it is the emotional ties between the members that make you a family*. She regards the church as her family, and for her, religion is a fundamental issue in her life: *The church has often come through for me, I couldn't live without its influence in my life*. She believes your religion is *the foundation to who you are*.

Her general concerns for South Africa are crime and the way in which the government is managing it: *They're not taking a hard enough stand on criminals*. Other concerns are, as with others, the economy, poverty and education. On this note, the participant states *she feels guilty about what she has in light of the hunger and suffering...there are times when I find it hard to live in peace and enjoy what I've got...it's a real white man's burden*. She feels, in terms of crime and violence, that things have got worse in South Africa and makes a reference to the past: *When the whites were in power at least they kept a lid on crime, this government just lacks complete control*. Also she believes whites in general to be worse off but that socially *things are much better for the blacks*.

Talking about the way in which people relate to one another, this participant feels *relationships are aggressive*, that there is *a lack of trust and many prejudices: There is this general perception that the black man is bad*. She does, however, realize that this stems largely

from racial separation in the past and that those black people that she knows and is familiar with, she does trust and does not have preconceived ideas of. This is a common point, made by many in various ways that relates to the extent to which blacks and whites have had contact with one another, where little or no contact results in poor understanding.

Furthermore, this participant feels whites are far less tolerant of blacks than blacks are of whites and attributes this to the fact that blacks still have that subservient mentality. She doesn't regard herself as tolerant enough as a Christian but resents constantly feeling pressured to give to the blacks as she had nothing to do with apartheid: I never advocated any degree of separatism, I embrace difference and would like to see a better level of understanding between all South Africans.

This participant believes mistrust and intolerance comes from not knowing one another and for this reason thinks increasing contact between race groups improves relations between them. She does not have a problem with mixed-race relationships, considering it more important to be of the same social standing than racial group. She does however feel a mixed race relationship would be particularly difficult in South Africa mainly because of the social stigmas created by the past. This relates to people in general having a negative feeling towards the idea as a result of their socialization and the way in which society has conditioned people, another common issue raised by many participants.

Again, this participant thinks of race not in terms of colour but in terms of culture, where culture refers to everything you are right from your faith to the food you eat.

Considering cross-racial adoption, this participant's first response is: *I would love to. I would be happy and proud because a human is a human and if you have the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life then you should and anyway, it's a individual choice.*

She does, however, tell of problems her friend has had in adopting a black baby: *He doesn't quite know where he fits in because he is similar to people of a different colour and different to people of his own colour.* No link is made between this and culture or race being learned or inherited yet the participant refers to this (being black and different to blacks yet similar to whites) as being *a really conflictual experience in terms of establishing who you are.*

In terms of the future, it is felt that South Africa is *over the worst*, but that what South Africa really needs is *more people caring about the welfare of others.* For the moment, though, this participant keeps hoping things will come right: *I would go through anything for this country, I can't see myself living anywhere else.*

Interview Number Eighteen:

This participant is a 33 year old married female. After completing her Higher Diploma in Education, she began teaching at a secondary school, earning within the category R3000-R6000 per month. She has two sisters who are also both married. Her idea of family is *a group of people who love each other and who look after each other: I still tend to hold on to the traditional view of a mom, a dad, their children and the extended family growing through marriage.* She does not believe, however, that family can always be thought of in terms of a blood bond.

Her role as a teacher has been *interesting* and she finds it *a learning experience having pupils from different races and different economic backgrounds.*

Thinking about South African society, she doesn't feel that crime has got particularly worse, *just that we are all more aware of it now* but does feel that since having our new government, *fear in the country has got worse.*

Commenting on how people of different race groups relate to one another, this participant feels it's still *very stiff where people are either over-compensating by making apologies or are consciously trying not to step on anyone's toes.* She notes that in her experience in a mixed class room, *race is something everybody is aware of.* She gives a couple of examples: *A group of black girls can be sitting laughing with one another in a way that's familiar to them and as soon as a white girl joins in, it becomes an issue that this person is different to them.* Also, when girls talk about who their best friends are, some girls state: *my best friend is an Indian, it is consciously referred to.* This is attributed to the unknown, *not being sure of those who are different to you.* This participant also feels that *as soon as there are differences, people feel a need to want to be seen as being the same.*

She believes that *on the surface people try to show their tolerance of one another* but that really *there are still many who are uncomfortable with mixing with other races.* Again this is thought to be related to not knowing what to expect, and due to preconceived ideas that have been instilled in both blacks and whites for many years resulting in having distorted views of one another, stereotyping people and putting people into categories. She admits she tends to put people in boxes: *When I see a different skin colour, I expect them to be different.* She does, however, think that spending more time with one another enables you to understand each other.

Considering race relations in South Africa, this participant believes that *before the elections there was much bitterness and resentment between both blacks and whites* (blacks because of the past and whites

because that's what they were taught). This is thought to 'still exist largely due to young whites resenting paying for the mistakes of another generation through the introduction of affirmative action and to blacks feeling somebody owes them something. Her personal feelings on affirmative action are that *your position should be dictated by the qualifications you have. It adds fuel to the fire, breeding anger and resentment and, as a result, doesn't do much for race relations.*

This participant sees race as *the colour of a person's skin and the country they come from*, but also relates this to culture, seeing culture as *your upbringing, your language, rituals and mannerisms*. She believes these are *taught through family... it is what is passed on from one generation to the next.*

In terms of mixed race relationships, this participant responds: *I still tend to look twice and think why choose him over someone your own colour. I am very conscious of it mainly because I think it's more than just the colour of your skin, you also have to consider the background each of you is coming from.* Reference is also made to the children, commenting that a child born to a mixed race couple *wouldn't know what they were.*

Thinking about cross-racial adoption, this participant comments that *she would opt for a white child*, but feels *if you are happy to raise a child with a different colour skin then why not*. She does not feel race would be an issue in the home and that culture or identity would not be a problem: *A child adopted at a very young age has no culture or identity to lose...that's something that still needs to be developed, he isn't born with either. I don't think it matters what colour family you are brought up in, as long as it is a secure and loving environment in which a child develops a sense of worth, that's far more important.* This clearly confirms her views of culture as being learnt as a result of the way in which you are brought up.

This participant doesn't feel people, the world over, will ever see beyond race because *it's what makes people different as does being male or female and that even gender differences are the basis for discrimination.*

Her expectations for the future are that things will improve but that there needs to be *motivation from the top, for the government to take charge and to get priorities straight in terms of education and health care.* Also, she believes *race groups need to be more exposed to one another in order to break down those barriers of the unknown.*

Interview Number Nineteen:

This participant is a 28 year old single male who works as an accountant earning in excess of R10 000 per month. He has one sister. Growing up in a small and close knit family, this participant sees family in the traditional sense, *as a unit that have shared their lives together and who are specifically related by blood: It's a unit you are born into, it's a blood bond you share.* Based on this, he admits to finding it hard to accept any other type of family, even in the case of an adopted child. This participant feels *restoring the basic structure of the nuclear family would improve the state of South African society which he sees as lawless and chaotic.* He has concerns about crime in particular and blames this on black people, feeling *they have no concept of civilization and won't conform to the standards of a first world society.* He is bitter and resentful of black people getting *hand outs* and angry that as a white person he is blamed for the apartheid regime.

This participant does not feel people in South Africa can relate to one another: *We are just so different and don't understand each other and can't be bothered to try.* He admits, however, to *being the worst culprit, being judgmental and making assumptions based on past experiences.* He gets irritated quickly and feels that blacks expect

special treatment...*like we as whites owe them something*...and for this reason is intolerant.

He comments that affirmative action and equity legislation are *degrading both the country and the economy*. His main issues with affirmative action are that *although there is the need to give those who have previously been overlooked a chance, it has not been implemented properly, it is tokenism, and undermines the efforts of whites and makes them resentful*. He states there is just *too much mistrust and ignorance between people in this country and affirmative action perpetuates it*.

This participant feels things in South Africa have *definitely got worse for the whites within the last five years* and that currently *being whites counts against you*.

His understanding of race is that *although it relates to colour, it is more linked to culture which refers to the way in which you have been brought up, the traditions and customs taught to you by both your family and the society in which you live*. Again, as with many participants, there is much difficulty separating race and culture which indicates strongly that they are thought to go hand in hand where race determines the cultural group to which you belong. This is problematic as, in the case of almost all participants, culture is considered learned yet when coupled with race, usually meaning the colour you are born with, then culture is implied as being inherited.

On the subject of mixed race relationships, he comments: *There are too many differences, not just the physical differences but differences in culture, religion and lifestyles*. Also, he does not believe it is fair on the children: *What do you tell your children when they are neither black nor white? How can you expect them to grow up well adjusted when they have no sense of who they are or where they belong?*

He feels that *other people like to pretend it doesn't bother them but that deep down, people, blacks and whites, still believe in sticking to their own kind*. He follows this same line of thinking in considering cross-racial adoption: *I would never consider adopting cross-racially because I am white and that child wouldn't be. That child needs a sense of who they are in terms of their own race and culture, not somebody else's...it's for your own sense of who you are, you need to think about race and culture*. It is felt that *those people who do adopt, do it out of a feeling that it's their duty to contribute towards bettering society*.

Although acknowledging that he comes across as *a really hard racist person*, he doesn't believe he is, just that the general degradation of society upsets him and that *nothing ever seems to change*. His resentment is rooted largely in the fact that although black people are in the majority, *they still would rather leave it to the whites to save the country*. He doesn't believe South Africans will ever see beyond race, basically because *it's the first thing you notice about a person but that maybe, in time, noticing differences won't evoke the negative feelings that it does now*. This participant feels this is achievable through people *changing their attitudes towards one another* which begins with race groups growing up together, *sharing common goals for the future*. On this note, he comments he is *relatively positive but that there is still a long way to go*.

Interview Number Twenty:

This participant is a 29 year old single male who works as a bank manager after completing his MBA, earning in the category of R6000-R9000 per month. He has one sister and has travelled overseas. His concept of family is *two adults, a man and a woman, with offspring that they raise together. It is basically people who are bound together by their love for one another and a blood bond. Extended family is separated from immediate family where your immediate*

family is specifically those related by blood and where family extended through marriage is more of an emotional bond.

Largely because of having travelled, this participant regards South Africa as being *rather isolated in terms of the rest of the world, still very insular*. He feels people here are *very materialistic and image conscious but on the whole have a pretty good sense of humour and relate to one another relatively well... people make the effort and try not to judge*. This participant recognizes though that this is based on his own experiences and comments that *there are those who have preconceived ideas about one another and who just don't want to even try and understand*.

On the whole people are considered to be *making the effort*. For this reason race relations are thought to have improved since the elections, specifically due to white people making more of an effort but basically *because they have had to which has enabled them to see that black people actually aren't so bad after all*.

In terms of how tolerant people are of each other, this participant believes that *when there is time to be tolerant, people generally are but for the most part, people lead hectic lives where little time can be wasted and as a result expect everything to be done yesterday no matter who's doing it*. Considering affirmative action, this participant doesn't agree with it but thinks it is necessary. He doesn't relate this to influencing the tolerance in relationships between race groups nor does he mention that this policy perpetuates any level of resentment between groups.

Race is seen specifically as *the colour of your skin*, and culture as *your way of living, the way you have been brought up to live your life*. Mixed-race relationships are not agreed with at all based on the fact that this participant does not believe race groups were meant to mix in that way: *You have both been brought up in a different way*

and because of that have different outlooks on life and different expectations for the future. And I think no matter how hard you try, those are differences that you just can't overcome. He goes on to say that the majority of people don't agree with it either, if they did there would be many more mixed race couples. I think people like to stick to their own and to share their lives and experiences with those who have a similar background, upbringing and view of life. This implies that being from a different race group automatically means being different in terms of background, upbringing and expectations.

Again a similar line of thinking is followed when discussing cross-racial adoption: *A black person should be brought up in a black culture because that's what he is. He will have an identity crisis because although being brought up in a white home, having a white outlook and following a white culture, he will be instinctively drawn to his African culture and will be confused about who he really is.* There is still that underlying assumption that being black or white determines the culture to which you belong and should be brought up in, and that anything else would result in confusion as to your identity and where you belonged.

This participant feels that more blacks need to be educated through the implementation of better structured affirmative action policies and that people need to work harder at understanding each other by being more involved with other race groups which is thought to produce more of a common ground. He comments, though, that *there will always be those small minded people that won't accept change and will continue to live with their preconceived ideas.* For the most part, this participant considers himself *more pessimistic* at the moment as he *does not see South Africa reaching its full potential.*

The Follow-Up Interviews:

From the original 20 interviews, five were selected on the basis of those that were immediately available and follow-up interviews were conducted. Since there were no refusals, the first five selected constituted these follow-up interviews.

Where reference has been made to a statement made by the participant in the original interview, quotation marks have been used. As before, italics indicate participants' own words.

Interview Number Seven: single male, 27, network administrator.

When asked to expand on what is meant by "living in South Africa is all about race", the participant explains that in South Africa, *the colour of your skin is the basis on which other people decide where you've come from and the type of person you are, it immediately determines what a person thinks of you, the perceptions they have of you and what they expect from you.* This is largely attributed to *what people have been socialized to believe as a result of separatism.* This depicts the social reality of colour in South Africa.

Again this participant doesn't feel race and culture can be separated, a very common theme appearing in the majority of interviews. This is explained in the following way: *Although your culture is more about how you are brought up and the traditions and customs you learn, your culture is dictated by the race that you are born with.*

There still exists this contradiction between what is learned and what is inherited. This is reflected in the issue of cross-racial adoption. The participant disagrees with cross-racial adoption on the basis of a child's loss of identity, explaining that *people construct their identity in terms of their race and because your race and culture are related, in the way that the race you are born with determines the*

culture you will learn, growing up as a black child in a white home denies that child that sense of identity in terms of their race. Here the participant reveals another interesting contradiction: culture was initially explained as "something that is learned and passed down over generations", now it is directly linked to race, implying it is inherited, suggesting a black child in a white home already has a cultural identity to lose because of the race group to which he/she belongs. People who share the same race group, share the same culture.

This participant completely contradicts his notions of what he believes to be learned and what he believes to be inherited.

The contradiction continues as he goes on to comment that *your identity is your own idea of who you are, it is continually being developed over your whole life but identity is also fixed in that you are born either black or white, male or female so part of your identity you inherit, whether you like it or not, and even if being black or white is not how you see yourself, it is how other people see and identify you, in this way, adopting cross-racially does mean losing a sense of identity, the identity of being black because as a black child you are growing up in a white home, learning a white way of life. A child doesn't just come with a different colour skin, you can't separate race and culture.*

Interview Number Sixteen: married male, 33, electronic and systems engineer.

This interview focussed initially on the role of the family in terms of constructing an identity. The participant felt particularly strongly regarding the significant role the family plays in bringing you up and teaching you about life and society and values. The family is seen as "the place in which you are introduced to the world and discover who you are and the values you will learn".

The participant believes your sense of identity is developed through *what you are taught about yourself, your culture and the world around you*. It is however also recognized that this process of identity construction is also influenced by the outside world and by the experiences you encounter your whole life through. *Your identity is something that continually develops and changes over time but I believe it is influenced mostly by the way in which you are brought up, by your family and by the culture you learn*. This reiterates the point the participant makes in his previous interview about culture referring to "a way of life", that it is "what is taught and that it is the way in which you are socialized into the world".

When asked to expand on the notion of race in terms of culture, the participant explains that *it is assumed that if you are born a particular colour, you will grow up within a particular culture. You inherit your race and with it the probability of being brought up with the traditions, values and beliefs of the cultural group associated with that race*. This participant feels that certain race groups are associated with certain cultures.

When confronted that the view implies that culture is inherited, the participant admits: *I can't draw the line between what you are born with and what you learn when it comes to culture*. Relating this to cross-racial adoption, the participant goes on to say that *although a new born baby, black or white, comes into the world not knowing anything, on a clean slate, they are still seen as being different*. It is believed that *different race groups have a different cultural background and in belonging to a particular race group, you should learn that culture in order to develop a sense of identity, a sense of who you are in terms of your race*. This is a complete contradiction of a previous statement in which the participant regards the family as "the major player in identity construction" and that "identity and culture are learned". In his initial interview, the family was perceived as "an emotional connection between people that gives you a sense of

who you are". The family was thought to give you a sense of "origin, a sense of where you have come from and where you belong, [helping] you to function well in society".

Interview Number Seventeen: married female, 33, with three children, works from home.

In her initial interview, this participant included the church in her concept of family and identity. When asked to expand on this, she responds: *Before anything else I am a Christian, that's who I am, that's my identity, that's how I make sense of the world. Of course I am a female, a white one at that, but my Christian life is who I am first and foremost.*

She explains that *your identity is formed as a result of the way in which you are socialized, and what you are taught to believe about both society and yourself as an individual. My socialization has been through the church, that is what my identity has been based on.* In this way, she sees the church as fulfilling the same role of the family which is also seen as a socializing unit.

This perspective the participant confirms, as she explains in this follow up interview that, *culture, like identity, is all the things you learn about who you are, including the food you eat, the traditions, values and beliefs you follow.* She does, however, continue, saying that *different cultures are completely unique and that in bringing two separate and different cultures together by way of either adopting or marrying cross-racially, there will be a lot of inherent problems.* This is attributed to the fact that *different race groups are automatically drawn to one another as they share a similar culture. I think you are born into a particular race group, which is determined by the colour of your skin and with that comes your culture.*

She is sceptical about culture being something that is entirely learned

but does not believe it is something entirely inherited either. She still believes though that *people of the same race group are born with certain characteristics that result in an instinctive gravitation towards those who are similar, which must say something about the possibility of being born with a culture or at least a tendency towards one which relates to the colour skin you are born with.* It is for this reason that this participant believes a black child adopted by a white family experiences *a sense of both confusion and conflict as he is similar in culture to those who are different to him in colour and different in culture to those who are the same as him in colour.*

Although appearing contradictory and confused as to her own ideas of race, culture and identity, changing her position several times, this participant still feels that, despite her wayward explanations of what is inherited and what is learned, she supports cross-racial adoption on the basis of it providing *a needy child with a good and loving home.*

Interview Number Eighteen: married female, 33, secondary school teacher.

When asked to expand on how a sense of identity is developed, this participant responds: *When you are born, you know nothing and rely on the family and society into which you are born to bring meaning and understanding into your life through teaching you traditions, values and beliefs by which to live...this is the culture you learn and in turn the way in which you develop a sense of who you are, locating yourself in the world.*

Expanding on how culture relates to identity, the participant explains that she believes *culture and identity go hand in hand, as a sense of who you are comes from the way in which you are brought up...your culture...what you learn as you go through life, orientating yourself within the world.* For this reason, she does not believe there is much

of a relationship between race and culture. *Being born a particular race incorporates inheriting certain physical characteristics which is different to your culture, culture refers specifically to what you learn.* Based on this, this participant has no problem with cross-racial adoption: *Your sense of identity and your culture are things you learn, the colour of one's skin is really of little significance in considering culture and identity.*

This participant's approach to cross-racial adoption specifically reveals an understanding of identity as being constructed and developing through processes of socialization enabling you to locate yourself within the world.

Identity is based also on the culture you learn which is entirely separate to race. The distinction between what is learned and what is inherited is clear: *You learn your culture through socialization, develop a sense of identity and are born with your race along with certain physical characteristics.*

Interview Number Twenty: single male, 29, bank manager.

In his initial interview, this participant clearly separates notions of race and culture. "Race is defined specifically as the colour of your skin, the genetic make-up and physical features you inherit. Culture, on the other hand, has nothing to do with what you inherit, it is the way you have been brought up, the norms, traditions and values you have been taught by your family and by society...your culture is who you are".

When asked to expand on identity, the participant elaborates: *Although culture plays a large role in your identity, in South Africa identity is about colour.* The participant recalls previously stating: "Before anything else I am white". He believes *people define themselves according to the colour of their skin, according to the*

race group to which they belong, disregarding his initial statement that "your culture is who you are".

The participant does not feel race groups should mix in terms of marrying one another because, *apart from being physically different, each has been brought up according to different values, traditions and norms, having a different outlook and approach to life*. He then goes on to say that *the colour of your skin is the essence of your identity*, confirming what was previously stated about how people define themselves, but yet again undermining the role of culture in identity. He further contradicts himself saying that *although you are not born with your culture, you are born either black or white and blacks have their own culture and whites have theirs and you grow up according to the principles of each*.

In his initial interview, the participant rejects cross-racial adoption on the principle of the child experiencing "an identity crisis"...recalling that interview: "That child will instinctively be drawn to his African culture...he will be confused about who he really is". When confronted on this issue, that it is implied that one is born with a culture, the participant responds: *So maybe you are born with certain instincts which are determined by the colour of your skin*. At this point, he changes his position on culture: *I still think a black would seek his identity in terms of the colour he was born and would be drawn to the culture that it incorporates, and if that implies culture being inherited...then so be it*.

When questioned on his comments regarding socialization as being "an important aspect of one's identity", the participant confirms that this is how culture is learned. He was then asked, this being the case, why then can't a black child find a sense of both identity and culture in a white home? Completely overwhelmed, the participant gives up...*I can't explain any more... that's just the way I feel about adopting cross-racially, I have never thought about why*.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

An Overview:

First and foremost, these interviews reflect the personal experiences and perceptions of young white South Africans when confronted with issues of race, culture and identity, in the context of thinking about cross-racial adoption. The material collected is rich in detail yet both complex and contradictory as participants, in considering cross-racial adoption, are unintentionally forced to confront the obvious tension that exists between understandings of that which is inherited and that which is learned, in the process of how we become what we are.

Although this research is qualitative in nature, there are certain common recurring patterns that are worth drawing attention to on a small scale quantitative level. As much as possible material has been arranged into themes, exploring an assessment of theory against practice. Due to the nature of the material, the separation of themes is problematic as many, if not most areas concerning race, culture, socialization and identity, are interrelated and in this way overlap. Themes examined include: the significance of location of context; the role of the family; the relationship between socialization and identity; interpretations of race and culture; mixed race relationships; cross-racial adoption and the future of South Africa.

The Significance of Context:

South Africa is about race, it's all to do with the colour of your skin.
(participant three)

South Africa is about doing what is politically correct in light of race relations. (participant four)

... a hot pot of tension, bitterness mistrust, dislikes and grudges that need to be diffused. (participant five)

People always bring it down to colour. (participant nine)

South Africa is in turmoil. (participant 13)

Race in South Africa has always had a negative connotation. (participant 15)

South Africa is hanging in the balance. (participant 16)

The first thing you notice about a person is they way they look and colour happens to be one of their most defining features. (participant 20)

Most apparent, evident in every interview, is the participants' first instinct to respond by locating themselves within the social context of contemporary South African society.

South African society is seen as one which is highly stratified and characterized by the institutionalized separation of race groups, where race is the predominant criterion along which social categorization and the allocation of people to groups takes place.

Of the 20 participants, 18 (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) regard race relations in South Africa as being particularly poor where race groups show *little understanding and tolerance of one another* (participant 14). Fourteen participants (participants one, two, five, six, seven, nine, ten, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19) attribute this to race groups sharing no common ground, having their language and, therefore, communication problems, preconceived ideas about one another, and a general level of resentment. Resentment is thought to be largely from the blacks *as a result of feeling apartheid owes them something* (participant 16) and from the whites who *don't believe in paying for somebody else's mistakes. My generation had nothing to do with apartheid, yet as a white, I'm held responsible* (Participant 18).

A further four participants (participants three, four, eight and 15) regard South Africa's past of separatism and what society and parents have taught their children as being the reason for poor race relations. This supports two theories of intergroup prejudice: the socio-cultural learning theory in which individuals are taught negative attitudes by significant others such as parents, teachers and even the media and the cognitive consistency theory whereby individuals acquire stereotypes about groups of people and looks for information which confirms this cognitive framework while rejecting contradictory or inconsistent facts about such groups. (Byrne 1991 ; Devine 1989)

There were only two participants (participants 11 and 20) who believed South Africans were making the effort, meaning that they were attempting to tolerate and understand one another better.

Examining the extent to which people are tolerant of one another, findings showed that whilst only three participants (participants nine, 11 and 20) regarded people as being generally more tolerant, 17 (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) felt people were considerably less tolerant. Ten of these participants believed all race groups to be generally less tolerant of one another where seven thought this to be true of whites in particular. These 17 participants attributed this intolerance largely to affirmative action, believing that it was not being implemented properly and served to *breed tension and hatred between race groups* (participant 13). It was consistently referred to as *racism in reverse* (participants one, two, three, ten and 16).

Whilst three participants (participants one, four and five) believe people living in South Africa to be generally worse off, 17 participants (participants two, three, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20) regard black people specifically as being generally better off now than ever before at the expense of whites who are now significantly worse off politically, socially and

economically. No comparisons were able to be drawn relating to gender differentiation regarding these perceptions.

Another aspect influencing the extent to which people are tolerant of one another was the notion of fear. Six participants, three males and three females aged 23-33 (participants number three, six, nine, 12, 13 and 15), admitted to being fearful of black people, seeing them as *threatening their sense of security and familiar lifestyle* (participant nine). Related to this, another four participants (participants five, eight, 13 and 17), three females and one male aged 27-35, remarked on having *a white man's burden* where they felt guilty thinking about the atrocities of the past. It is interesting to note that it is those from the older age group (27 and upwards) that contemplate this *white man's burden* (participant 17).

A connection here can be made to Sheriff's (1966) realistic conflict theory, as outlined in the literature review, where conflicts between groups are assumed to arise out of competition for scarce resources where resources may be concrete, such as geographical territory, or, as in this case, where resources may be abstract such as power and status.

To a large degree, South Africa is viewed in its context of transition which results in participants separating South Africa into a before and after, a then and now. Six participants make reference to the past (participants six, eight, nine, 13, 14 and 17), remembering the way things used to be: *In the past, white supremacy was the order of the day* (participant eight). *Before, you always read about all the bad things happening somewhere out there, now it's right on your door step* (participant 13). *We* (referring to white people) *used to be protected, we had better policing, more police in white areas, now all that has changed* (participant nine).

Within this social context of transitional change, participants confront the material reality of their every day whiteness and what it has meant to be white in South Africa in terms of a then and now context, where previously the experience of being white was never consciously considered. *Now, being white in South Africa counts against you* (participant one). *Being white you are considered worthless* (participant 14). *Every day as a white, you run the risk of being murdered or hijacked* (participant nine). *For me as a white female, I am very conscious of crime and my own safety, it never used to be that way* (participant 11).

This is also reflected on in terms of the past and present where changes in South Africa are located within a specific time frame...for some, four participants, (participants ten, 12, 13 and 14), this is before the 1994 elections, while for others, six participants, (participants one, two, four, nine, 18 and 20), this is the 1994 elections themselves and for a further, six participants, (participants three, eight, 11, 15, 16 and 19) this is within the last five years. Four participants (participants five, six, seven and 17), do not comment.

These responses can be understood in terms of Giddens' (1991) theory of reflexivity, in which narratives of self-identity are shaped, altered and reflexively sustained in relation to rapidly changing circumstances of social life. In this reflexive projection of the self, self-identity is considered fragile and continually being ordered against the backdrop of shifting day to day experiences. Giddens (1991 : 215) argues that a reflexively ordered narrative of self-identity "provides the means of giving coherence to the finite life-span, given changing external circumstances"

Giddens (1991 : 14) expands on this observation: "Everyone is in some sense aware of the reflexive constitution of modern social activity and the implications it has for his or her life.

Each of us not only 'has' but lives a biography reflexively organized in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life." In light of this, participants are reflexive about the social perspective in which they locate themselves, never passively accepting external conditions of action but "more or less reflecting upon them and reconstituting them in light of their particular circumstances". (Giddens 1991 : 175)

South African society is considered in the social context of becoming an increasingly racially integrated one. All 20 participants regard perceptions of one another as being rooted in a combination of your personal experiences with people of colour and in popular perceptions, that is, what you have learnt and been told about others. This has resulted in the establishment of a sense of 'self' and 'other' and the need to protect one's own identity. This links with the point made previously where white people feel threatened. It does, however, serve to reinforce notions of difference where one's physical description is increasingly associated with cultural traits. This point will be expanded on further in a discussion of identity, race and culture.

Not only do participants acknowledge their social setting, locating themselves within this context, they also recognize the significance of it. All participants make constant reference to how notions of race, culture and identity are influenced not only by the social context in which they live but more so by processes of socialization and what they have learned and been taught, either as a result of personal experiences or popular perceptions. This supports Billig's (1976 : 24) view of identity as being "intricately bound up with the social setting in which individuals function", and Jenkins' (1997 : 63) argument that "identity is produced and reproduced during social interaction, and interaction is always situated in context". Although little can be concluded regarding a comparison between gender, income and age groups, this observation becomes increasingly

significant when considering the participants' perceptions of processes of socialization, identity construction and notions of race and culture in an understanding of how we become what we are. This will be further explored through the progression of themes, beginning with an investigation of how participants perceive the family and its role in society.

The Role of the Family:

Considering definitions of the family, of the 20 participants, 14 (participants one, two, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) viewed families as being both a blood bond as well as an emotional bond between people, where the existence of an emotional relationship was of greater significance. *Family is where you fit in* (participant eight), *it's a relationship of unconditional support, love and acceptance* (participant 11), *it has little to do with being related by blood...of course you can't change a blood bond, but it's more about a connection between members* (participant 16). Of these 14, three accepted a family as any close bond shared (participants eight, 12 and 15), 11 (participants one, two, six, seven, nine, ten, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 18) defined family initially in the traditional nuclear sense, modeled on the typical Western view of a husband and a wife and their children, as this was the family structure in which they had been raised. This was, however, then supplemented by individual interpretations of family in terms of an emotional tie, where alternative family types such as those of single parents, gay couples and adopted children were also considered as constituting a family, as, within this union, the function of the family, as a unit of support, was still there no matter what form it took, again defying the limitation of an inherited blood bond.

Six participants (participants three, four, five, 13, 19 and 20) referred to family as being specifically a blood bond: *Family is about being related by blood* (participant four), *it's a sacred*

institution...including anyone as part of your family cheapens the word (participant 13), *it undermines that true and unique blood bond* (participant 19). Interestingly, only one of the six was married, a 34 year old female, participant five. The remaining five (participants three, four, 13, 19 and 20), four males and one female ranging in age from 26-29 years of age, were still single. All six attributed this, firstly, to being raised in a traditional nuclear family in which family was reinforced as being predominantly a blood bond; and, secondly, as a result of this, one day wanting their own nuclear family consisting of a spouse and children. This bears testimony to the point that not only are perceptions bound within the social settings in which they function, so too are they, to some extent, products of socialization, founded within the family.

This is supplemented by the following: Where three participants did not comment, and one participant regarded the church as being the major influence in her life, 16 of the 20 participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, nine, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) regarded the family as being most influential in the development of who you are as an individual, believing that it is within the family structure that both socialization and the construction of your sense of identity occurs. This reinforces Samovar's point that "the most essential link between the individual and society is that the family provides the individual with an identity in the wider society". (1991 : 45) Participants refer to family *as the foundation of society* (participants six and 15); *...it's where you develop a sense of decency* (participant four); *...family gives you a sense of where you've come from, a sense of origin, a sense of belonging...it teaches you how to function as part of society.* (participant 16)

Here, considering the family as a unit in which primary socialization occurs, responses of the participants can be linked to Berger's (1969) argument that primary socialization is not only the most important

aspect of socialization but that it also forms the basis for all secondary socialization and the development of a sense of self.

Berger (1969) offers the view that an individual is born into an objective social world within which he/she encounters significant others who are imposed on him/her and who are in charge of his/her socialization. Significant others are said to mediate this social world and in doing so, modify it, selecting aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure. As a result, and responses from participants support this, the individual takes on the roles and attitudes of those significant others, where the self becomes a reflected entity, "reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others". (Berger 1969 : 151) This argument by Berger is further supported as findings in the section examining identity and socialization will indicate.

Furthermore, six participants (participants six, ten, 12, 13, 16 and 18) four males and two females ranging in age from 25-34, attribute the general deterioration and lawlessness of society to a break down in the family as a unit of socialization as it is *within this unit that a sense of togetherness, morals, values, beliefs and respect for one another is learned* (participant 12). Significantly, only one of these is single, one engaged to be married and the remaining four, newly married. All six, however, again base their views on their experiences of family and the close knit unit in which they were fortunate enough to be raised. This supports O'Connell's (1994 : 16) view that perceptions of family, founded in stereotypical definitions, "clearly reflect traditional beliefs as to the way in which relationships ought to be ordered".

Samovar (1991 : 45) points out that the family "begins the process of each child's socialization and lays the foundations on which relationships are built, providing an important function in the transmission and maintenance of cultural norms and values".

This significant aspect in examining the role of the family was evident as 19 of the 20 participants believe that it is through the family that culture is transmitted. This point will be expanded on at a later stage as participants develop interesting contradictions in terms of perceptions of what is inherited and what is learned.

Continuing with the role of the family, a final point, 18 of the 20 participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) believed perceptions of people of different races were based not only on personal experiences with people of colour but more so on preconceived ideas, prejudices and stereotypes instilled by both parents and society. These perceptions reinforce Mosikatsana's (1995 : 623) view that "human beings are products of their environment and develop their sense of values, attitudes and their concept of self within their family structures".

Within the group of those who view family specifically as a blood bond, where four of these are males and only two females (participants three, four, five, 13, 19, 20), no significant conclusions can be drawn concerning perceptions/notions of family differing across gender lines. Findings do, however, clearly show the significance all participants, irrespective of gender, place on the family, not only as the primary unit of socialization, and as having an important role in the development of a sense of identity, but also as a cultural transmitter and educator of values, morals and beliefs. This point is of particular importance when examining perceptions of cross-racial adoption and notions of race, culture and identity. It will be re-examined below, starting with an assessment of perceptions of socialization and identity.

Socialization and Identity:

As was evident in the examination of the role of the family, 16 participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, nine, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) see the family as not only being primarily responsible for the socialization of a child but also for that child's development of a sense of self.

It has already been established that these 16 participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, nine, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20) view the family as a structure which forms the *foundation of society* (participant six), one in which a sense of values, morals, beliefs and traditions are learned. It is considered as the unit in which you, as an individual, *learn to function within broader society* (participant 11). Furthermore, these participants regard the family as teaching you *a way of life* (participant 16), which is interpreted as your culture as you are provided with *a heritage and a background, an origin, and a sense of where you've come from* (participant 16). Socialization is seen as occurring within the family, the family is seen as a unit in which you are brought up and this upbringing, learning of traditions, values and beliefs, is seen as constituting culture. This point will be expanded on briefly. At this point, we can refer back to Berger's (1969) position on primary socialization as discussed at some length previously.

Jenkins' (1997) also offers a view of identity construction where he argues that it is within the course of earliest socialization that each human being develops a unique personality or sense of self.

These 16 participants also regard socialization as occurring within broader society, where individuals are influenced by the experiences they have and by their interactions with others.

This was, however, related back to the family, as participants believe perceptions of others and notions of what is accepted as the norm, have already been constructed as a result of socialization within the family. Again it is necessary to comment on the link here between these findings and Berger's (1969) view of identity as reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others.

Broader society is, therefore, considered to be less influential as a unit of socialization. These participants believe that socialization within the family is what has resulted in people creating stereotypes of one another and having preconceived ideas which account for misunderstandings and lack of common ground between individuals, particularly between whites and those of colour. This is supplemented by the fact that all 20 participants believe a positive future for South Africa lies in encouraging increasing interaction between race groups at grassroots level, particularly interaction in terms of schooling, eliminating the possibility of either parents or society instilling stereotypes.

Related to this understanding of socialization, all 20 participants initially adopt a constructionist view of identity. Identity is viewed as a sense of self, as a sense of who you are in the world and where you've come from. This sense of identity is thought to continually change and develop as a result of your life experiences which, to a large degree are determined by where and by whom you have been brought up. Identity is, therefore, considered flexible, being constructed over time, rooted in social interaction and influenced by agents of socialization, namely the family and society. This also supports Billig's (1976 : 54) view of identification being a process which is social, not "an isolated individual act".

These participants do, however, relate identity to the central importance of culture, believing culture basically to be your *upbringing: what you learn about yourself, your heritage and your*

traditions, your sense of who you are...your identity in this world (participant 15).

Although identity is, at this stage, considered as acquired, every participant relates identity to race, believing race to constitute a *large part of who you are, how you see yourself and how others see you* (participant 13). At this point an interesting aspect emerges when examining the perceptions participants hold of notions of identity, race and culture towards an understanding of how we become what we are.

When considering the relationship between race, culture and identity, participants reveal an intriguing contradiction between what they believe to be inherited and what they believe to be learned in terms of identity.

A separation of the terms race, culture and identity becomes so problematic that where notions of identity were previously thought to support a constructionist view, an essentialist approach to identity becomes much more apparent, where a person is understood as being "a fully centered, unified individual endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose 'center' consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same, continual and identical with itself, throughout the individuals experience". (Hall 1992 : 275)

By arguing that a person's actions and reactions are determined by the personality, tendencies, traits and orientations with which they are born, the essentialist approach advocates that social identification, therefore, occurs with others who have the same inbred characteristics. This implies, as these participants suggest when considering race, that persons sharing the same or similar characteristics, would 'instinctively' identify with one another. This

then suggests leaving little or no room for agency on the part of the individual to “change or adapt” their identity or to “adopt new identities”, implying identity formed on the basis of these shared characteristics creates rigid boundaries which are difficult to transcend. (Marshall 1994 : 103)

This tension between that which is learned and that which is inherited in terms of race, culture and identity will be expanded on in the following section.

Interpretations of Race and Culture:

Participants were asked to give their immediate response to the terms race and culture. Initially, separating the two was straight-forward.

There were two participants (participants ten and 15), both females, who regarded race as a social construct: *Race is just a way of identifying people* (participant 15), *it's something you fill in on a form...it's a classification somebody invented to put people into categories* (participant ten). There were three participants (participants 14, 18 and 20), two females and one male, who defined race specifically in terms of colour and the physical characteristics with which you are born: *It's the colour of your skin* (participant 18). All of the remaining 15 participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 19) referred to race initially as the colour of your skin and one's physical appearance but went on to add that race and culture could not be separated.

Considering culture, every participant agreed culture was learned, but linked this to race, which reintroduced the contradiction between what they believe to be inherited and what they believe to be acquired. Nineteen participants (all except participant 18) believed identity construction to be founded in a combination of your race and

you culture and were unable to separate these two terms, engaging in both in a confusing and frustrating contradiction.

These 19 participants (all except participant 18) explained themselves in the following way: *Race is more than just the colour of your skin* (participant four), *I think race and culture go hand in hand, culture is something you learn and race is something you are born with but with a different colour comes a different culture, different beliefs and ultimately a different lifestyle* (participant 19).

The contradiction continued with participants believing that culture is *who you are, it's your sense of identity, it's what you learn, and has nothing to do with what you inherit but you are born with a particular race and as a result of that race you are born into a particular culture* (participant 19);...*Being born a certain colour determines the culture within which you will be raised: A black child in South Africa will grow up learning a traditions black way of life, the Zulu way* (participant 14);...*Race and culture are the same thing, culture is more about how you are brought up but that is dictated by the colour you are born* (participant seven).

Clearly, these 19 participants not only present an essentialist approach to understanding race, culture and identity as outlined in the previous section, but also bear testimony to the process of signification as outlined by Robert Miles. Signification is used as a concept to "identify the representational process by which meanings are attributed to particular objects, features and processes, in such a way that the latter are given special significance and carry or are embodied with a set of additional second-order features". (Miles 1989 : 70)

Furthermore, as Miles (1989 : 71) explains, "people differentiated on the basis of the signification of phenotypical features are usually also represented as possessing certain cultural characteristics", with the

result that the population is represented as “exhibiting a specific profile of biological and cultural attributes”. The deterministic manner of this representation implies that “all those who possess the signified phenotypical characteristics are assumed to possess the additional cultural characteristics”. This holds true for these 19 participants. The contradictions of these participants lie not so much in interpretations of race and culture, but more in that which they believe is learned, or acquired, and that which they believe is inherited towards understanding how we become what we are in developing a sense of identity, a sense of who we are, in the world.

There is however one participant, participant 18, a 33 year old female, who does not operate within this contradiction. She explains: *Identity is part of your culture, it is a sense of who you are and the values you learn as you grow up...that's the basis you use for orientating yourself within the world. This relates to culture, which is your upbringing, the traditions and customs taught to you, your way of life. Race on the other hand is the colour of the skin you are born with, it is those genetically inherited traits and physical characteristics with which you are born.* This suggests this participant is able to separate notions of race and culture and has a relatively clear idea of what she believes to be inherited and what she believes to be learned.

There is no research data from this study that suggests a distinction between the way in which males and females perceive race and culture. It was hoped that by selecting ten males and ten females, there might have been data yielded that showed either similarities or differences in the way in which males and females perceive notions of race, culture and identity. This was, however, not the case. Participants show an internal lack of clarity as they confuse race and culture, wanting to have culture as race which implies it as something that is inherited through being born a particular colour. In this instance, one's physical description is associated with cultural traits,

further reinforcing notions of difference.

The significance of these interpretations of race, culture and identity and the tensions and contradictions that they reveal towards an understanding of identity construction, are further explored in light of mixed race relationships and perceptions of cross-racial adoption.

At this point, it is necessary to relate participants' perceptions of race to a point made by Guillaumin (1980 : 59) in which he states: "the meaning of 'race' is ultimately linked to conceptions of it within the existing social structure". As has been evident throughout, participants have responded, without exception, within the social context of a racialized South African society, where their frame of both experience and reference is purely local. Interpretations of meanings of terms such as 'race' and culture are no different.

Here reference also needs to be made to previous theoretical discussions, recalling Malik's point (1996 : 30) that the discourse of culture provides a powerful tool with which to challenge the ideas of "immutable hereditary differences" where, although, in most people's minds, the concepts of race and culture appear to be mutually exclusive, culture, like race is animated by human traits of universality where cultural traits prove to be as powerful a marker of human groups as biological traits such as skin colour.

It is also necessary to draw a comparison here between the responses of the participants and Levi-Strauss's (1987) implied argument that culture mimics race even to the extent that it stamps on its members physical marks of distinction which are passed on from one generation to another. In this sense, the responses of 19 of the participants support Levi-Strauss's point (1987 : 17) that "cultural barriers are almost of the same nature as biological barriers" and that cultures are comparable to the genetic traits of 'races' as each culture is marked by certain features which are absent from other cultures,

and possession of these features, makes one culture different to another. where cultures are "sealed compartments", separating 'us' from 'them' and imposing on us, "even before birth", ways of being and modes of thinking from which we cannot escape. (Levi-Strauss 1987 : 10)

Perceptions of Mixed Race Relationships:

Considering mixed-race relations, all 20 participants interpreted this type of relationships as being one between a black and a white. Participants were asked to explore their perceptions of mixed-race relationships, enabling a further investigation into how participants perceive notions of race, culture and identity.

Seven participants (participants six, seven, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17), three males and four females ranging in age from 23-35 accepted the idea of mixed race relationships. All of these seven participants felt that *if two people are comfortable with one another despite their differences then why not?* It was considered *fine if that's what people want to do, if that person makes you happy and you are able to share a unique bond with them then so be it* (participant 12). Three of these participants (participants 14, 15 and 17), all females aged between 28 and 35, believed being of the same class and social standing was far more important than sharing the same cultural and/or racial group: *it's more about sharing the same set of standards and values and that comes from sharing the same or at least a similar class* (participant 15).

None of these seven participants (participants six, seven, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17) mentioned possible problems relating to the racial and cultural differences that may exist. Reference was, however, made to the fact that mixed-race relationships are generally frowned upon by society in general, as it is *still considered an oddity, you look twice* (participant 17). Mixed-race relationships are believed to have a

social stigma attached to them, where these seven participants believe South African society to be *far too conservative* (participant 11) and, as a result, not accepting of races mixing on a more personal level. One participant, a 25 year old male (participant 12), although being in support of mixed-race relationships, commenting: *the thought of it just doesn't appeal to me.*

Thirteen participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, eight, nine, ten, 13, 16, 18, 19 and 20) were completely against the thought of mixed- race relationships. Three of these (participants five, ten, 20) attributed this to *personal reasons*.

Of the remaining ten, six participants (participants two, eight, nine, 16, 18 and 19) felt being involved with someone from a different race group was *an attention seeking ploy* (participant 16) as it was considered the *in thing* (participant 19) ; a further four participants (participants one, three, four and 13) justified their position in terms of religion: *God never intended for race groups to mix in that way...if He did, then we wouldn't have all been born different* (participant one).

These same ten individuals (participants one, two, three, four, eight, nine, 13, 16, 18 and 19), equally male and female, all based their opposition to mixed race relationships on the possibility of that couple having children. Here participants make reference to the identity of that child in terms of their race and culture. Drawing on past discussions relating to the role of the family, there is the perception that a child born to a mixed race couple *wouldn't know what they were* (participant four), as children are thought to look to *their parents for a sense of who they are, for a sense of identity and belonging* (participant eight). Participant nine explains: *That child would be neither black nor white, how is he supposed to find his place in this world when he can't even identify with his own parents...how can you expect that child to grow up well adjusted when*

they have no sense of who they are or where they belong?

Interestingly though, all 20 participants see *no reason why any one would want to intentionally get involved with someone from another cultural or racial group* (participant 13) as these participants perceive most people as *preferring to stick to their own...most people feel negative about mixed race relationships because it's an inbred thing in us that people tend to stick to their own* (participant 11). This could suggest an understanding of intergroup relations in which people perceive the world similar to that of Rushton's (1989) theory of genetic predisposition where genes can best ensure their own survival by encouraging reproduction with similar individuals.

These views, however, epitomize the notion of difference and the boundaries that are created as a result of the racial and cultural distinctions that exist between people. As Phillips' (1996 : 48) writes: "social identification occurs with others who [are perceived to] have the same inbred characteristics", implying that those who share the same or similar characteristics 'instinctively' identify with one another, suggesting identity to be a product of nature rather than nurture.

Again the importance participants place on the family as having a significant role in the development of one's identity is evident. The family is consistently seen as the unit in which an individual develops a sense of who they are and where they belong, enabling them to establish themselves within broader society. In addition to this, perceptions of a future family, for the majority of participants, reflect the uni-racial characteristics of the present.

In terms of this discussion, identity on its own, in the sense of a child growing up in a mixed-race family, is considered as being constructed. Yet, previously, the participants' interpretations of race and culture supported the essentialist view of being born with certain

inbred traits and characteristics. This contradiction continues to play itself out when investigating how participants perceive of cross-racial adoption as it is at this point that participants are forced to consider the ultimate link between race, culture and identity, confronting the tension that exists between what they believe to be inherited and what they believe to be learned.

Perceptions of Cross-Racial Adoption:

Intentionally, at no point in this study has a definition of cross-racial adoption been given. An interpretation of this term was left entirely to the participants themselves, encouraging participants to express their immediate response towards a meaning of the issue. In all 20 cases, every participant viewed cross-racial adoption as first and foremost the adoption of a black child by a white family.

Considering cross-racial adoption, six participants (participants seven, eight, 11, 12, 17 and 18) considered themselves in favour of the idea. This group consisted of two males and four females ranging in age from 23-35 years old. In responses to cross-racial adoption, only one participant (participant 17), a 35 year old female said that, although recognizing problems with adopting cross-racially, she would adopt a black baby. The problems this participant identifies reinforces the contradictory perceptions and lack of clarity regarding identity, race and culture she holds, namely in terms of what is learned and what is inherited. Although she remained consistent in her views of family, defining family more in terms of an emotional bond as opposed to a blood bond, and her open mindedness regarding mixed-race relationships, the participant clearly illustrates contradictory views. This begins with her view of race as inherited physical features, related to culture, which is suggestive of being born with a culture. The participant explains: *A black child will battle growing up in a white home because that requires him denying his culture which I believe he has a certain instinct towards. You are*

born a specific colour, that's your race, and along with it comes certain inbred characteristics and instincts (participant 17).

This participant is, however, not unique. A further three participants, two males and one female ranging in age from 25-35 years old (participants seven, eight and 12), who also support cross-racial adoption, share this sentiment. They explain, in the same fashion, that a child will experience a *loss of cultural identity* (participant seven). *Culture is learned but you are born with a history, you need to know your past, where you've come from and the traditions of your culture* (participant 12). These participants do, however, consider this loss of cultural identity as not a good enough reason not to adopt a black child.

Another participant, a 23 year old female, (participant 11) in support of cross-racial adoption also disregards his initial views of race and culture as being inherently linked when considering cross-racial adoption: *Race doesn't build into you certain characteristics, there's no in-built cultural background stamped on him...you bring any child up as your own, according to your culture, and that's the culture they learn* (participant 11).

The remaining participant (participant 18), a 33 year old female, is the only one in the entire sample of all 20 participants that manages to avoid any contradiction in terms of her understanding of race, culture and identity. Where this participant regards race as specifically *the colour of your skin and those inherited physical features*, the significance of a black baby being raised in a white home is *of little consequence* for the following reason. The participant defines culture as *the traditions, values and norms with which you have been brought up which gives you a sense of who you are in the world, a sense of identity*. Identity is seen as part of culture as *your identity is based on what you learn about the world through socialization and is constantly subject to change*.

In this way, since identity and culture are learned, there is nothing for that child to lose in terms of who he or she is and a sense of self.

Although, out of the six participants who were in support of cross-racial adoption (participants seven, eight, 11, 12, 17 and 18) four of these were females (participants eight, 11, 17 and 18) and only two of these males (participants seven and 12), no significant conclusion can be drawn relating gender to perceptions of cross-racial adoption. What is more significant is that these perceptions may well be consistent with notions of family as each of these participants defined family in the sense of an emotional bond between people rather than a blood bond. Furthermore, one participant bases her perception not only on her notion of family but also on her views regarding identity construction and notions of race and culture.

Presenting the material gathered from interviews of those participants who are against cross-racial adoption proved an interesting task as it was at this point that participants revealed their unacknowledged and unrecognized underlying assumptions and beliefs regarding race, culture and identity in terms of what is inherited and what is acquired, confronting the tension that exists between explanations rooted in nature and nurture.

As we have seen, in considering notions of race, culture and identity as separate concepts, participants have little difficulty in giving meaning to such terms, assigning definitions based largely on common sense assumptions and popular perceptions. However, when asked to explore relationships between the concepts, participants enter into a state of confusing contradictions. This is epitomized when faced with having to explain their position on cross-racial adoption and it is in light of these perceptions of cross-racial adoption that tension-filled understandings of race, culture and identity are revealed.

Fourteen participants (participants one, two, three, four, five, six, nine, ten, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20) were against cross-racial adoption. Two of these (participants five and 13), one female and one male aged 34 and 27 respectively, were against adoption in general, saying their positions had nothing to do with race or culture but that *they could never see any adopted child, black or white as their own* (participant five and 13). This is consistent with their views of family as specifically a blood bond.

The remaining 12 participants, seven males (participants one, two, four, six, 16, 19 and 20) and five females (participants three, nine, ten, 14 and 15) ranging in age from 22-34, opposed cross-racial adoption on the basis that the adopted child would lose a sense of their own culture and identity. Previously, all 12 of these participants, despite (as we have seen) changing their positions when faced with the link between race and culture, had responded to both culture and identity as the products of socialization.

In the case of cross-racial adoption, participants responded: *A black person should be brought up in a black culture because that's what he is* (participant two). *He will have an identity crisis as he will instinctively be drawn to his black culture and be confused about who he is* (participant six). Other remarks: *A child needs a sense of who they are in terms of their own race and culture, not somebody else's* (participant 14). *It's important to develop a sense of who you are in terms of your heritage, a black child can't do that in a white home* (participant 19).

Continuing this line of thinking: *That child will grow up wanting to find it's culture, it's upbringing, it's no longer looking for a biological person, it's looking for a whole lifestyle* (participant ten). And, *how is that child supposed to place itself in terms of its own identity, what about its own culture, beliefs and traditions? Adopting cross-racially denies your heritage and results in a loss of identity,*

a loss of the sense of where you've come from (participant 20).

It is important to note at this point that all of these 12 participants, in their discussions of the role of the family, regarded the family as not only being the most significant unit of socialization but also the most influential in the development of a sense of self, enabling an individual to locate themselves in broader society with a firm sense of who they are and where they belong. Family was regarded as the primary site in which a sense of identity was constructed. Based on this, it was established that participants not only supported a constructionist view of identity, but also believed culture to be a process of acquisition. Probing perceptions of cross-racial adoption does however contradict this as participants then appear to imply that identity, race and culture are inherited. Within this group of participants, this indicates that perceptions of cross-racial adoption are not informed, either by notions of family, or by notions of identity construction, but rather by a conflicting tension between what one is born with and what one learns.

These participants' perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal an underlying assumption that culture, race and identity are in fact 'more inherent' than anything else, where the development of an individual is determined more as a result of nature rather than nurture. Understanding what is believed to be inherited and what is believed to be learned in terms of race, identity and culture proved to be both problematic and frustrating for all participants as this tension between nature and nurture was unintentionally confronted in the interviews. Participants want to hold both views, having culture as both race and identity. Ultimately, reflected in these perceptions, are the contradictions ordinary people experience in terms of making sense of who we are as individuals and how we develop.

At this point, a connection must be made between these findings and those of Ledderboge's (1996 : 19) where "perceptions as to the desirability of cross-racial placements are linked intimately to perceptions of race and culture and the surrounding formation of identity". Reference also needs to be made to Simonson and Walkers' point (1988 : xi) that the explicit link that opponents of cross-racial adoption make between 'race' and 'culture', where the 'race' of a child determines the 'culture' in which he/she should be brought up, reveals a view of culture "as a predetermined, natural phenomenon", which findings of this research support.

The Future of South Africa:

Findings showed that considering South Africa's future, 19 participants (all except participant 16) were positive and saw South Africa as *having potential* (participant seven). Although all 19 viewed the future with skepticism and admitted to being unsure of where the country was heading, they termed themselves *hopeful* (participant 16).

There was one participant (participant 16), a 33 year old male, who admitted to being negative about the future as he thought South Africa was *hanging in the balance, teetering towards going down hill*. Seven participants (participants eight, ten, 11, 13, 17, 18 and 19) believed it was the responsibility of the government to correct South Africa's economic and political problems as well as addressing issues relating to crime, education and health care.

In terms of race relations, nine participants (participants one, seven, ten, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19 and 20), six males (participants one, seven, 12, 13, 19 and 20) and three females (participants ten, 14 and 18) ranging in age from 23 to 33, believe there would never be a time in South Africa when race wasn't an issue. *How can it not be... skin colour is the first thing you notice about a person...you can't escape*

it (participant 14). There were, however, three participants (participants nine, 12 and 15) who felt South African society was becoming more and more divided along class lines rather than racial lines.

All 20 participants regard the key to South Africa's future as lying in a new generation, growing up together at grassroots level. As cited earlier, the primary reason for poor race relations and a lack of understanding between race groups, was said to be the preconceived ideas people hold of one another as a result of what they have been taught. Interacting at grassroots level from an early age is considered to foster better relations between race groups through first hand experiences of one another on an equal footing. Here participants make reference to the new generation of young children going to school together. In addition, all 20 participants emphatically state that fundamental to South Africa's future was the need for people, both blacks and whites, to change their attitudes towards one another by disregarding stereotypically established mindsets and adopting a more accepting and open frame of mind.

These suggestions support those discussed by Cook (1985), Byrne (1991) and Bacon (1992) where it is proposed that addressing problems relating to intergroup relations lie in teaching people not to hate, changing their socialization and increasing direct intergroup contact.

A Brief Conclusion:

This research is about the meanings people in their interviews give to notions of race, culture and identity when talking about cross-racial adoption.

Although showing a perspective in which nature predominates over nurture, the interviews conducted, not only epitomize the confusion

ordinary people experience in explaining how we become what we are, but they also illustrate the common sense assumptions individuals operate within. Giddens (1997 : 13) defines common sense as "that rich yet disorganized, non-systematic, often inarticulate and ineffable knowledge we use to conduct our daily business of life" and it is this that the individuals interviewed use to operate within when confronted by the issues raised concerning race, culture and identity. This is evident in both their contradictory statements as well as in their sense of reasoning and in justifying responses and opinions held.

Responses are therefore based on common sense notions and an individual understanding of the social world.

Responses are given within the social context of South Africa as a racialized and divided society, in which your identity is confirmed as being either black or white. It is something you can't escape. The follow up interviews in particular, illustrate the extent to which people associate a physical description with cultural traits, portraying an underlying assumption that what you look like determines who you are, where being born into a particular 'race' entails being inherently different.

Perceptions of cross-racial adoption are not necessarily informed by one's definition and understanding of family, although the family and society are recognized as being responsible for not only the socialization of an individual but also for the development of their sense of identity. Perceptions of cross-racial adoption are based on the perceived relationship between race, culture and identity, and determined by the participants' contradictory understanding of the way in which identity is constructed. Confronting cross-racial adoption as an issue, participants, regardless of being either for or against cross-racial adoption, with the exception of only one, illustrate a lack of clarity in being unable to consolidate that which

is learned, or acquired, and that which is inherited and are forced to confront the tension that exists between the two. Through the contradictory and confusing interpretations of race, culture and identity, ultimately, perceptions of cross-racial adoption reveal an underlying assumption that identity, race and culture are in fact inherited.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

To Conclude:

The primary objectives of this research were as follows:

- to explore the extent to which a certain section of society remains intolerant of other race groups despite changes in legislation, and
- to investigate how young white South Africans perceive cross-racial adoption and what these perceptions reveal about notions of culture, race and identity.

In light of these, my conclusions are as follows:

Participants respond using their common sense which is based, firstly, on their own experiences with people of colour and, secondly, on popular perceptions - that which they have either been told by others or learned through processes of socialization.

Despite transitional changes in South African society, such as an increased prevalence of mixed-race relationships and cross-racial adoption, as well as the introduction of reformatory schemes like affirmative action, and the abolition of residential and educational segregation, which have resulted in increasing contact between race groups on all levels, socially and otherwise, people still remain intolerant of one another. This is attributed to poor communication between race groups due to language problems, a perceived lack of common ground, and to preconceived ideas instilled by parents and society as a result of a past of separatism.

An examination of material shows that a level of dissatisfaction has been created in particular by what is perceived to be the incorrect implementation of affirmative action which has bred an air of resentment directed specifically from whites towards blacks. Resentment is also evident in the view that, as white individuals, participants see themselves as worse off now than ever before, feeling their familiar way of life to be threatened. At this point, it should be noted that the 20 participants were well-educated (matriculation certificate being the minimum educational qualification) and middle class individuals. Since this presents a homogeneous class grouping, class and status were of little significance in this study. This point is considered as a suggestion for further research.

Participants respond within the social context of South Africa as a racially-divided society and show an extreme level of awareness regarding what it means, and what it has meant, to be white in South Africa, recognizing the material reality of their day-to-day whiteness which has never before been consciously experienced where society confirms your identity in terms of the colour of your skin.

The use of cross-racial adoption as a tool of examination resulted in participants having to confront the tension that exists between that which is inherited and that which is learned. Findings show that participants exhibit an extreme lack of clarity in an attempt to explore their understandings of race, culture and identity. As has been evident throughout, on their own, concepts of race and culture are easily distinguishable where race is considered one's inherited skin colour and physical characteristics, and culture and identity, as acquired or learned constructions.

Considering cross-racial adoption, participants were, in their responses, forced to examine their perspectives of nature and nurture, taking a position on what they believed to be inherited and what they believed to be learned in terms of race, culture and identity towards

understanding how we become what we are. An analysis of material shows that a confrontational tension exists between that which is learned and that which is inherited in explanations of how we become what we are. Ordinary people, such as those used in this study, have conflicting notions of race, culture and identity and work fundamentally on the assumption that what you look like determines who you are and where you belong. This approach strongly indicates that although participants seemed unclear how to think this through, these participants appear to support the view that it is nature, and what is inherited, that plays more of a role than nurture, and what is learned, in determining one's sense of identity and ultimately how you develop a sense of who you are.

Whilst an examination of material concerning those who support cross-racial adoption did appear to suggest perceptions being informed by notions of family, the same cannot be said for those who did not support cross-racial adoption. Furthermore, an analysis of data collected does not suggest any relationships, within this specific sample, between gender differences and perceptions of cross-racial adoption, culture, identity and race.

Suggestions for Further Research:

As it was beyond the scope of this research due to the small sample size, to further supplement these findings, an investigation into the extent to which gender plays a role in informing perceptions of cross-racial adoption would be beneficial. An undertaking of gender differentiation, class and educational status with regard to notions of race, identity and culture could also form the foundation for future work in this area, as would a repeat of this study amongst black people and in a future social context.

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APPENDIX



To whom it may concern:

Research by Ms Elspeth Miller (student number 931-323-143)

This to certify that Ms Elspeth Miller is engaged in approved research towards a Master of Social Science degree at the University of Natal, Sociology Department. It would be appreciated if you would grant her an interview.

As her supervisor I can vouch that her work is of a serious nature, aimed at improved understanding of the views of people living in this changing society. She has undertaken to abide by the ethical commitment of all researchers formally attached to this University, not to cause harm to those who become part of her research, and to maintain the confidentiality and protect the identity of the people she interviews.

If there are any further questions you wish to ask, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Gerhard Maré (professor)

phone: (031) 260-2279

(031) 260-1097 (secretary)