A Descriptive Study of Racial Identity Amongst University of Natal Durban Students in a Post-Apartheid South Africa.

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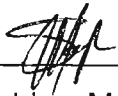
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own original work and has never been submitted for any other purpose anywhere else. All references herein have been acknowledged.

Siphiwe Maneano Maqutu   14th July 2003

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Abstract

It has almost been a decade since the inception of a 'New South Africa', without apartheid, which separated South Africans and classified them hierarchically according to their 'race'. The 'eradication' of apartheid has meant that South Africans have had to re-look at issues around racial identity without a dominating apartheid ideology.

The purpose of the research was to describe and to look at some of the features and dynamics concerning racial identity that are prevalent in a post-apartheid South Africa. This was done by exploring the nature and type of interactions University of Natal Durban (UND) students (doing a Human Behaviour and the Environment module) had with persons not from their own racial group, prior to coming to UND as well as at UND. The possible challenges, threats and opportunities students felt were afforded them because of their racial group were also explored. Literature concerning issues of racial identification in South Africa and other parts of the world was also examined.

A descriptive research design, using a triangulated research methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the study. A non-probability sampling method with reliance on 83 available law, community development, nursing and psychology students representing the four racial classifications in South Africa, namely black, white, coloured and Indian was used. Data were collected through observations as well as through a self - administered structured questionnaire.

The findings of the research suggest that issues related to racial identification in a post-apartheid South Africa, for black, white, coloured and Indian students is in turmoil and requires reconstruction. The findings further indicated that questions

about affirmative action and the future of non-black South Africans in South Africa is believed to be uncertain and negative. The issue of poverty and the internalised oppression and inferiority of black students was also identified to be problematic.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

"And if the colonized are (albeit uncomfortably) embedded in the modernizing world of the colonizer, the menaces of the post-apartheid era should come as no surprise" Robinson (1996: 219-220.

In South Africa issues of racial identity are deeply entwined with concerns about structural inequalities. Thus issues regarding structural inequalities are addressed throughout this research. For the purpose of the study the concept of culture, which refers to common customs/practices and ethnicity, which are the characteristics that make up cultural identity, will be used in conjunction with race, which defines a person according to biological characteristics, such as skin colour and hair form (Nunn, 2001). It must be acknowledged that race and culture are not the 'same' but in the South African context, a person's cultural identification is more often than not linked to race. In discussing race it has be taken into account that race, as a concept, has been discredited by some authors (Banton, 1988, Maré, 2002). According to Maré (2002: 11) "...there are not races...The genetic differences within so-called race groups, if agreement could be reached on what they are and where the boundaries are to be located, are greater than the imputed differences between them. Appearances and the selections we make in order to give credence to the existence of these groups, tell us nothing more than finger prints, or hair styles would." It is further pointed out by Maré (2002) that the appearances of people that are supposedly so clear and fixed, are open to sets of interpretations and adaptations we have to make from the 'standard', in order to hold on to a notion of a racial core. There are, therefore, an enormous amount of concessions made to diversity, in order to hold on to the concept of race. It is pointed out clearly by Maré (2002:12), however, that race does exist socially. Quoting Turner (1990), Maré contends that "We make something of the differences we can see, we are taught what is valid in appearance, we are reassured that these values in society are something of social importance."

It is often taken for granted that all is well between the different racial groups of South Africa since the inception of a democracy in 1994. According to Sturgeon (2002: 173), "The political changes in South Africa over the past decade have been dramatic and have brought about events that have impacted fundamentally on all its peoples. These changes have not only irrevocably altered the cultural/racial identity of its people, but also their relationship with each other. " South Africa has a legacy of apartheid in its academic institutions and in all spheres of life as a result of having had an apartheid government policy, which sanctioned separateness of the races. The fact that different racial groups could not attend the same universities in the past, but had to attend universities of their own so called racial groups, provided the primary impetus to investigate the progress of the current multi-racial climate of the University of Natal, Durban.

Legal, community development, nursing, psychology and social work disciplines need professionals who understand themselves and the clients whom they serve. This is important in order for the client to receive the best service. According to Terreblanche (2002), Dr Hendrik Verwoerd who had become the Prime Minister of South Africa in 1958, announced his supposed 'non-racist' policy of *separate development* also known as *grand apartheid*. Separate development had serious implications for the different racial groups because it advocated separate facilities and services for each racial group. Facilities including residential areas, restaurants, jobs, transport, health care, welfare, toilets as well as educational facilities to name a few were separate for different racial groups. South Africa therefore had a human service delivery system that was characterised by specific racial groups being served by "their own specific racial group." In a post-apartheid South Africa which already has legal, community development, nursing, psychology and social work professionals of different racial groups serving individuals who are not necessarily from their own racial group, there is a need to delve into the implications of this for service excellence.

The need to look at racial identity issues in South Africa stems from the fact that South Africa is a country, which can be described as multicultural as well as having an apartheid past which classifies South Africans according to race. According to Sewpaul (1999: 741), "The South African population, in accordance with apartheid regulations, was divided into distinctive racial categories in terms of the Population Registration Act of 1950." The racial groups included the racial group white, followed by Indian, coloured and finally the black racial group. It is further pointed out by Sewpaul (1999) that the provisions of this Act were repealed by the Population Registration Act Repeal Act No. 114 of 1991, which abolished the distinction made between persons belonging to different racial groups or population groups. The above being the case however, reference to the different racial groups will be made although they are by no means satisfactory. The power of racial labels or categories in terms of the way South African people think, feel and interact means that their deconstruction is difficult, necessitating their use, despite their problematic nature. The disbanding of the apartheid system has implications for racial identity vis-à-vis other forms of identity such as cultural, national, ethnic and gender in the post-apartheid South Africa, which now allows different racial groups to interact with each other. According to Sturgeon (2002: 173), "The shift from a country where all constructs were engineered to keep each "racial" group totally separate, to relate only within itself and be unaware of, or antagonistic to, other groups, to a country where true integration is expected is an enormous change. This shift will take time, and I suspect, requires much more focused assistance than is currently being offered."

When dealing with different perspectives on the issue of race and identity, it is important to note that there are many different schools of thought in terms of what the way forward is for different racial groups living together harmoniously. For a post-apartheid South Africa one would therefore be looking for an ideal model to help South Africa to deal with issues of racial identity in the best

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possible way. Three types of models will be outlined as shown by Hinman (2002) and the feasibility of each discussed:

1) **Separatist Models** – These models are said to encourage the separation of different racial groups, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to promote racial identity. South Africa can be said to have followed the separatist model through apartheid, by enforcing involuntary separation of the 'races'. It can safely be said that the separatist models would not work for South Africa since Apartheid, as a type of separatist model did not work.

2) **Assimilationist Models** – These models make the issue of race irrelevant and put it in the same category as eye colour. An example is the 'melting pot' idea, where there is supposed to be an eventual blurring of racial distinctions and assimilation into the dominant culture. Due to the fact that the assimilationist models did not work for America, one would tend to think that they would not work for South Africa which has very distinct cultures within and across various racial groups.

3) **Pluralistic Models** – These models recognise that we are members of numerous groups, based on race, ethnicity, religion, geography, place in life, hobbies etc. and sees identities constituted by all of these affiliations and does not see race as the dominant classifier of identity. Pluralistic models appear to be the right models for South Africa.

When one examines the current South African climate it would appear that the pluralistic models have been put into practice with for example, different racial groups and religions being recognised. Questions, however, still remain regarding the racial identity implications of this new change in South Africa. More specifically for the purpose of this study the questions are: how the operationalization of pluralism is affecting students and their racial identities, and the implications for these students as future helping professionals. There is no doubt that cultural diversity is a reality in South African higher education according to Bitzer & Venter (1996) and that this poses a challenge for

historically "white" and "black" universities. According to Cronje and Jonker (2000), who are social workers in South Africa, it can no longer be considered feasible or practically possible for helping professionals to have cultural exclusivity and ethnic homogeneity.

According to Oliver (cited in Willett, 1998:185) "In order to live together without war and oppression, we need to accept that different is not synonymous with opposition. Our identities as individuals and as groups need not be threatened by different individuals or different groups; rather, our identities are enriched by and constituted by our relations with different individuals and different groups. So in order to have an accurate sense of who we are, we need to actively engage with the different people and groups who have shaped us, directly and indirectly."

1.2 Problem Statement

Institutional racism is over but separation and segregation still exists. In some instances perhaps tensions have escalated, an example of which concerns the whole concept of affirmative action. During class discussions there were often comments about the unfairness of affirmative action by white, Indian and coloured students. Prior research for example by Slabbert, (2002), and Sturgeon (2002) in institutions of higher learning in South Africa, namely Cape Technikon and University of Cape Town supported the fact that racism and racial stereotypes are still very much in existence in South Africa, and that affirmative action is a contentious issue.

1.3 The Rationale for the Research

Since becoming a graduate assistant at UND for students doing a Human Behaviour and Social Environment 1st year module, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the interactions that students had with each other across

racial groups. Through conversations with students and observations the researcher made of the interactions of the students of the four different racial categorisations, there were clear racial identification issues arising, which appeared to require exploration. This exploration appeared to be all the more important because these students were representative of helping professionals of the future who would have to be self-aware when serving clientele, especially with regard to racial identity issues. As a student on campus the researcher observed that the students followed particular patterns of interaction which centred on interacting with their own specific racial groups and there were specific areas where different racial groups hung out. The researcher also managed to be part of the dominant discourses around race, ethnicity and identity on campus which were incorporated in formulating the questionnaire.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 To explore the nature and type of interactions UND students had with persons not from their own racial group, prior to coming to UND.

1.4.2 To explore the way students feel about their own racial identification.

1.4.3 To explore the possible challenges or threats that students feel their racial identification poses for them.

1.4.4 To explore what opportunities students feel their racial group affords them.

1.4.5 To explore the nature and extent of interaction of UND students with other UND students who are not from their own racial group.

1.5 Underlying Assumptions of Research

1.5.1 The UND students did not have much (if any) interaction with other racial groups on an 'equal' level prior to coming to UND.

1.5.2 Generally students view their racial identity as separate and different from other racial groups in South Africa.

1.5.3 White, Indian and Coloured students are generally dissatisfied with the governments' adoption of the policy of affirmative action, and perceive it as a threat to their life opportunities and aspirations.

1.5.4 There is hardly any interaction of students across racial lines at UND.

1.5.5 Black students would be more optimistic about their future in South Africa compared with white, Indian and Coloured students.

1.6 Research Methodology

- ❖ The research adopted a descriptive research design. A triangulated research methodology incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research was used in this study.

- ❖ With regard to sampling, a non-probability sampling method was used with reliance on available subjects. The population sample included 83 law, social work, psychology, community development and nursing students doing a first year module on 'Human Behaviour and the Social Environment'.

- ❖ Data collection was done through observation of the interaction of the students, as well as a self-administered structured questionnaire.

- ❖ Analysis was done using descriptive as well as content analysis.

- ❖ The limitations of the research lie in the personal biases, values and judgements that are inherent in qualitative researchers' interpretation of data. Another limitation is in that the data cannot be generalised as applying to the rest of the South African population, nor the rest of the student population at UND.

- ❖ The strengths of the research are in the richness of detail that one gets as well as learning about the reality of individuals.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

When one looks at the theoretical framework underpinning one's research, one is considering the most plausible theory explaining one's research. Given the socio-political constructions around race, the researcher chose to adopt a social constructionist theoretical framework.

Social constructionism is basically of the view that what one believes is socially constructed, and it has been said to be an important concept in identity research Oliver (1999). According to Burr (1996), social constructionism as an approach draws its influences from a number of different disciplines which include philosophy, sociology, psychology and linguistics, making it multi-disciplinary in nature. Burr points out that social constructionism also has influences from post-modernism or post-structuralism which rejects the notion of rules and structures underlying forms in the real world, and emphasizes the co-existence of a multiplicity and variety of situation-dependent ways of life. It can therefore be concluded that no specific feature can be said to identify a social constructionist position. There are however some things that one would absolutely have to believe in, in order to be a social constructionist according to Burr (1996) namely:

1) A Critical Stance Toward Taken-for-granted Knowledge

   Social constructionism cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be. In South Africa we need to be critical of the deep divisions of South Africans according to race and the impact this has on their racial identification.

2) Historical and Cultural Specificity

   Social constructionism asserts that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific or relative. Namely our understanding depends upon where and when one lives. Living in South Africa created a situation relatively unique to South Africa in terms of the way different racial groups view each other.

3) Knowledge is Sustained by Social Processes

The above refers to the fact that our current accepted ways of understanding the world, is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other. There is a need in South Africa to address the way in which different racial groups interact as a result of social processes that are a legacy of apartheid.

4) Knowledge and Social Action go Together

This means that descriptions or constructions of the world require that individuals who are knowledgeable about the process make things happen through social action. In South Africa descriptions or constructions about racial identification, that are part of the South African society would require knowledgeable individuals to effect change through social action. These individuals would have to be well versed about the dynamics of the many factors such as race, language, ethnicity, religion and gender that constitute identities, to organise effective social action that would result in progressive changes.

It is asserted by Burr (1996) that we construct our own versions of reality (as a culture or society) between us and that there is no such thing as an objective fact. In the South African context, apartheid was the overriding social construct for South Africans, orchestrated by the government, which advocated that different racial groups live separately because of their different racial identities. The white people were at the top in terms of their superiority followed by Indians, coloureds and finally the blacks. According to Berger (2001) whether consciously or unconsciously, racial identity is always constructed. Most of the time however race is consciously constructed according to Berger, especially in the South African context where individuals were given no option but to classify themselves according to a particular racial identity.

Another important factor in social constructionism is the importance of language as a pre-condition for thought. "...the way people think, the very categories and concepts that provide a framework of meaning for them, are provided by the language that they use...when people talk to each other, the world gets constructed" (Burr 1996:6-7). Bearing the issue of language in mind when speaking of racial identity in a post-apartheid South Africa, a poignant question is raised. Although South Africa has eleven official languages, English is the main medium of instruction in most schools, followed by Afrikaans. The significance of this is that language and identity are inextricably linked as the languages yet again legitimize the world of the colonizer. Race and the choice of either English or Afrikaans (predominantly seen as the white person's language) and their association with superiority are important considerations in the South African context.

Some of the influences of social constructionism are psychological. According to Burr (1996:11), "Social psychology as a discipline can be said to have emerged from the attempts by psychologists to provide the U.S. and British governments during the second World War with knowledge that could be used for propaganda and manipulation of the people." In South Africa on the other hand social psychology (from which social constructionism has its roots, according Burr, 1996) was used for the propaganda and manipulation of the South African people. It is a fact that the masterminds of apartheid were highly educated psychologists. When one considers the "negative" construction of racial identity which is a legacy of apartheid one is confronted with the need for new constructions.

According to Gergen (1999:4-5) social constructionism "...welcomes both the voices of tradition and critique into dialogue, while granting neither an ultimate privilege... more importantly, the constructionist dialogues contain enormous potential; they open new spans of possibility for creating the future...social constructionism invites the creation of new more inhabitable ways of going on

together." South Africa is definitely in the process of trying to create a new future and all South Africans need to embrace change and not fear it. The construction of apartheid created fear, anger, bitterness, distrust and many other negative emotions toward other racial groups for many South Africans.

According to Castells (1997:7), "The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations. But individuals, social groups, and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and in their space/time framework." Castells (1997) further explains that the social construction of identities always takes place in a context marked by power relationships and proposes that there are three forms and origins for identity building:

1) Legitimizing Identity

This is introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination in society. In South Africa, apartheid was legitimized through the law of the government of the time which put a stamp on the issue of the white race being at the top in terms of power, status, privilege, access to resources and domination, followed by the other three non-white racial groups, in descending order.

2) Resistance Identity

This identity is generated by those that are in positions or conditions which are devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society. In the South African context, resistance identity can be said to have been evident in the emergence of the African National Congress (ANC), which produced the freedom charter which was in opposition to the legitimizing

identity of apartheid, but advocated equality for South Africans of different racial groups.

3) <u>Project Identity</u>

This identity involves people who on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society, and by so doing, seek the transformation of the overall social structure. When looking at project identity and looking at racial identity in a post-apartheid South Africa at UND, one is looking at the fact that different racial groups of a first year law, community development, nursing, psychology and social work class are perhaps faced with having to develop different social constructs about their racial identities in relation to the other racial groups on campus. One of the reasons for this would be the fact that many South Africans, (especially young South Africans) are expected to interact on an 'equal' basis with people of different racial groups for the first time. The question is therefore whether the different racial groups in South Africa are constructing or have constructed new beliefs about themselves and people across race in the 'new South Africa'.

This chapter has given an introduction to the descriptive study of racial identity among first year UND students in a post apartheid South Africa. The problem statement, rationale for the research, the objectives, underlying assumptions, and a brief research methodology was also given. Finally the social constructionist theoretical framework underlying the study was discussed. Chapter Two deals with the literature written by both local and international authors about racial identity, its origins as well as the way it is affecting South Africa currently. The researcher's personal experiences of racial identity, is also evident throughout Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

"An account of self-identity has to be developed in terms of an overall picture of the psychological make-up of the individual...We begin from the premise that to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it" Giddens (1994:35).

In reference to the above quotation, to come to a clear understanding of one's psychological make-up is no easy feat. Often as individuals we are not even aware of where some of our conceptions of self come from and we may not even want to delve into the depths of our psyches and our histories to find out the 'truth' of what constitutes our self-identity. The above quotation suggests that, to be a human being there should be a willingness to take this journey of self-discovery so as to know why we do the things we do. In the context of this research the journey of self-discovery has to do with racial identity.

Racism and racial identity issues are universal issues, although specific manifestations may differ according to context related realities. The results of what culminated as apartheid in South Africa came from a general wave of sentiment throughout Europe and the western world, the ramifications of which we are still dealing with today. One of the major consequences of this sentiment is that black people are inferior to white people. According to Mare (2002: 6) "It is 'common sense' (to white South Africans) that black people are inferior to white people. And this common sense is not just some sort of delusion. It is based on white South Africans' experience of the objective 'inferiority' of most

blacks in, for example, education, income, dress, and language proficiency (that is proficiency in the only languages that whites recognise). And, moreover, nearly everyone they know treats blacks as inferior. They see black 'inferiority' as one of the imperatives of human nature." The following section will deal with some global and local perspectives of racism.

2.2 Racism: Global and Local Perspectives

Haviland (1996) refers to the phenomenon "global apartheid" (which will be explained further), which is why the unfolding events since the demise of apartheid are of interest the world over. South Africa can be said to be almost a mini version of what is in existence in the world today. The prevailing question is whether or not South Africa can provide some of the answers for the rest of the world in the way it deals with racial identity issues.

As is generally known, apartheid in South Africa involved policies that aimed to maintain racial segregation. According to Haviland (1996), structurally apartheid served to maintain the dominance of the white minority over a non-white majority consisting of the racial classifications of Indian, coloured and black groups in descending order. This dominance of the white minority happened through the social, economic, political, military, and cultural constitution of South African society. Non-whites were denied effective participation in political affairs and were restricted in terms of where they could live and what they could do, and were denied the right to travel freely. The whites on the other hand controlled the government including the military and the police. Haviland further points out that in South Africa the richest 20 percent of South Africa took 58 percent of the country's income (mainly white), while the poorest 40 percent of the population received only 6.2 percent of the national product, (mainly nonwhites). Haviland points out that although there is no 'official' policy of global apartheid, it is nevertheless in existence. Although about two thirds of the population is non-white and one-third white, Haviland argued that in the world, as a whole, being white and belonging to the upper stratum of society tend to go hand in hand, with

very few exceptions. Haviland (1996:469) explains that, "In the world today, the poorest 75 percent of the population make do with 30 percent of the world's energy, 25 percent of its metal, 15 percent of its wood, 40 percent of its food. The greater percentage of these and other resources goes to the richest 25 percent of the population...life expectancy as in South Africa is poorest among non-whites. Most of the world's weapons of mass destruction are owned by whites: the U.S., Russia, France and Britain. As in South Africa, death and suffering are distributed unequally; ...The parallels between the current world situation and South Africa are striking. We may sum up global apartheid as a de facto structure of world society."

The importance of comparing the apartheid that existed in South Africa until recently and what Haviland terms global apartheid is to highlight the importance of dealing with South African issues as a microcosm of what is happening in the rest of the world. This would include issues of racial identity which are closely linked with structural inequalities that are characteristic of the world we live in. With the whole concept of globalisation which according to Grange (2002:68) is a term used to describe "...complex processes, linked to the interconnectedness of life on our planet as a consequence of changes in communication, technologies, economic production, cultural patterns, political alliances and so on", it is even more important to link what is happening in South Africa with its connectedness with the rest of the world.

The little Oxford Dictionary defines 'race' as being, "each of the major divisions of humankind, each having distinct physical characteristics" and define 'identity' as, "being specified person or thing; individuality..." From the above definition racial identity has to do with looking physically different and the individuality associated with one's looks. When speaking about race it is important to note that the biological notion of racial difference was discredited a long time ago although the notion of race continues to carry a great deal of importance in defining individuals in society. According to Frankenberg as cited in Ballard (2002), race must be

seen as a creation of society as opposed to race being seen as an inert characteristic of people in a society. It is further pointed out by Frankenberg (1993) that the most useful view of race is the analysis that views race as socially and politically constructed rather than an inherently meaningful category. Race is linked to relations of power and processes of struggle, and the meaning of race may change over time. Frankenberg cited in Ballard (2002: 36), stated that "Race, like gender, is "real" in the sense that it has real, tangible, and complex impact on 'individuals' sense of self, experiences, and life chances. In asserting that race and racial difference are socially constructed, I do not minimize their social and political reality, but rather insist that their reality is, precisely, social and political rather than inherent or static." What Frankenberg (1993) is pointing out is important because it highlights the fact that racial identity and its effects are not static but can be ever changing and this is especially evident in South Africa. Ballard (2002) contended that racial identity is constructed through the process of racism, rather than racism being a response to social difference. This is important to note because it supports the idea that racism is socially constructed and can therefore be deconstructed.

Despite the controversies surrounding the concept of race, it is a dominant societal construct that cannot be sidelined. It has shaped the thinking and the workings of society the world over in very direct and profound ways. According to Steyn (2001:XXXii) "The construction of race has been used to skew this society over centuries. If we prematurely banish it from our analytical framework, we serve the narrow interests of those previously advantaged, by concealing the enduring need for redress. To deal with the expressions of power, we have to call it by its name."

In the context of the research, it can be said that, racial identity has to do with experiences of being either black, white, Indian or coloured in a post-apartheid South Africa. There may be arguments against the notion of homogenous black, white, Indian or coloured experiences, with social-class issues intersecting race

in significant ways. However the researcher's contention is that race still constitutes the dominant discourse in South Africa, despite the transition in socio-economic patterns among the different race groups.

According to an article written by the 'Institute for Justice and Reconciliation' 'IJR' (2001:1), "Identity is the pride and prejudice of South Africa. It is both a hope and the rift that runs throughout the country's tumultuous history." The premise for the above assertion is not surprising when one considers that apartheid had its roots in pride in a particular racial identity, namely the white identity which was promoted at the expense of the other three dominant racial identities in South Africa. It is further asserted by IJR that South Africans themselves show substantial disagreement about the meaning of identity and its role in a post-apartheid South Africa. A further question is whether the so-called 'rainbow nation' of South Africa which wishes to promote pluralism, tolerance and healing of past deep divisions concerning racial identity can promote heightened awareness of different racial identities. The question is important because there are concerns that racial identity can feed civil discord, pitting neighbour against neighbour as well as spurring hostility and separatism (IJR 2001). What form and what place and value does racial identity have in a post-apartheid South Africa? Is the current shift around the world toward post-modernism which values the co-existence of a multiplicity and a variety of situation dependent ways of life, problematic because it 'would appear' to encourage separatism in terms of racial identity in South Africa? According to Gergen (1999:18), "If an individual is prized, then all that is 'not the self' is 'other'. Cast in the position of other, the fundamental question one asks is 'whether you will help me or hurt me'... I am invited into an instrumental posture toward others: they are primarily means to the ends of my fulfilment... One has value only so long as he 'profits' the other. Why remain friends if the other doesn't 'do anything for me.' Why remain married if 'my needs are being stifled'?... No one can be trusted." What will be seen in some of the research done in other institutions of higher learning as well as in this research is that there is definitely a heightened sense of 'the other' with the

different racial groups feeling hardly any affiliation to other racial groups but seemingly concerned with the interests of their own racial group.

2.3 The State of Higher Education in South Africa before and after Apartheid.

For the purposes of this research, when speaking about higher education, specific focus will be placed on university education as well as technikons and not on other higher education institutions. Specific focus will also be on the University of Natal Durban.

According the University of Natal General Prospectus (2002) the Natal University College was a forerunner to the University of Natal, which opened its doors in Pietermaritzburg in 1910 with eight professors and 57 students. In August 1912, Old Main Building was opened by the Minister of Education, F.S. Malan and the present day Pietermaritzburg Campus was established. In the year that followed, Natal University College (NUC) ceased to be a state institution and instead became a state-aided body. In 1923, NUC extended its tuition to Durban but it was not until 1928 that Durban agreed that NUC take full responsibility for university classes in Durban. Mainly through the efforts of Fabian Socialist, Dr Mabel Palmer, separate classes for 19 non-white students at NUC were introduced in Durban in 1936. The University of Natal Durban (UND) had a Medical School founded in 1951 for black students. The number of non-white students at UND grew to 900 by 1960. Throughout this time, however, classes at UND reflected the segregated nature of South Africa under apartheid. In other words there was no interaction of white students with non-white students on campus. "It was not until 1983 that the University circumvented the government's racial admission "quotas" by an appeal to the High Court, that the University could attempt to fulfil its aims of serving the educational needs of the broader community" (UND General Prospectus 2002: 10).

For the older generation of South Africans who grew up in the days of uncompromising apartheid, especially during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and went to university, their education was separated according to race. According to Le Grange (2002: 68), "During apartheid the higher education system in South Africa was fragmented; divided on racial and ethnic lines and generally insulated from public scrutiny and international influences. In a new dispensation higher education in South Africa faces two broad challenges: how it will contribute to redressing inequities of the past and how it will respond to the demands of an economically competitive 'global society'". Bearing the above in mind, it is important to pin-point what some of the inequities of the past are and how they have a bearing on an economically competitive 'global society'.

As mentioned previously South African university students were divided on racial and ethnic lines during the apartheid years. Currently, however, all the different racial groups are studying together. The University of Natal Durban specifically, used to be traditionally a 'whites' only university during apartheid and was (and still is) an English speaking university. Currently it has students of all racial groups. The different racial groups generally live very different lives from each other and when they enter university, for most of them it is the first time they interact with other racial groups on an equal level. The majority of South Africans still cannot afford to send their children to multi-racial schools and many black South Africans attend university with help from financial aid. According to Deegan (2001), the 1953 Bantu Education Act was explicitly intended to instil compliance and passivity into black youth through its restricted form of elementary education. The importance of this is that black South Africans come from a history of Bantu education and there continues to be serious problems with incompetent teachers in black schools. The result of this is that the level of education of some black students as compared to their white counterparts is poor. Learning as equals at university level therefore becomes a fallacy, and stereotypes that different racial groups have of each other are evident in the

confidence of the better educated white students as compared to the lack of confidence and competence of their fellow black students.

With regard to the existing related research that has been done on racism and ethnic identity, it is rather disturbing to realise that South Africa has some serious problems to contend with. A study done by Slabbert (2002) on 'Racism, Education and Internationalisation' at Cape Technikon, found the results of the study to be disappointing, especially coming from an 'educated', academic body of people. To assess the relative status of racist paradigms in students at a tertiary education institution in South Africa, Slabbert (2002) had 265 students complete a questionnaire which attempted to measure ethnic group identification and particular interracial attitudes.

In the study Slabbert found significant indications of racist stereotypes in all racial groups, with a strong bias toward subjects' own racial groups when working with black, white and coloured students. "The most significant finding based on the analyses, is that uniform perceptions exist with reference to specific variables; moral; trustworthy; prejudiced; friendly and warm. The direct interpretation in these cases indicates that subjects from different racial groups regard each other as immoral; not trustworthy; prejudiced; unfriendly and cold. Clearly the realities contained in these findings indicate that South Africa does not have a firm foundation for creating racial unity or harmony. If people inherently regard each other as immoral and not to be trusted, amongst others, methodological problems will arise in the reconstruction of South Africa" (Slabbert, 2002:166). The conclusion reached from the research was that racist perceptions and stereotypes remain very prevalent in South Africa. However, Slabbert points out that since racism is attitudinally based, it is largely learned behaviour and can therefore be unlearned. In the language on social constructionism one can say that racism is socially constructed and therefore deconstruction of racist thinking needs to be made in South Africa.

Another related study done by Visser, Cleaver and Schoeman (1999) of the University of Pretoria also yielded interesting results. Their study involved 70 students doing their honours in Psychology attending a two day workshop with the aim of raising students' awareness of their own intergroup attitudes about race. Forty students from a traditionally white university and thirty black students from a neighbouring traditionally black university participated. The aim of the workshop was to help students accept members of other race groups as equals, as well as change their interracial attitudes and behaviour to enable them to enter helping relationships in a multicultural society. The ultimate aim of the research was to evaluate the impact of the workshop on the attitudes, behaviour and racial identity of the students involved.

A multi-method evaluation was used, and a questionnaire from six existing scales was compiled and the emotional, cognitive and behavioural components of inter-group attitudes were measured. The questionnaire consisted of scales which measured attitudes toward their own-group and to the out-group, and to their own-group and out-group identification, subtle racism, behavioural intention and racial identity development.

The results of the questionnaires and the feedback from the students showed that the workshop had an impact on an emotional level. The white student's attitudes in general changed significantly toward the black students and they evaluated their own and the out-group as more similar after the intervention. According to Visser et al (1999), through contact on equal ground and sharing of experiences, the white students gained a more positive attitude towards their black peers, and yet no differences were found in the attitude of the black students after the intervention. There appears to be a gap in the research in that there is no investigation to follow-up as to why the black students' attitudes did not change. The question that comes to mind is whether the students were really interacting on an 'equal' level, considering the nature of South African society.

Another study done by Sturgeon (2002) explored the importance of developing cultural awareness among human service professionals. In her study students in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town were required to write an "Ethnic Autobiography" tracing their life history in terms of their awareness and experience of their own and other ethnic groups. The students were also expected to write about how this awareness of their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups was developed and their current attitudes.

The students involved in the study between the years 1996 to 2001 were from different class sizes, which ranged from 26 to 45 students. In terms of the old racial classification system, approximately 31% of the students in the study were white, 23% were coloured, 40% were black and 6% were Indian.

The findings of the research showed the emergence of the following common themes in the narratives of the students:

❖ Usefulness of the exercise

Most of the students found that the exercise helped them to get in touch with who they were and their value systems, although a few students found the exercise thought provoking but painful.

❖ Impact of apartheid

Students expressed strong feelings about the effects of apartheid including the fact that it brainwashed people.

❖ Prejudice and development

Students were very aware of the development and impact of prejudice.

❖ A time/event that changed perceptions or made students question the apartheid system.

Most students identified experiences which initiated a change in their attitudes to other groups.

❖ Disagreement with parents

Many students explained that their views were different from their parents' views.

* ❖ Aspiration to an individual identity within a broader cultural context.
  Most students argued that they would prefer to be seen as an individual, although not denying the values of their culture.
* ❖ Value of university experience
  Almost all students commented on the value of university experiences in cross-cultural mixing and the openness of discussion within the Department.

Sturgeon (2002) concluded that there were clear issues pertaining to race and identity, as well insecurity about their future in South Africa because of affirmative action especially in the white, coloured and the Indian population groups. This 'identity crisis' in the coloured and Indian populations seems to stem partly from the previous acceptance by students of the status quo. In other words generally all the students whether white, black, Indian or coloured seemed to have previously believed apartheid was the norm. The realisation of the 'abnormality' of it and the need to change ways of thinking about themselves and other racial groups appears to have been a challenge for many students. The results from Sturgeon's study accord with the researchers' underlying assumptions which were that the white, Indian and coloured students would be generally dissatisfied with the government's adoption of the policy of affirmative action and perceive it as a threat to their life opportunities and aspirations.

2.4 Perspectives on being white in South Africa

"As a native South African, I cannot remember a time when I was not aware of being 'white'. Race was the defining factor in any South African's life. White people lived in nice houses, went to good schools, did the work that mattered, had culture, and decided political issues. Other South Africans worked in our houses, on the roads, on the farms. They were labourers, although some were terrorists, to be feared" Steyn (2001:X).

An interesting question to be asked would be, how many children who are classified as of the 'white racial group' ever ask their parents the reason they are white and whether they would receive a clear answer from their parents. Most white parents do not even fully know where their white identity comes from and therefore cannot tell their children with any clarity why they are classified white and what this means.

In the South African context and in the world in general, white people take it for granted that being white is the normal way to be, and that all other racial groups who do not fit into the definition of whiteness constitute the 'other' or are deviant in some way. This does not just affect the people classified as white but those who are non-white (in 'all' the various forms). "As the privileged group, whites have tended to take their identity as the standard by which everyone else is measured. This makes white identity invisible, even to the extent that many whites do not consciously think about the profound effect being white has on everyday lives, Steyn (2001:XXVI). I remember going shopping with a friend to buy underwear and being confronted with the colour 'flesh'. The colour 'flesh' was the colour of so called 'white' people and it struck me that it did not matter that in South Africa there so many different shades of 'flesh', the one that counted was the 'white' flesh. There is of course the commonly voiced fact that all children play with white dolls. Only recently dolls of other racial groups, which are still very rare have emerged on the market. The question once again is where does this pervasive, favourably seen white identity (as opposed to other racial identities) come from?

The story or construction of white racial identity is not a uniquely South African story; it is a product of dominant worldwide thinking. According to Steyn (2001:XVII) "...race is certainly not just skin-deep. Indeed it is generations deep and continents wide. I continue to struggle through the multiple fences of white identity that my heritage constructed to define me." It is a well known fact that white South Africans are descendents of Europe and therefore brought with them to South Africa the European assumptions of racial and cultural superiority as well as European belief in its entitlement to political control and land ownership. Added to this was the European belief in their right to benefit from their access to the world capitalist system at the expense of an exploited, conquered non-white majority.[i] It is further pointed out by Steyn (2001: XXXII) that "...white South Africans cannot move forward unless they confront the extent to which their identities and personal expectations have been shaped through asymmetrical power relations, both internally within South Africa, and globally, through enmeshment within western historical processes and ideologies."

A brief background history of white identity

"One cannot be white without identifying with blackness at the same time. In fact there would be no 'white' without 'black'...Blacks cannot escape whiteness no less than whites can escape blackness" Du Toit (2001).

When looking at the history of white identity, as has been mentioned previously, there is undoubtedly a European history of how the non-whites, and especially the Africans were viewed by so called white people through the stories of those who ventured out to these 'mysterious' countries which were later conquered and became colonies. According to Thiele (cited in Steyn, 2001:6), "...European colonists became whites only in parallel with their identification of those they colonised as blacks."

It is further pointed out by Steyn (2001) that during the medieval periods, European conversations and discussions about black Africans underwent several

transmutations which depended on the dynamics that were at play within Europe. These discourses were not based on the changes that occurred within the people being represented, and Africans were often talked about in the absence of any real experience of Africa and Africans. According to Bernasconi (2001:11) "The invention of the concept of race...took place some time after the introduction of the broad division of peoples on the basis of colour, nationality, and other inherited characteristics that could not be overcome subsequently as religious differences could be overcome by conversion." Bernasconi cites the 15th century as a period in which Spain converted Jews to Christianity and yet did not accept them as equals. In the 16th century, the Native Americans were mistreated by the Spanish and the justification for this was that they were not human but opponents of Bartolome-dellas Casas. In the 16th century the Atlantic trade in slaves began and it is pointed out by Bernasconi that it was impossible for the Spanish or the English to exploit the Jews, Native Americans, and Africans without having the concept of race. The importance of introducing the concept of 'race' was in the fact that it allowed for the process of othering and for the justification and the legitimisation of the practice of racism.

When passing through the Cape (which is currently the city of Cape Town in South Africa) in 1627, Sir Thomas Herbert, one of the many European explorers going into Africa said that the Khoikhoi speech was "rather apishly the articulately sounded, with whom 'tis thought they have unnatural mixture...having a voice 'twixt human and beast makes that supposition to be of more credit, that they have a beastly copulation or conjuncture"[ii] Parker (cited in Strother, 1999:3). It was just never thought that the Khoikhoi were human beings with a language of their own. To read the above in the 21st century is highly embarrassing but this is a part of where white South Africans as well as white people all over the world derive their white identity. There are unfortunately still prevailing thoughts that black people are not really human and this kind of thinking has its origins in the thinking of the European forefathers of South Africans, as well as other Europeans worldwide.

Bernasconi (2001) credits the German philosopher Immanuel Kant as the author of the first theory of race which Kant captured in a book published in 1775, called "Of the Different Human Races". The 'dubious honour' according to Bernasconi (2001:15) of contributing to further thoughts with regard to race belongs to a Swedish researcher, Carolus Linnaeus who included human beings within a formal classification of animals and plants. Under the heading 'Homo Sapiens' four geographical varieties of human beings as well as their supposed characteristics were highlighted by Linnaeus:

1) Homo Americanus – obstinate, content, free, governed by habit
2) Homo Europaeus – gentle, very acute, inventive, governed by customs and religious observances
3) Homo Asiaticus – severe, haughty, covetous, governed by opinions
4) Homo Africanus – crafty, indolent, negligent and governed by caprice

When one reads through the characteristics given to each of the above human classifications, it is clear that the European was given the best characteristics and this thinking about different racial groups has filtered down through the generations.

In the 19th century, the issue of race continued to be an obsession for Europe and the question of why black people were black and not white (Bernasconi 2001). According Barkan (1992:15), " During the nineteenth century scientists reified the concept of race and endowed it with explanatory powers beyond its taxonomic purpose...Physical differences were correlated with cultural and social status through biological justification...political domination buttressed by biological rationalization proliferated during the second half of the nineteenth century." The result was rapid colonialism of black people who were deemed inferior to white Europeans.

According to Bernasconi (2001) the introduction of the concept of race lent an air of apparent legitimacy to the practice of racism. The fact that the concept of race now had a scientific status contributed to making racism more respectable. It also contributed to allowing people to have no guilt feelings about racism and racist practices because there was a clearly scientific basis for it. What is popularly known as scientific racism as well as Social Darwinism became pervasive in the 19th century, (Ballard, 2002; Strother cited in Bernth,1999). According to Banton (1988: 19-20) "The 1850s have been identified as the decade in which theories of 'scientific racism' were first advanced. There was nothing remarkable about belief in racial superiority in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Europeans were obviously superior to Africans in the ships they built, their navigational instruments, their development of writing, and so on...African and other backward peoples would be able to catch up in a few generations."

According to Vilakazi (2000: 4), "...a new hierarchy of humankind was proclaimed, enforced, and made part of common sense practice: there was a new classification of humankind according to a new concept called "race". The main reference points of the new hierarchy of humankind were the two polar ends of the hierarchy: at the bottom was the black African and at the top was the so-called white European."

In the 19th century Europeans could earn a living by exhibiting people of African descent at fairs and similar places. One of the more famous of the South African women who were exhibited was Sartjee Baartman who was shown as representing how 'freaky' Khoikhoi women were. According to (Strother cited in Bernth, 1999) Sara Baartman's arrival in London and Paris in 1910 caused a sensation because Sara suffered from steatopygia, defined in the Medical Dictionary (1989) as "excessive fatness of the buttocks." In the midst of all the different stories of black people as strange looking or cannibals, no doubt it added to the belief that black people were indeed inferior to white people, perhaps even sub-human in some ways. According to (Strother cited in Bernth,

1999: 37), "The ethnographic shows that developed in the course of the nineteenth century perhaps proved the most effective tools of scientific racism. Their enacted ethnography invited spectators "to see for themselves."

White South African university students appear to know little about the political issues facing South Africa and still less about the impact and consequences of apartheid. Can it perhaps be attributed to having had a previously authoritarian, deceptive government that served the interests of white people well through a combination of what Steyn (2001) refers to as lies and half truths while eliminating any opposition to its rule? Bearing the above in mind, a brief outline of the origins of Afrikaner nationalism and ultimately the ideology of apartheid will be looked at.

According to Terreblache (2002:298), "The stratification of Afrikaners into a small elite of 'notables' and a relatively large underclass (comprising at least two thirds of Afrikaners in the 1930s) was largely the result of protracted internal struggle between larger and smaller landowners over control over land and black labour". It is further pointed out by Terreblanche (2002), that this struggle over land began in the 18th century and was intense in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. External factors such as pests, droughts as well as the Anglo-Boer war succeeded in helping to impoverish the rural Afrikaners. According to Terreblache (2002: 298), "By overemphasizing the alleged injustices done to Afrikaners by British imperialism and foreign capitalism, and exaggerating the dangers of *swart oorstromming* ('black swamping'), Afrikaner ideologues succeeded in creating a 'syndrome of victimization' – ie, The idea that the existence and interests of the Afrikaner volk were endangered by other population groups."

The advent of the new South Africa would therefore not surprisingly be seen as endangering the interests of the Afrikaner. The *swart oorstromming* can be said

to have finally occurred to the horror of many white South Africans who had always been warned about it; the evidence of which is a black led government.

The findings from Sturgeon's (2002) study at the University of Cape Town which was previously mentioned indicates that the thoughts of young white university students confirm some of the continuing fears of white youth in South Africa as well as their hopes . The findings of Sturgeon (2002) were as follows:

Themes common to white students

❖ Distress at how little they had questioned the dictates of apartheid
"To put it simply, we were totally isolated, so at a young age black people were not even an issue in my life."

❖ Brought up by "nannies". Black people seen as gardeners or maids
"Most black people worked as domestic workers. It didn't strike me as completely unjust as I had not known any different."

❖ Feel parents, although liberal, were really racist
"My parents were always 'good to them', but always seemed in some way superior."

❖ Afraid of black violence, but feel guilty
"If white guys approach me, I tell them to get lost. If black I am scared. I am aware this is racism"

❖ Aware of own current prejudice/racism
"My brother started dating a Muslim girl which for me is difficult to accept."

❖ Role of religion
Most students claimed a strong faith which rejected discrimination. "God has made us all in His image."

❖ Events that changed perceptions
Ironically, mixing with other race/ethnic groups initially generated racial tension and the reinforcement of stereotypes by parents; only later did this lead to the dispelling of these things.

❖ Feelings towards the current political dispensation

Students were generally very positive, but with some reservations, particularly regarding job opportunities. "My friends say that I will never get a job in the new South Africa."

It is clear from looking at perspectives on being white in South Africa that, there are clear origins of the superior white identity, in direct comparison to the inferior black identity. The majority of people however take it for granted that being white is the most normal way to be, not realising the deeply embedded social construction that white identity is. The following section deals with perspectives on being black in South Africa.

2.5 Perspectives on Being Black in South Africa

"I finally came to understand that there isn't only one way of being black, that there was no mystique I had to measure up to. I came to believe that I could live however I wanted to live and still be accepted as a member of the black community" (Raible, 1990).

As a black person the above quotation has a great deal of meaning for me personally. Having been brought up in a black community but having attended multi-racial schools from kindergarten, I am a black person who has been exposed to a variety of cultures and who had westernised as well as African upbringing. As a result of my upbringing there were moments of struggle with my identity, when I was resented by some white people, and by some black people for speaking the English language well and for being comfortable relating with a variety of people. I have come to learn, however, that there isn't one way of being black as the above quotation suggests and that my way of being is just one of many.

Having experienced my life as a black person and having observed family, friends and others around me, I have concluded that, as unwilling as many black people would be to admit this, we feel inferior to white people. There is definitely a constant feeling that we have to prove that we are intelligent enough and can

manage life just as well as white people can. I've seen it in my life, in my family, friends, strangers, and among fellow students. As black people we may know intellectually that we are not inferior but we feel it in the way we are treated in this world, in the discourses around us, the media, the way we are ignored, looked down on and patronised, no matter how much we've proved ourselves. It hurts our emotions, our pride and our dignity as well as our self respect and many of us do not even know why.

Some of the outward manifestations of the hurt, bitterness and anger of the black person against the whites are to hate everything western or so called 'white'. The other manifestation, however, is to wish you were white and to aspire to be white and this is often seen in children who grow up generally around whites. This however changes as they are rejected by the very white people they seek to emulate. The aspiration toward wholeness and all that it symbolises in terms of beauty and success is most poignantly described in "The Bluest Eye" by Toni Morrison. In the South African context where racial groups were separate until recently, if one does not seem to be stereotypically black, the rejection can come from fellow black people as well as white people. Black people will reject some who supposedly act white because they have chosen to reject and hate everything 'white'. White people will simply reject you because you are black and you do not fit in for example.

I had an incredible encounter with a friend from Johannesburg. We met when I was about ten years old. During that time as we interacted I remember thinking that she spoke English with a wonderful accent, which she had acquired from attending a multi-racial school. When we met about 17 years later I was amazed to hear her speaking with what one would define as a typically African accent. When I inquired about the change she explained that as a result of tremendous rejection by fellow black people on account of her accent she had deliberately changed it.

The point of explaining the above is to show that some black people also suffer from an identity crisis as a result of living in post-apartheid South Africa. At a certain level black people are expected to bear allegiance to their blackness by making sure that they can speak their mother tongue, adhere to their culture and speak other African languages. On the other side of the spectrum they are expected to compete on an equal level in a westernised society dominated by globalisation. Keeping the balance can be a problem in some cases.

The tremendous amount of suffering as a result of one's skin colour is also one of the features of being a black South African because of the perception the world over that, black people are deficient compared to white people. The reality of the pervasiveness of this belief is that black people themselves believe it, thus reflecting the dynamic of internalised oppression, Sewpaul (2003).

According to Fanon (1986:12), "There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is a fact: Black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect." It has been previously mentioned that, being white is the standard through which black people are measured throughout the world. It is pointed out by Sewpaul (2003) that there is a need to move away from using white, which is a mark of gender and racial privilege, as a point of departure in identifying difference, because whiteness as race and colour represents itself as the original model for being civilized and good, while it represents the other as primitive and bad. South Africa also followed the same route with regard to race, having been a colony like other countries in Africa, and it is a fact that everybody in South Africa 'had to' gauge their progress and success as human beings, according to representations of white and in particular British whiteness.

The British English culture was the predominant culture and it was deemed superior. Even with the advent of an Afrikaner ruling party in the late 1940s, English culture continued to be elevated higher than Afrikaans culture. Currently in South Africa, English is the main medium of instruction and communication for

the whole country, followed by Afrikaans. The majority of black people can therefore speak English and/or Afrikaans fluently as well as their mother tongue. According to Fanon (1986:18) "Every colonised people – in other words, in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is with the culture of another country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle." One could argue that in South Africa, separate development allowed everybody to follow their own culture. This, however, would be wrong because schools for example were controlled in terms of the South African apartheid government which restricted so called, Indian, coloured and black people in terms what they were to learn, what religion they were to practice in school and so on.

In the 1950s according to Banton (1988), the South African apartheid government had the following social situations regulated by laws based upon racial criteria:

❖ Marriage

❖ 'illicit' carnal intercourse

❖ Proximity between neighbours and traders

❖ Inclusion on a common electoral roll

❖ School education for Africans

❖ Reservations of occupations

❖ Control of contact in trade

❖ Black – white contact in churches, schools, hospitals, clubs, places of entertainment, public assemblies, university education

The racial classification of apartheid made it 'impossible' for people to enter into social relations until the racial status of the other party was known. The example of a black person being left to die because there were no ambulances for black

people available but only ambulances for white people is often quoted as an example of the inhumanity of apartheid.

The importance of the above is in that it created different racial groups who did not have experience of each other as human beings but only exposure to propaganda that was imposed on them by the government of the time.

According to Sewpaul (2003) "By some illogical extension, economic and political power and military capacity have come to be seen as synonymous with intellectual and academic integrity, contributing to the Western exploitation and hegemony that exists in almost all of the Two-Thirds world." As shall be seen with the responses of the black students from Sturgeon's (2002) study, black students to date still feel that they are inferior to white people, intellectually and academically. The roots of this may be imbedded in slavery, black servitude, colonialism and lack of political, economic and military power. Students responses from Sturgeon's (2002) study included:

Themes common to black students

❖ Impact of apartheid

Stories of great hardship and personal hurt were presented. "I wondered why whites did not suffer like we do. I got involved in politics and developed attitudes toward other race groups."

❖ Contact with other race/ethnic groups

Students from rural areas or small towns described a progression of how they initially only mixed with their own language group, then with other Black language groups, and lastly with White or Coloured people either at private schools or later, in high school or at university.

❖ Aware of stereotypes, past and present

Most black students shared common stereotypes of white people and of themselves. "A white person is a person who has everything, who knows everything, and owns the world as a result." "I internalised the stereotype of being disadvantaged, stupid and no good. This was like a label."

❖ Importance of respect

The concept of respect was highly valued and mentioned by most students.

❖ Importance of cultural values, extended families and "Ubuntu"
Most students commented on the importance of their cultural values, rituals and traditions and described these in some detail.

❖ The importance of language
"I believe language is the most important aspect of culture."

❖ Feelings towards the current political dispensation
Students generally did not discuss this in any detail except to note that the country has changed dramatically.

It has been clearly seen that in direct contrast to white people, black people generally have an inferiority complex and that some have unresolved bitterness, which is a direct result of apartheid. The following section will deal with perspectives on being Indian in South Africa with special focus on the current Indo-African conflict in South Africa, which also has its origins in the past apartheid system.

2.6 Perspectives on being Indian in South Africa

"You and I are genetic accidents. Neither you nor I have had any choice in the matter. While my wife may wear a sari and I may eat curry and rice, I am an African, inasmuch as those born in Britain are British, and those born in France are French, and nobody has the right to deny me my birth right" Ronnie Govender (2000)

At the beginning of the year 2000, an editorial in the Isizulu bi-weekly newspaper ILANGA was written by an ex-editor Mr Amos Maphumulo, who was forced to resign after expressing strong anti-Indian views in the Newspaper. In his article he suggested that Indians be expelled from the country, causing some tension between the Indian and the black African populations in South Africa. As a direct result of Maphumulo's article, debates were held concerning Afro-Indian relations including a day long workshop at the Independent Newspapers in Greyville which

was co-chaired by the then Home Affairs minister and IFP leader Inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Bishop Rubin (Mhlanga, 2000) 'Daily News'.

Following the above incident, about two years later, towards the middle of 2002, there was controversy over Mbongeni Ngema's song, Amandiya (Indians), which talked about Indian businessmen exploiting black people. Once again tensions between Indians and Africans in South Africa were provoked (Suthentira & Mkhize, 2002) 'Sunday Times', (Ismail, 2002) 'Tribune Herald'.

Following are some of the sentiments that were expressed as a direct result of the release of Mbongeni Ngema's song:

"The South African Human Rights Commission had condemned the song because 'it consists of sweeping generalisations, contains harmful stereotypes of Indian people and has the potential to polarise the races..." (Singh 2002) 'The Post'.

"Mbongeni Ngema's anti-Indian song is rabidly racist hate speech...Indeed, the evidence that affirmative action sidelines Indians is not only anecdotal but also overwhelming. Thus, when Ngema says that Indians have taken over Durban, and that Blacks are poor because exploitative Indians have it all, he is talking balderdash, fandangle, nonsense. My guess is that today there are more black than Indian millionaires. Affirmative action continues to hurt Indians" (Jethalal 2002), 'The Leader'.

"Indians are potrayed in a narrow one-dimensional caricature of their actual selves. Indians are more often than not perceived as traditionally dressed, curry munching, funny talking, corrupt people who arrange marriages, own most businesses, and who bribe people to get what they want" (Seedat, M & Naidoo, V. 2002) 'The Post'.

"Post journalist Mr Marlan Padayachee recorded the following in one of his articles: 'Despite once fighting shoulder to shoulder with their African comrades, they (Indians) now appear to be collectively facing a post-apartheid dilemma of an identity crisis; the question of political allegiance and the fear of the ruling ANC's affirmative action job policy'". (Seedat, M & Naidoo, V. 2002) 'POST'.

The identity crisis in the Indian community which is alluded to by Padayachee was also evident in the responses that students gave to a question about affirmative action in the research. These responses will be given and discussed in Chapter Four.

Debates on Afro-Indian relations in South Africa, also resulted in the resurgence of talk about the 1949 riots in which a black 14 year old boy had an argument with an Indian shop assistant of about 16 years of age who then slapped the latter's face. This resulted in large scale rioting, which started in Cato Manor. 'Daily News', (2000). The result of these riots resulted in the deaths of many Indians and fears of the occurrence of similar riots with history repeating itself for Indians in South Africa.

When giving commentary on the resurgence of tense Indo-African relations, Webster (2000) pointed out that , "...under colonialism – and its more developed form, apartheid – the colonised were not all treated the same. Some were given preferential treatment – under colonialism there was a process of what one would call differential incorporation of the colonised in the social structure. As a result, conflict and competition between the subordinate groups over scarce resources often took a racial or ethnic form. Through the process of differential incorporation, stereotypes of groups emerged that could provide the flashpoint for explosive "race riots" (Webster 2000), 'Daily News'.

It is further pointed out by Webster (2000) that, the 1949 riot was structurally predetermined because the social structure stemming from the system of apartheid incorporated ethnic and racial groups at different levels and the Indians

were perceived to benefit by this differential incorporation. It seems that even after apartheid the perception that black people have of the Indian community, has not changed. According to Webster (2000), the structural conditions that South Africa has today are different in some fundamental ways to those that existed in 1949. An example is that we no longer have a government committed to racial and ethnic segregation but regrettably, however, many of the socio-economic conditions that fuelled frustrations among the poor of Durban over 50 years ago still exist today. This is evidenced, for example, by the large informal settlements, which exist in and around the city of Durban. The problem with regard to Afro-Indian relations therefore appears to not only be a racial one but a socio-economic or a class one (Khan, 2002) 'Daily News', (Terrebalche, 2002), (Desai, 2000).

According to Meer (2000), there are over a million South Africans of Indian origin, 76% of which live in KwaZulu Natal. It is well known according to Meer (2000) that the majority of the South African Indians were brought to KwaZulu Natal as indentured labourers in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it was a British colony. The South African Indian population according to Meer (2000) is English speaking to the extent that, generally the youth do not know any one of the numerous Indian languages spoken by their grandparents. They are outwardly a modern sophisticated people presenting themselves in the western mode. Inwardly however according to Meer (2000), family ties and religion keep the Indian people firmly tied to the traditions that are intrinsically Hindu and Muslim and that distinguish them from other South Africans.

It is further asserted by Meer (2000: 1), "For South African Indians, India and Pakistan remain important as places of cultural renewal, probing roots and going on holidays when affordable. There is no involvement in Indian politics. There is no wish to return to India, even just to die there. India is really a strange country – most South African Indians are five generations deep, and their roots are firmly embedded in this country. There has been some secondary migration to

Canada, Australia and the United States, but the numbers are negligible, confined in the main to professionals. Even then, most of those who have migrated, confess a nostalgia and a wish to return." The above expresses the importance of South Africa as a place where South African Indian identity is built from having generations of South African Indians growing up in South Africa.

As has been mentioned previously, people do not just have one identity that characterises them but several. This is also the case with the Indian community in South Africa. According to Meer (2000), there are whirls of cultures within cultures and there are Indians who are three generations deep in South Africa who insist that they are Africans. On the other hand there are Indians who insist on their Indianness, and draw even narrower boundaries around them such as Hindus, Muslims, South Indians, North Indians, Tamils, Telegus, Gujeratis and Hindustanis (Meer, 2000).

The above explains clearly some of the dilemmas that are faced by South African Indians in terms of their racial identity. This 'identity crisis' is further complicated by some of the dynamics that are at play economically and racially between blacks and Indians as a result of the legacy of apartheid and the growing margin of poverty between the haves and have-nots in South Africa. It is argued by Vilakazi (2000) that the main cause of conflict between Indian and black people, is economic as well as racial. Vilakazi (2000) contended that although slavery had existed for generations in human history throughout the world, in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, slavery began to be associated with the black African skin colour, even though slaves of other groups other than black existed. The term slave therefore became synonymous with being "black African". According to Vilakazi (2000: 4) "…the episodic character of those other instances of slavery, such as "White slavery" in North America, the enslavement of the Indian people in 19th century Natal, and the Chinese in other parts of Western civilization, is shown later by the fact that the "slave" status of these people never became such

a burdensome heritage that it hindered the upward mobility of those people above the black African."

The White European was placed at the top of the race hierarchy in terms of superiority and the black African at the very bottom of the hierarchy, with the Chinese, the Malay, the Indian, the South African coloured and other groups being placed between the two ends of the hierarchy. According to Vilakazi (2000), the direct result of this was that everybody who was not black African, particularly those who were classified as in-between were careful and anxious not to be mistaken for being black.

The layers of people in between the black African and the white European namely, for example the Indian, the coloured, the Chinese, and the Malay people generally acquired with time a sense of superiority over the black African. The apartheid government made it possible for the roles of who is superior to whom to be acted out, in the way facilities were allocated to the different racial groups. According to Vilakazi (2000: 6), the layers between the black African and the white European, "… were very anxious and careful not to be mistaken for the African, and they acted that particular anxiety and concern, almost always, with cruelty, which filled the African with great bitterness towards these layers of people…This must be kept in mind when discussing Indian-African relations". The reasons for problems in Indo-African relations is taken further by Vilakazi (2000) who argues that the black community's well being is deteriorating.

Five factors are pointed out by Vilakazi (2000: 8) which are important when discussing relations between Indians and blacks in South Africa:
1) The black population is the overwhelming majority of the population in the country and in the province of Kwa-zulu Natal.
2) The black population is the poorest, least educated, and least skilled.
3) The black population is the indigenous population, which was dispossessed of the land and vital resources needed for a decent life.

4) Historically, the heaviest weight of oppression, exploitation, and contempt fell upon the black population.

5) The black population was the mass base of the liberation struggle.

Vilakazi (2000) argues, based on the above, that it should not come as a surprise that the black community is as dissatisfied as it is, and as they look around for comparative purposes at the other minority groups in the country they notice their upward mobility while their situation continues to worsen. According to Vilakazi (2000: 8), "When the majority community (in numbers or power) is satisfied, prospering, and secure, it does not mind the nest community of minorities, even if minorities are also satisfied, prospering, and secure. However, when the majority community is beset by want, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and fear, it tends to exhibit a lack of compassion and tolerance for minorities."

It is pointed out by a number of writers that during the apartheid years there were quite a number of Indians in South Africa who were involved in the struggle for freedom for black, Indian and Coloured people in South Africa (Padayachee cited in Seedat & Naidoo, 2002, Jethalal 2002). Currently South Africa is no longer governed under a system of apartheid and what is evidently being experienced by the general Indian South African population is that they are not wanted in South Africa. Things are further complicated by the fact that some Indian people are 'attacked' for holding fast to traditions as well as a culture, which separates them from the rest of the South African population. It is therefore not surprising that there should be a general 'identity crisis' in the Indian population. It is pointed out by Poovalingam (2002), that there is an absence of societal interaction by the Indian community and that as a direct result of this, Indians in South Africa are seen as stuck up, only interested in making money, clannish and keep to themselves.

It is interesting to note from Sturgeon's (2002) study (where she has combined the responses of Indian and coloured students) that the responses of students

confirm some of the above dilemmas that some of the South Africans of Indian origin feel they face. The responses of students were as follows:

Themes common to Coloured and Indian students

- ❖ Questioning of Identity

  Coloured and Indian students more than any other group, debated their identity and questioned the significance of this identity. "Am I Indian or Coloured?"

- ❖ Awareness of apartheid

  While some Coloured and Indian students were politically aware from an early age, others only became aware more recently.

- ❖ Role of religion. Religious differences, Christian or Muslim

  For most students religion played an important part in their lives.

- ❖ Aware of stereotypes/racism, past and present

  Most students described early stereotypes of black and white, which have changed over the years, but which to some extent are still evident.

- ❖ Events that changed perceptions

  While the students were aware of apartheid from a reasonably young age, it seems they started to question its legitimacy when encouraged to do so by influential people in their lives.

- ❖ Feelings towards the current political dispensation

  "In the apartheid era the whites had all the power, while in the post-apartheid era there seems to be a major shift of power from whites to the 'blacks'. These shifts are necessary, but unfair to us Coloureds."

- ❖ Afraid of violence

  Some students commented on the level of violence in their communities, particularly gang-related violence.

What seems apparent when looking at perspectives on being Indian in South Africa, is that the Indian people feel marginalised and cast-aside because they are neither white nor black, and policies such as affirmative action are considered unfair. Coloured people also consider themselves as neither white

nor black. The following section will look at perspectives on being Coloured in South Africa.

2.7 Perspectives on Being 'Coloured' in South Africa

"I consider myself African. But this is not a general Coloured perception. In fact a lot of Coloured people deny their African heritage. There is an aspiration toward white beauty although it's not overtly stated, but they furiously straighten their hair so you can't see the African kink, they still consider a straighter nose, thinner lips, lighter skin as beauty. And that's the aspiration. Apartheid still lives in our minds" (Lueen Conning, 2002).

The above quotation reminds me of an experience I had when studying at the University of Cape Town where the majority of the Coloured population reside in South Africa. Before progressing to relate the experience a definition of a coloured person in the South African context will be given. According to Sewpaul (1999:741) , "The term 'Coloured' initially embraced seven sub-groups: Cape Coloured, Griqua, Malay, Indian, Chinese other Asiatic and Other Coloured. With the Population Registration Amendment Act No. 64 of 1967, a child was classified as Coloured if both parents were classified Coloured or if one parent was white and the other Coloured or black. The other sub-groups – Malay, Indian and Chinese were not equated." As mentioned before the categorisation of people according to race has its problems and even though the Population Registration Act Repeal Act No.114 of 1991 abolished the distinction made between persons belonging to different races or populations groups, the labels continue to be used in South Africa. The Coloured racial category in the researcher's opinion is the most confusing. In the context of this discussion a Coloured person is one who is a mixture of different race groups.

Referring back to my experience in Cape Town which I alluded to earlier, I remember having difficulty at times in identifying whether a person was so called Coloured, Black, White or Indian because of the variety of shades of skin colour, texture of hair and physical features that characterise the coloured population. Some coloured people looked Black, others Indian and still others white. It is

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therefore not uncommon to hear stories of Coloured people who identified themselves as white despite having black ancestry.

Another experience I had in Cape Town involved us sitting as a group of students discussing our family trees. I remember being rather disappointed when the Coloured students mentioned, Norwegian, German, French, Dutch ancestors etc... and absolutely nothing about their African or Indian or other ancestors whereas it was visible that they were not 100% white Caucasian. This observation highlights the fact that these Coloured people were ashamed of their 'non-white' or 'black' ancestry. The discourses on the inferiority of Black people and the superiority of white people once again comes to mind. According to Conning (2002) one of the things her play 'A Coloured Place' explores is the fact that as Coloured people they have never acknowledged their roots.

Having spoken to a Coloured friend here in Durban, one of her greatest pains in her own words were that she felt she was not accepted either by Black people nor was she accepted by Whites. This she says is the greatest pain about being Coloured. One of the other frustrations she says is the fact she is continually hearing reference to lighter skin being better than dark skin. My friend points out that her sister who is fairer than her receives and has always received better and more affirming attention than she receives. Having said this, the researcher is aware that this preference of lighter skin is pervasive even in black and Indian communities. In the Coloured community however it appears to be more painful because one has to grapple with the fact that one is part of two, three or even sometimes four or more different racial categories. As a result of this one is sometimes confronted with having to choose which racial category they must identify with more than another. With regard to the Coloured group I interacted with in Cape Town, they chose to ignore and deny their Black heritage and acknowledged their white heritage because of the superior status of white people as compared to black people.

Explained in another way it could be said that there are Coloured people who have an identity crisis. In the words of Conning (2002:4), "Because of not having an overt cultural or collective identity or something they could call their own, Coloured people have experienced, in a sense a major identity crisis. In the old South Africa they didn't fit into any of the prescribed boxes. African, Indian, and white communities had very distinct cultures and parameters. Coloured people were dumped in a separate box, lived in their own areas and, in a sense, purely out of circumstance there was a sense of community. Unfortunately, the urban Coloured community is on a trip that is all about escapism...Whether through alcohol, drug abuse, gangsterism, or denial of their African heritage."

Conning (2002) indicated that she found it difficult to relate to the term Coloured and she says that she found herself asking questions concerning her identity in the new South Africa. She expressed surprise that South Africans would ask her which racial category she belonged to. She knew this stemmed from the fact that there is not one particular face, or type of hair, or skin colour that one can say is Coloured, and the lack of a Coloured accent makes one even less easily identifiable as a Coloured person.

As has been mentioned previously, in a post-apartheid South Africa Coloured people feel marginalised as popularly expressed in the statement, "we are not white enough nor are we black enough". The policy of affirmative action is also seen as favouring 'pure' Africans which makes many Coloured people resentful. This is confirmed in Sturgeon's (2002) study and supports the researcher's underlying assumptions as well as the findings of the research.

Having seen that the issue of not being white enough or black enough is a major point of contention for Indian and Coloured South Africans when speaking about affirmative action, the following section will deal with affirmative action.

2.8 Affirmative Action

"Affirmative action cannot be applied randomly or in a haphazard manner. Rather, the courts require careful and close consideration of each of the elements stated in the constitution. A valid affirmative action policy will therefore be one that is designed to achieve the adequate protection and advancement of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and the policy must simply be adequate" (Moolla, 1999:3).

The above quotation is the source of fear and frustration for South Africans who are not black African because it is believed that the constitution supports the employment of black people over non-black people because they were the most disadvantaged, at the expense of non-black. There are therefore fears of whether non-black people will get employment. A pervasive belief is that black people will be employed regardless of qualifications or expertise and being black will be their ticket to employment. Affirmative action is seen as reverse discrimination by non-black people. Some black people on the other hand feel that if tokenism is practiced where black people are simply employed to show that there are black people regardless of their ability, this is an insult to black people who know they can get employment because of their ability and not their skin colour. It is important that affirmative action is defined and discussed in this research because it is the source of tremendous debate for the different racial groups of South Africa because of its specific focus on race.

According to Moolla (1999), in the South African Constitution, (Act 108 of 1996) it is stated that, "equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons' disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken. Added to this, the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) requires that if equality in the work place is to be achieved in South Africa, "affirmative action measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace of the designated employer, need to be

implemented. Further, members of the designated groups (Blacks, which includes Africans, Coloureds and Indians, all women and all persons with disabilities) must be "suitably" qualified to be considered for appointment" (Moolla 1999:1).

The law states clearly that affirmative action aims to redress the imbalances of the past, without any practice of tokenism, and yet the fears of the non-black people of South Africa are not surprising. Notwithstanding that South Africa already has a history of apartheid which guaranteed white people employment, the prospect of not having this guarantee and security must be frightening. According to van Jaarsveld, "It was through the Industrial Dispute Prevention Act of 1909 that white workers through white only trade unions were given the right of employment within the government. The Native Regulation Act of 1911 standardised black employment by providing for certain procedures and penalties if black workers were to be employed. Section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 enabled the Minister of Labour to reserve employment positions for people of a certain race. The Bantu Labour Act excluded all blacks from the definition of 'employee' and prohibited registered trade unions from including blacks as members."

Population groups such as the Indians and the Coloureds on the other hand know that black people will be considered before them in the implementation of affirmative action and this cannot be easy to accept. The reality of what happens in practice has also been debated in terms of the fact that tokenism does occur. At the back of the minds of South Africans who think that black people are not as competent as white people when doing certain jobs, black people included, affirmative action is further resisted. The necessity of affirmative action therefore does not make it easy for non-black people to accept.

There is no doubt that the redress of past inequalities in South Africa is a necessity. However it is important that in redressing these imbalances, non-

black racial groups are not totally alienated and marginalised. This will not augur well for the future of South Africa, especially if we aspire to be a true and deepened democracy. It is undoubtedly a difficult and a painful process for many South Africans and there is a need for education of people in the process of implementing affirmative action. Ultimately there cannot be effective redress without some loss to some persons or groups. Previously/currently privileged groups need to become aware of their privileged status and why change needs to occur.

This chapter detailed the literature, beginning with a brief description of UND as the area where the research was conducted. The literature review also looked at studies done locally at other institutions of higher learning. It gave both global and local perspectives on racial identity issues: namely, perspectives on being white, black, Indian and coloured in South Africa and discussed affirmative action which is an important aspect of this study. Chapter Three which follows focuses on the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in the research. Methodology or methodological approaches, according to Babbie (2001) refer to the wide variety of methods and techniques used by scientists in empirical research depending on the tasks they perform: from methods and techniques of sampling, to data collection methods to methods of data analysis. The selection of the methods and their application, according to Babbie (2001), are always dependent on the aims and the objectives of the study, the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and the underlying theory or expectations of the researcher. Certain assumptions and principles underlie the methods and techniques used. Methodology therefore includes both the methods and techniques used by the researcher as well as the underlying principles and assumptions regarding their use (Babbie, 2001).

3.2 Research Design

The research was guided by a descriptive research design. A triangulated research methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods was used in this study. The triangulation included more than one data source. According to (Denzin cited in Babbie, 2001: 275), "Triangulation or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that will raise sociologists [and other social science researchers] above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies." This is said to be because triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability done within the interpretive paradigm. According to Babbie (2001:279) qualitative research designs share the following features:

- ❑ A detailed engagement/encounter with the object of study.

- Selecting a small number of cases to be studied
- An openness to multiple sources of data (multi-method approach).
- Flexible design features that allow the researcher to adapt and make changes to the study where and when necessary.

According to Denzin & Lincoln (1994: 2), qualitative research is intended to "...study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them." The researcher attempted to do this.

Quantitative researchers on the other hand according to Neuman (2000), want to develop techniques that produce quantitative data or data that is in the form of numbers. This is done by the researcher moving from abstract ideas, or variables, to specific data collection techniques to precise numerical information produced by the techniques. The researcher also attempted to do this.

3.3 Population and Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was used with reliance on available subjects. According to Grinnell (1988) availability sampling is sometimes referred to as 'accidental sampling' and refers to the fact that the first available appropriate sampling units are used. The current research involved a student population of 108 first year, law, community development, nursing, psychology and social work, students, taking the Human Behaviour and the Environment course. The students were representative of the four different racial classifications in South Africa whom I saw three times a week as their graduate assistant. Eighty-three of the students out of 108, responded to the questionnaire administered. The value of this strategy was in the fact that it saved time and was convenient for the researcher. The researcher was in a strategic position to observe patterns of interactions among students in the classroom context.

3.4 Research Strategy and Procedures for Data Collection.

a) *Observation of the interaction of the students* was used to collect data, since the researcher already had access to a class of over 100 first year students taking a course on Human Behaviour and the Social Environment, as a graduate assistant to this class. Through observation everyday events are described and the researcher's direct or indirect participation in activities or conversation is accommodated to enable the researcher to describe individuals' perspectives and interpretations of what is happening around them. The researcher used observation by recording the interactions of the first year class specifically regarding racial identity issues, from March 20th to May 29th 2002.

b) *A Self-administered Structured Questionnaire,* (see appendix 1) was another research strategy used to collect data. There was a pre-testing of the questionnaire which was administered to the different racial groups on campus to ascertain any ambiguous or unclear questions. The self-administered questionnaire involved respondents having to complete the questionnaires themselves, (Babbie, 2001). For the study, the questionnaire was administered to the first year Human Behaviour and the Social Environment course students, at the same time and at the same place during class, making it possible to answer any questions the students may have had. A brief explanation of the purpose of the study was given to the students and ethical issues such as anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation were explained.

3.5 Forms of Analysis

Once data has been collected, data reduction needs to be done, which according to Blaikie (2000) involves transforming the raw data into a form which can be analysed. This was done both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Content Analysis

The type of qualitative analysis used was content analysis which is usually divided into two types, namely relational analysis and conceptual or thematic analysis, according to Babbie (2001). For the questionnaires conceptual or thematic as well as descriptive analyses were used. According to de Vaus (2001: 195), the fact that in descriptive research, "...surveys are not primarily designed to develop explanations of behaviour, problems of causation, of causal order or the influence of uncontrolled variables do not matter. The key thing is to ensure that samples are large enough so that we can get sufficient numbers in the various subgroups to provide reliable descriptions." When describing the racial categories in the research, there was a definite deficiency in the number of Coloured students. This has implications for the generalisability of the data from the coloured student population in the sample. According to Palmquist (1993) cited by Babbie (2001:491), the process of conceptual analysis is comprised of the following eight stages:

1) Deciding on the level of Analysis
2) Deciding how many concepts to code for
3) Deciding whether to code for the existence or frequency of concepts
4) Deciding how to distinguish among concepts
5) Developing rules for the coding of texts
6) Deciding what to do with irrelevant information
7) Coding texts
8) Analysing results

With regard to quantitative analysis some of the responses to the questions were quantified, and given as numerical information wherever it was deemed necessary by the researcher.

Some of the answers in the questionnaire were organised into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units and combined with the observations the student made in the presentation of results in Chapter Four.

3.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Design

Strengths of Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data allows the researcher to obtain richness of detail, and to learn about the reality of individuals. There is tolerance of ambiguity and contradiction as well as allowance for the prospect of an alternative explanation when interpreting data.

The reliability and validity of quantitative research is high and it has clearly defined boundaries. According to Babbie (2001:119), "...reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object , would yield the same result each time. On the other validity refers to, "...the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration, (Babbie, 2001). Though one can never be sure that they have 100% validity because of differing viewpoints on interpretations of meanings of what is measured, quantitative research has higher reliability and validity than qualitative research. The researcher tried to ensure face validity of the questionnaire, by having it pilot tested.

Limitations of Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Qualitative data is less representative. The interpretation of the data is bound up with the subjectivity of the researcher. There is also a possibility of decontextualising the meaning in the data and oversimplifying the explanations given in the data. The nature of qualitative research is that it is interpretative and therefore, biases, values and judgements of the researcher have to be openly acknowledged. Another factor is that the experiences and background of the researcher and the way they might shape the interpretation of the data must be disclosed (Creswell, 1998). There is 'no value-free or bias-free design', (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher, as indicated earlier was acutely aware of her own black racial identification and was mindful about how this might

have influenced the interpretation of the data. While the data are presented as objectively as possible, the process of interpretation does involve elements of researcher subjectivity.

With regard to this research there will be a problem of generalising the findings of the research to the rest of the student population at UND and the rest of South Africa. There will also be a problem in the research, where observations were used especially concerning the deficiencies of the human analyst, where the researcher may have certain biases with regard to data collection, in terms of consistency, focus and judgement.

Quantitative research on the other hand has a tendency toward empiricism and artificial settings. This therefore means that the detail and depth of the data can be lost.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The issue of confidentiality and anonymity was upheld in the reporting of data in the research, upholding the research ethic of no harm. By informing the students about the nature of the questionnaire and that answering the questionnaire was voluntary, informed consent was obtained by the students who responded to the questionnaire. There was awareness by the researcher however, that the fact that the study happened in a classroom context did not give students a full degree of freedom to refuse to participate.

Informed consent could not be obtained when students were being observed in the classroom context however, and the ethics of this might be questioned. While students were not explicitly informed that they were being observed, they had some awareness of it by virtue of the presence of graduate assistants and a lecturer in the classroom. The researcher believes that an explicit statement with regard to observation of patterns of racial interaction and dialogue in the

classroom might have jeopardized the objectives of the study or imposed unnatural constraints on behaviour and classroom discussions.

With regard to dissemination of information, a copy of the study will be available in the library. The researcher will also write up aspects of the study for publication in scientific journals.

This chapter has dealt with the research methodology for the study, which clearly has some limitations and some strengths. The following chapter will focus on analysis and discussion of results from the study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

"'Race' and colour are real influences in the world and the basis of group identities. To ignore the role that identity plays, even identity based on an artificial or arbitrary construct such as 'race' or 'colour', is to deprive people of their history, culture or sense of place and the ability to celebrate part of themselves" (Beyond Racism, Overview Report, 2000:40).

In this chapter the results pertaining to racial identity among students doing the Human Behaviour and the Social Environment first year course are presented. As the quote above indicates, there is no avoiding the influences of 'race' and colour when discussing group identities. This is especially true in South Africa which has a legacy of apartheid. When discussing the results of the questionnaire 'race' will therefore unavoidably be the foci in the discussion.

Out of a class of 108 students, (from the Departments of Social Work, Psychology, Nursing, Community Development and Law) doing the Human Behaviour and the Social Environment first year course, 83 students answered the questionnaire. The fact that the above mentioned professions, particularly social work, nursing and community development are generally female dominated meant that the majority of students were female as seen below in Fig. 1, with 89% of the respondents being female and only 11% of the respondents being male.
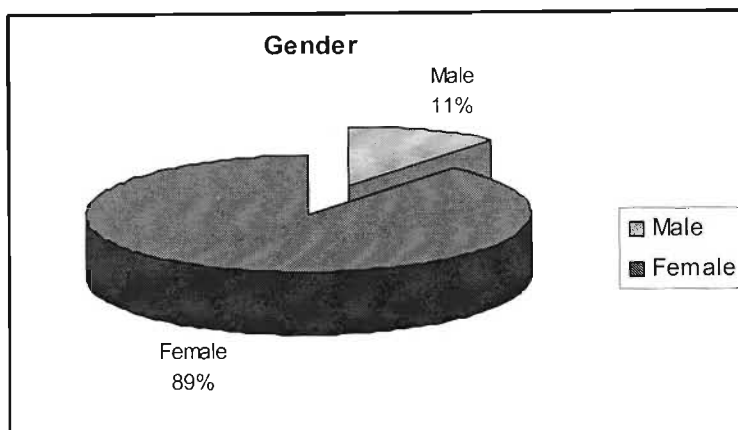
Fig.1 Gender

With regard to the ages of the students, the majority of students were in their late teenage years in keeping with the fact that the majority of them were first year students. The fact that the majority of students were in the ages 17, 18 and 19 years of age is a reflection that they had entered university immediately or soon after secondary schooling.

It is well documented by psychologists such as Erikson (1963) that this stage of development is characterised by identity versus role confusion. Many of these students will no doubt be grappling with whether they are following the right career path, which may affect the rest of their lives. For some of the students there are bound to be some career changes as they move through university and as they consolidate their identities. There were a few students in their twenties as well as thirties and one in her forties as shown in Fig. 2.
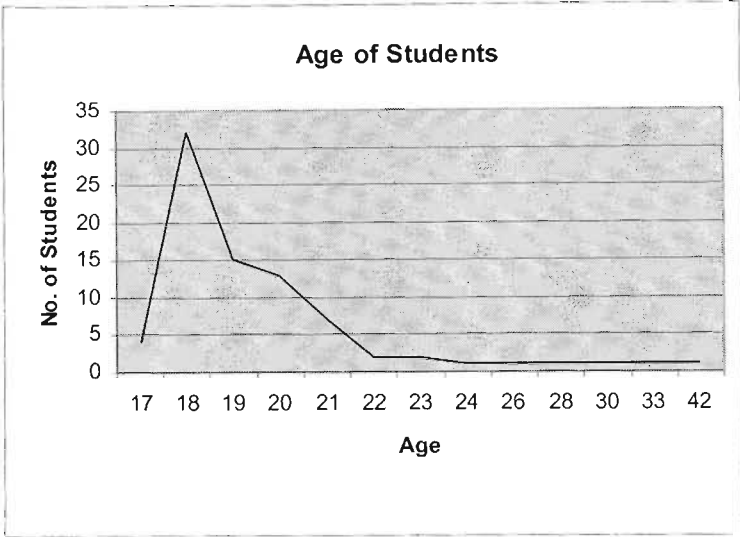
Fig.2 Age of Students

Another expected finding was that since the Human Behaviour and Social Environment Course is a first year course, the majority of students were first year students followed by 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th year students (see fig. 3). It needs to be pointed out that some of the students doing the course were repeating the course as a result of having failed the course. This might explain some of the students doing the course as second year students. Another factor is that there are senior students who are doing the Human Behaviour and Social environment course as an ancillary module while doing other major subjects.
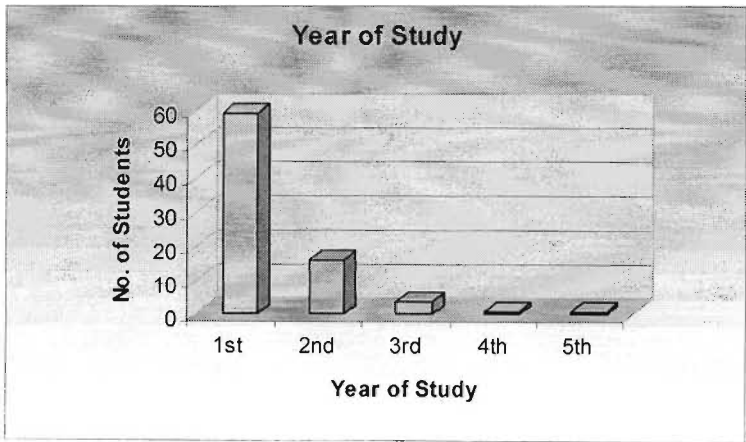
Fig.3 Year of Study

With regard to the racial classification of the students, (See fig.4) 36% of the students were Indian, which was the biggest population group in the sample. This may be attributed to the fact that Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) has the highest Indian population in South Africa. This however is not a reflection of the Indian population being the highest population in KZN, the Black Population is the highest population in KZN, followed by the Indian, white and finally the coloured population. The second highest racial group in the sample was the black students, with 33% being black, followed by 21% being white, 5% being coloured and 5% of the students being foreign (represented in the 'other' category). The foreign students included students from Japan, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique, (see fig. 4). Statistical information acquired from student records at UND indicated that in 2002, for all the faculties of the University of Natal Campuses, 48% were black students, 3% coloureds, 29% Indians and 20% whites. In the Faculty of Community and Development disciplines (CADD) at UND from which the majority of the students in the study belonged, 75% were black students, 3% coloured, 11% Indian and 10% white. This indicates that despite the indications in this study the majority of students in the University of Natal are black, followed by Indian, white and coloured students respectively. It is further indicated that in the CADD faculty the percentage of black students is even higher compared to the other racial groups.
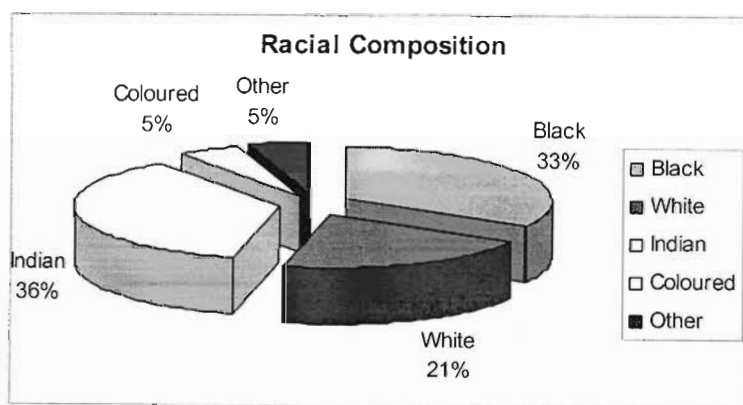
Fig.4 Racial Composition

When looking at the responses of the students in this study it important to bear in mind that, "...racial classifications and identities are neither uniform nor are they static around the world...All human beings have multiple identities – as members of nations, communities, families and professions. As men or women, rich or poor, we have "racial identities" and appearances associated with people indigenous to different parts of the world – Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia. These identities may be generated and embraced from within or imposed on us by others. However constructed, they have force and influence in our lives " (Nascimento & Nascimento 2000: 17).

Having provided the basic demographic data the rest of this chapter will focus on discussing some of the varied responses of students to the questionnaire (See Appendix 1). The students responses will be discussed under five themes which were identified by the researcher.

In South Africa the previous apartheid government worked hard to instil in the minds of South Africans how 'static' identities were and this has no doubt affected the current generation of young South Africans. The responses of the students showed limited interactions of the different racial groups and a general discomfort when it came to interaction across racial lines for many students. The analysis of data deals with students' responses concerning current debates around issues such as affirmative action, the current South African government, intimate relationships across racial lines and how students view their future in South Africa.

From the twenty questions that students had to answer in the questionnaires issued to them, the following five themes were identified:

1) Interaction with other racial groups
2) Identification with own racial group

3) Government's handling of the different racial groups

4) Intimate interaction across colour lines

5) Future in South Africa

Within the above mentioned themes there were sub-themes which will be seen as each theme is discussed. The responses of the different racial groups will be given and discussed in terms of how specific racial groups responded to the questions.

4.2   INTERACTION WITH OTHER RACIAL GROUPS

Interaction prior to coming UND

In the questionnaire, students were asked: "Prior to coming to UND, what was the nature and type of your interactions with persons other than your own 'race group'?" Overall whether from black, white, Indian, Coloured or foreign origins (who are represented by the category 'other') the findings were that the majority of students had minimal interaction with other racial groups. Such interaction was largely restricted to certain circumstances such as work or school. Even where students were 'interacting' within the school context there were allusions to the fact that this interaction happened because it was forced by teachers, who divided students into groups for example. This applied mainly to students who had attended multi-racial schools. Few students had good meaningful interactions and only a very small number claimed to have had no interaction at all with other racial groups (See Fig. 5).
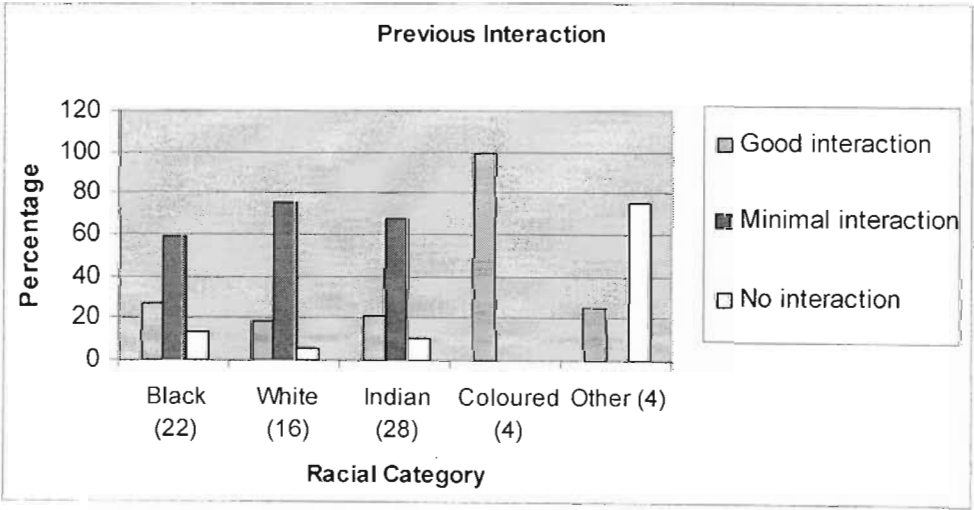

Fig.5 Previous Interaction

What was classified minimal interaction was interaction that students had in formal settings such as school, work, shopping etc. With regard to good interaction, this involved interaction that went beyond the formal setting and involved students actually having friends from other racial groups and interacting socially with other racial groups as well. Some students also described their interaction with other racial groups as good. It bears noting however that, what some students may consider good interaction is in fact minimal interaction. For many of the students who have interacted for the first time with other racial groups in a school setting, they may consider this to be excellent interaction as compared to the fact that, in other contexts they never interact with other racial groups. The nature of the interaction is also probably not analysed by some students whereas others do analyse it. What some students may consider good interaction, may therefore actually not be interpreted as such.

When looking at Figure 5., which documents the previous interaction that students had with other racial groups prior to coming to UND, 74 students as compared to the 83 who responded to the questionnaire answered this particular question. Out of 83 students, 9 students therefore did not answer the question. From the 22 black students out of a total of 27 black students who responded, 14% said that they had no interaction with other racial groups, prior to coming to UND. On the other hand 59% of black students claimed to have had minimal interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND. Finally, 27% of black students claimed to have good interaction with other racial groups, prior to coming to UND. Examples of students responses include:

"Very poor, there was no mixing with people of another race even if we were assigned in groups which had different races and I always felt small and inferior, I wasn't able to let out my ideas because they didn't even bother taking them".

"Its difficult because we don't have the same interests and I find that other races feel uncomfortable and see it as a shame to interact with blacks."

"I am not feeling good if I interact with other race groups, than my own race group, I feel open to talk everything in my own group. The stigma that black people are inferior from other races is still there".

"It was too complicated at first, since I was afraid because I have not been studying in a multi-racial school".

One of the distinct factors that can be noted from the above responses of some of the black students is the fact that there is a feeling of inferiority when interacting with other racial groups. When one considers that there are books such as the one written by Gordon de la Mothe called, "Reconstructing the Black Image", the main focus of which, is to document black people of great intellect and stature to prove the intelligence and equal standing of black people as compared to white, is one example of the need for black people to prove themselves as equal to white people. It has already been mentioned before that in South Africa there was a clear hierarchy with White people at the very top and black people at the very bottom of the hierarchy of privilege and assumed intelligence and this no doubt has carried on through the generations of South Africans. It has fostered the belief by white people that they are superior to black people and black people believe that they are inferior to white people.

In South Africa this is made very difficult by the fact that many students do not necessarily have a good command of the English language, the main medium of instruction at school. They may be regarded as stupid by their fellow students thus contributing to increased feelings of inferiority. Other factors that lead to this are the disparities in wealth between black and white students which means that black students do not have access to the same kinds of facilities for the betterment of their education.

Sixteen out of the 18 white students responded to the question (see Fig. 5).

From the 16 white students who responded, 6% claimed to have had no interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND, while 75% claimed to have had minimal interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND. Finally 19% of the white students claimed to have good interaction with other racial groups.

With regard to some of the more distinct responses of the white students, there was a student who consistently referred to other racial groups as *'those people'*, which indicated a process of 'othering'. In the apartheid years it was an accepted belief that white people had to protect themselves from the other that represented the 'swart gevaar', translated 'black danger'. The student said: "I've had much less coloured, Indian or black friends than whites, but have good relations with those people. Their culture and value systems are different."

One of the more common responses of the white students was: "They work for me, the Black people I mean, I go drinking with them, but hardly socialize with them, beyond the home environment." This also pointed to the phenomenon of the relationship between black and white people being that of the black person working for the white person in jobs such as being a maid, gardening etc., which were generally regarded suited for black people as the inferior people.

Out of the 30 Indian students who responded to the questionnaire, 28 responded to the question of interaction prior to coming to UND. The results indicated that 11% of the Indian students claimed to have had no interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND, with 59% of the students professing to have had minimal interaction with other racial groups, prior to coming to UND. Finally 21% of the students claimed to have had good interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND.

With the responses of the Indian students once again the process of 'othering' is noted when one of the students said: "Most of them are friendly while others

have a "don't care" attitude when you greet them. " For many of the students it was also evident that the reason for their very minimal interaction with other racial groups was because they attended predominantly Indian schools. There were however a number of students who attended multi-racial school who admitted to minimal interaction with other racial groups.

One student mentioned a very common phenomenon of 'meaningful' racial interactions of children with the black racial group being with the maid. The student says: "While walking anywhere I would greet anybody from any race, other than that I communicate with my maid."

All 4 of the coloured students in the class answered the question on their interaction prior to coming to UND. All of them claimed to have had good interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND.

Granted that there was a very small number of coloured students in the class, the fact that 100% of them said that they had good interactions with other racial groups would seem to indicate a denial that even the coloured community interacted with fellow coloured people more than other racial groups. One of the distinct occurrences in the Human Behaviour and the Social Environment class, was that all the different racial groups would sit in a cluster with their own racial group. When observing the coloured students this phenomenon applied to them as well, they tended to sit together in class and remain together with other coloured students as was the case with black, white and Indian students. The clustering in class and the reality of the fact that South Africa was segregated to a point of having residential areas for whites, blacks, coloured and Indians, indicates what appears to be denial by the coloured students. This might reflect presentation of socially acceptable responses; as people of mixed heritage they would like to believe that their allegiance does not lie with any particular race group. Yet on a behavioural level, there was clear affinity to their own race group.

The category 'other' as has been mentioned before consists of foreign students, mainly of Japanese origin. This category as shown in Fig. 5 had four respondents out of a total of four. 75% of the respondents claimed to have had no interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND, whereas 25% claimed to have had good interaction.
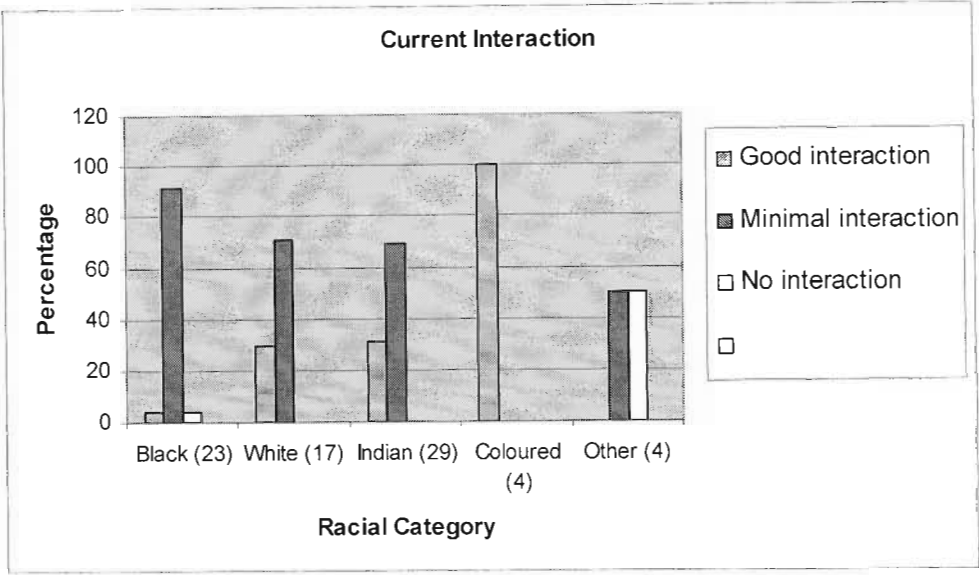
The students who had no interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND attributed this to being in a country with hardly any other racial groups. For example a student said: "In my country, majority of people are Japanese (99.4%), so I don't have a lot of opportunities to communicate and interact with other racial groups, but I'm really interested in different cultures."

Having seen the responses of students regarding their interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND, the following section will focus on students' current interaction outside and within UND.

Current Interaction of Students with other Racial Groups Outside and within UND

Students were asked the question: "Do you currently interact with people from other racial groups? Explain as fully as possible, the nature, type and frequency of the interaction." Once again the majority of the students from the different racial groups, had minimal interaction with students from other racial groups, the main interaction, being at university, where they had no choice. It was also evident from some of the responses of students that the interactions that did occur were not comfortable and were only entered into because students did not have a choice in the matter. There were once again a minimal number of students who had good interactions and a few who claimed to have no interaction. It is interesting to note that there were foreign students who did not have interaction with others which may suggest that South African students

generally do not have a culture of reaching out to foreign students. Connected to this is the fact that South Africa is known to be struggling with Xenophobia. Another factor could be the fact that foreign students themselves felt uncomfortable interacting with local South African students (See Fig. 6).

Fig.6 Current Interaction

Out of the 83 students in the sample, 77 responded to the question about their current interaction with other racial groups at UND. There were 6 students who did not respond to this question.

The responses of the black students in Fig. 6, indicate that 23 out of 27 answered the question about their current interaction. The results indicated that 5% of the students claimed to have no current interaction with other racial groups whereas 90% of the students said that they had minimal current interaction with other racial groups, mainly as a result of being forced to interact in the university setting when they were divided into groups. There were also some responses which alluded to the fact that some black students feel inferior in group discussions and that the other racial groups are not interested in what they have

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to say. Examples of some of the students responses include:

"Not really. I interact with other race groups, only when I have to, during lectures, group assignments".

"Yes, I always ask for money; lecture notes sometimes if I have missed a lecture and most frequently ask someone what the time is because I do not have a watch or a cell phone. I don't ever start a conversation unless I know them fully.

"Yes, I study with them".

"Yes, during class and it is not frequent".

"I try but they are not willing to, even in group discussions where the academic situation forces us to be but they simply cannot take what you say, especially the whites and the Indians".

One of the students mentioned the issue of language when talking about interaction and the importance of this when students are interacting. Many students who are not very comfortable with the English language limit their interaction to their own racial group because relating to other racial groups means that they have to use English.   The student below articulates the importance of language with regard to interaction with other racial groups on campus:

"Yes, some of them. Since we as students, despite the different cultures that we differ from we only use one language on campus that can enable us to communicate with each other and that is English. In this way, I can interact with people from other racial groups."

Only 5% of the students claimed to have good interaction with other racial

groups in UND currently. While this low percentage was disturbing it does suggest that there is hope for South Africa in that there are current meaningful interactions between racial groups. An example of a student's response about good interaction was:

Yes. I do. We club together, have slumber parties and we teach others about our history (racial history). We also have interactive dinners where we get to taste each other's food and we are mixed, i.e. black, white and Indian.

Seventeen of the 18 white students responded to the question on their current interaction with other racial groups at UND. There were no white students who said that they had no current interaction with other racial groups. On the other hand 71% of the white students said that they had minimal current interaction with other racial groups. As mentioned before similar sentiments of interaction that happened as a result of forced interaction through class groups were voiced by students. Examples of student responses include:

"Yes, but only at university and not on a personal level".

"Yes, now that I'm studying I interact with other races, but not frequently, we are acquaintances".

"Yes. Everyday, although not many close relations. Not all other race groups want to be close to whites".

"Not really; only in lectures and tutorials".

"I don't have friends because we seem to come from different worlds but I interact in class and wouldn't mind friends of colour".

"Not really very much. Do interact with people in classes and group work."

Another interesting phenomenon that was voiced by white students was that they had close interaction with their nannies or maids as they are commonly called in South Africa. What is interesting is that these women who are old enough to be the mothers of the children they take care of are referred to as girls.

"Yes. On the sports fields, in social gatherings at Varsity. I am good friends with my nanny girl who I feel that I can trust and go to her for anything".

"Yes frequently everyday, my nanny is my second mom".

It is common that the close relationships that white people have with black people, is the relationship that they have with their nannies. It is interesting that when students were asked about current interaction with other racial groups at UND the nanny was mentioned. One would therefore question whether some white students may have difficulty viewing fellow black students as their equals given their main interaction with black people was in the capacity of nannies or gardeners.

Twenty-nine percent of the white students said that they had good interaction currently with other racial groups. Examples of student responses include:

"Yes very close friends of mine are black and Indian. I have had two black boyfriends as well as a coloured boyfriend".

"Yes. I work with people from different race groups. I fellowship with people weekly from different race groups. At school I interacted with close friends from different race groups on a daily basis".

With regard to the Indian students, as can be seen in fig. 6, out of 30 students, 29 students responded to the question about current interaction with other racial groups at UND. There were no students who said that they had no current

interaction with other racial groups. However 69% of the students reflected minimal interaction with other racial groups. Once again the main interaction was as a result of forced interaction mainly because of groups being selected in lectures. One of the more interesting responses was that there were a few Indian students who expressed the fact that although prior to coming to UND they had friends of other racial groups this has changed since coming to UND. The segregation of South African racial groups during the apartheid years seems to be hard for students to overcome. Some expressed problems of clashes as a result of culture and lack of understanding of one another. There were also students who expressed that there was interaction with other racial groups because of religion. Examples of students' responses include:

"Most definitely, But this year my friends and myself have begun to move into groups of our own racial groups - pity!"

"Yes, to a small degree, usually to say hello, I think we are still segregated, many race groups still maintain their boundaries".

"Yes, sometimes because I have no choice because of academic reasons. I am more comfortable interacting with black people than white people although I do not have any objections and interact with both".

"Yes, but minimally. It is very hard for me as my whole life, I have lived around predominantly Indian. All of us come from different backgrounds and in most cases it is rather cultural clashes than personality clashes".

"I am only with Indians. I may just say hi and how are you to other race groups but there is no closeness with them".

"Yes. Mainly in lectures, tutorials. etc."

"Yes, I have casual conversations with my peers of other racial groups from class or outside".

"Yes, I have many friends from different race groups because of religion".

"Yes, in lectures and tutorials, we are forced to interact with each other."

"Yes I still talk to some of my old black school friends and at varsity we interact at lectures".

"Yes, everyday the people in my lectures".

Thirty-one percent of the Indian students felt that they had good current interaction with other racial groups. This suggests that there is definitely hope that South Africans are starting to break through the divisions of the past and interact with each other. Examples of student responses include:

"Yes I have friends from other race groups we go clubbing and for dinners".

"Yes everyday, I have many friends who are black, white, Indian and coloured".

"Yes, I have many people from other racial groups as friends. We interact with each other".

Once again as in the previous question, all 4 of the coloured students answered the question on their current interaction with their racial groups within UND positively. Their responses indicated that 100% of them claimed to have had good interaction with other racial groups. Once again as was debated previously, there seems to be a desire amongst coloured students to come across as interacting with other racial groups because of their mixed heritage. The reality however was that coloured students had a tendency to interact with

their 'own' racial groups during class as was the case with all the other racial groups. However, it is possible that the issue of an ambiguous identity as described in the literature review, does place coloureds in better positions to maintain positive relationships with all racial groups. Examples of student responses include:

"I have long-lasting friendships with other race groups and also work with them".

"Yes, at home 90% of my friends are white, we eat at each others houses and tease each other about racial issues, slang. At varsity I have the same attitude".

"My step-father is Indian and my boyfriend is white and my best friend is Congolese."

Having described the current interaction of students with other racial groups both within and outside UND, the following section describes students' thoughts regarding interaction of different racial groups on UND campus.

Students' Thoughts on Interaction of Different Racial Groups on UND Campus

Students were asked the question: "What are your thoughts on the interaction of the different racial groups on UND campus?" The responses of students from all the different racial groups indicated that students generally desired interaction but felt uncomfortable interacting with other racial group or they just did not understand other racial groups. This is expressed clearly by one white student whose response to the question was:

"I think there should be more interaction but black people should tone it down i.e. not always shout and scream when talking to others."

Another telling comment was from a black student who was concerned by the fact that student residences have hardly any white students.

"They should come together and embrace their differences and mostly their similarities. I live in Res. There is only one white girl in Res. Why is that?"

The fact that the University of Natal Durban was originally a University only for white people, means that there was a point when residences at UND were 100% white. When black students moved into the residences it seems that white students moved out. This is no doubt a legacy of apartheid where for many white people, it was inconceivable, (bearing in mind South African history) that they could live in the same residence with black people. After all for years many white people had been warned about the 'swart gevaar', 'black danger', and they were socialised into believing that they were superior to blacks. International students who are white on the other hand do not really have a choice about staying in residence initially when they study in South Africa. Also because they are international students, some may want the experience of regular local South African students. One Indian student essentially supporting the notion that people should remain within their own race group, asserted:

"People should be friends with who they get along with, not people who they feel uncomfortable with."

What seems clear from these responses as mentioned previously is that some students really have a desire to interact with each other but they do not feel that there is much that they have in common with other racial groups and are afraid of a backlash as a result of interaction across racial groups. From the observations that the researcher made in class, students from each specific racial group sat in particular places in the class. The white students clustered together, the black students clustered together, the Indian students clustered together, the coloured students clustered together and finally even the foreign students sat with

someone from their own country. It could perhaps be argued that the foreign students took their cue from the local students as to how interaction was supposed to happen if they wanted to be comfortable in South Africa, namely 'stick to your own kind'. What students say and what happened in class seem to show a discrepancy, in that they found it easier just to be with their own racial group despite assertions to the contrary by some of them. This may have been as a result of desiring to present more socially and politically acceptable responses.

The following section will deal with the importance that students attribute to identifying with their own race group as well as the advantages, disadvantages and challenges students feel they face as members of their specific racial groups.

4.3 IDENTIFICATION WITH OWN RACE GROUP

The Importance of Identifying with One's Own Race Group

Students were asked the question: "What do you think is the importance of identifying yourself with a particular racial group?" The majority of the students from the different racial groups felt that it was important to identify with their own racial group because it gave them a sense of belonging. Many of the students pin-pointed language, culture, customs, traditions and history as being major reasons for identification. A few students felt that racial group identification created barriers between people and therefore was not important and there were a number of students who were ambivalent about whether it was important to identify with one's racial group or not. (See Fig. 7).
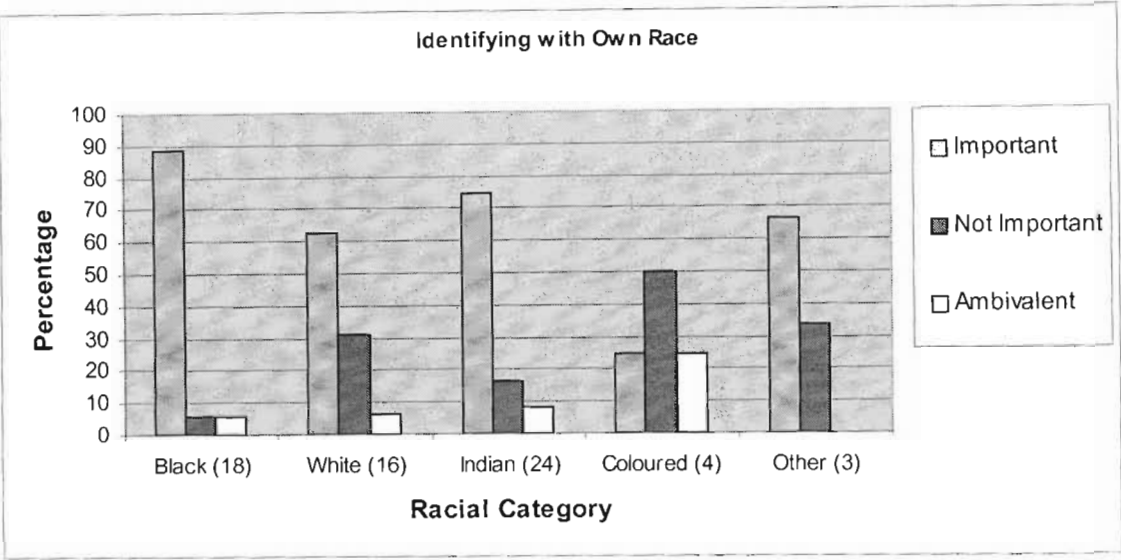
Fig.7 Identifying with Own Race

This question was not answered by a significant number of students, which could indicate that they were either uncomfortable with the question or perhaps did not understand the question clearly. Out of the 83 students, 19 did not respond to the question concerning their identification with their own racial group.

Out of the 27 black students, 18 responded to the question. Eighty-eight percent of the students felt that identification with their own race group was important. The main reasons cited for this importance were the fact that black people share a common history and culture and because there is a sense of belonging inherent in identifying with one's, own racial group. On the other hand 6% of the students felt that identification with their own racial group was not important. There appears to be a need for a sense of belonging in the society as a whole with these students, shown in the fact that they want acceptance from all racial groups. Another scenario is that perhaps students do not feel they fit into their own racial group or have experienced rejection from their racial group and therefore seek acceptance from other racial groups. Another 6% of students were ambivalent about the importance of identifying themselves with their own racial group. These feelings of ambivalence could also be attributed to how

students feel about what is politically correct and how they honestly feel, which may be that people should just stay within their own racial groups. Other students may also feel that saying identification was unimportant was somehow denying the importance of their group, as will be seen in some of the students' responses. Examples of some student responses include:

Students who thought it was important to identify with one's own race group:
"It is important to our own race group. Common background, common culture and language."

"It helps me to feel that I belong in a group that accepts and understands."

"We share something. Blacks share a sense of being the under-dogs; the oppressed. Whether in Europe or Africa black people share an identity."

"I think language and culture are the things which can identify with a sense of belonging to a race group."

With regard to white students as seen in figure 7, out of the 18 white students in the sample, 16 responded to the question on identification with one's own race group. From these 16 students, 63% felt that identification with one's own racial group was important. Once again the importance was said to be in the fact that one's racial group gave one a sense of belonging, history and culture. On the other hand, 31% of the students felt that identifying oneself with one's own racial group was not important. There is a possibility that the students who say there is no importance in identifying oneself with ones specific racial group, feel that this is tantamount to being racist, or to admitting superiority to other racial groups as shall be seen in some of the student responses. There were 6% of the students who were ambivalent, which shows the dilemma students find themselves in, namely whether to say the politically correct thing or what they actually feel. The apartheid ideology had entrenched thinking that it was correct for racial groups to

identify with their own racial group only and this was taken for granted by many students. One student for example responded with: "Never really thought of it. Seems automatic. I suppose if I did not, I would be ostracized by some people of the same race. By identifying myself as white with whites I feel as if I belong to a group." Other examples of student responses include:

Students who thought it was important to identify with ones own race group
"To achieve a sense of belonging."

"So I know if I belong."

"It gives one a sense of history and thus, belonging."

"To give you a sense of belonging."

Ambivalent students
"Gives you a feeling of importance. Know where you come from. You don't feel lost or alone, yet NOT important otherwise."

"I don't think that it is that important to differentiate yourself into a different race. I feel that it generally is differentiated as different race interests and ways of expressing themselves hence they tend to gravitate towards their own race. I feel that by differentiating oneself you create barriers between races.

Students who thought it was not important to identify with ones own race group
"Not important. I have lots of friends from all races and cultures at UND."

"There is no importance, some white people think they are superior to those of colour but I don't think we are different."

Twenty-four out of the 30 Indian students in the sample responded to the

question (Fig.7). 75% of the students felt that it was important to identify oneself with one's specific racial group. The reasons given for it were once again a sense of belonging, culture, history and religion. The 17% who felt that identification with one's specific racial group was not important once again could possibly be thinking that the admission that it was important meant that they felt that other racial groups were not important. Eight percent of the students were ambivalent which once again highlights the dilemma of being South African: on the one hand being very sensitised to your own racial group and on the other hand being encouraged to be all encompassing of other racial groups. Examples of student responses include:

"It is important, I prefer to identify with my race group, I feel more comfortable."

"It's important in that you have a sense of belonging, you do not feel isolated and inferior to the rest."

"The importance of identifying myself with a particular racial group is so that I know my background & I know my traditions and customs."

"It makes us feel we belong somewhere."

"You learn to understand each other and where you come from."

"It helps to give you a better understanding of who you are and where you come from."

"It gives me a sense of belonging."

"No importance as such. We were just born into a particular group and stereotyped actions make us call ourselves a particular group."

"I don't think that one's identity should be solely based on your race group. I don't think being Indian implies much of a difference with my identity."

Four out of the four coloured respondents answered the question on racial identification (Fig. 7). Twenty-five percent of the students felt that identification with one's racial group was important, whereas 50% felt that it was not important and 25% were ambivalent. This once again indicates denial of the importance of racial identification within the coloured racial group, which seems to be a trend throughout the study so far. As mentioned before coloured students in class sat together as did blacks, whites and Indians, following what was the trend throughout the UND campus. Examples of student responses:

"Not much importance, but generally different racial groups are treated differently."

"No importance, it just acts as a barrier between people. The only time it helps is when eye witnesses identify criminals."

"For me it is not so important."

Of the 3 out of 4 who answered the questions, the responses of the foreign students showed that 67% of the students felt that identification with one's racial group was important. 33% of the students on the other hand felt that there was no importance in identifying one's self with a specific racial group. Examples of student responses:

"No importance."

"There is a sense of familiarity bond and connection with those who share familiar experiences cultural and social because of race."

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The following section will deal with what the students felt were the advantages of being in their specific racial group if any.

4.4 The Advantages of being in your specific racial Group

Students were asked: "Do you think there are any advantages to being in your specific racial group?" The majority of the black students felt that there were advantages to being black and cited reasons of having pride in being African as well as the change from the apartheid government, and the a new government which is empowering black people. There were a few black students who said there were no advantages to being black and some of the reasons cited were that black people were poor. With regard to the white students, the majority felt that there were no advantages to being in their specific racial group mainly because they were worried about not getting jobs because of affirmative action; what many students termed reverse discrimination. The majority of Indian students felt that there were advantages to being in their specific racial group and the main reasons for this were that they were proud of their Indian culture and traditions. There were also a significant number of Indian students who felt that there were no advantages to being Indian and their reasoning was that they were either as one student put it, " too black or too white" and were therefore sidelined. There was a coloured student who felt that the fact that they were in the middle and could play both sides of the fence was an advantage and there was one who felt this was not an advantage. There were students from all the racial groups who were also ambivalent about whether it was advantageous or not to be in their specific racial group, (Fig. 8).
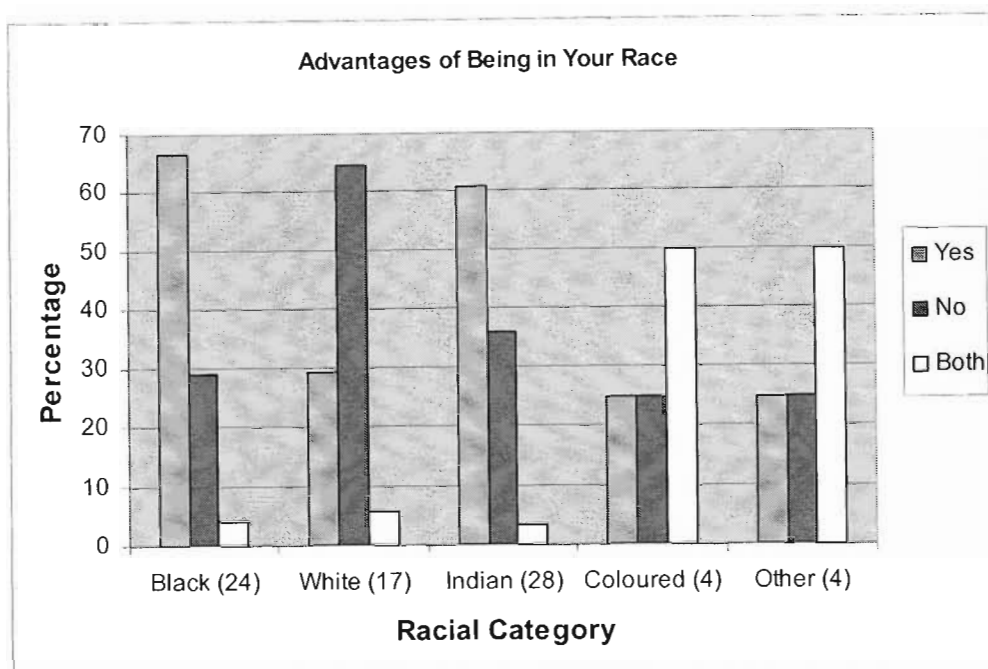
Fig.8 Advantages of Being in Your Race

As can be seen in Fig. 8, the question on the advantages of being in your specific racial group was answered by 77 students out of the 83 that responded to the questionnaire. There were 6 students who did not respond to this specific question.

Twenty-four out of the 27 black students responded to this question. Sixty-seven percent of the students answered "YES" to the fact that there were advantages to being in their specific racial group. This is in agreement with the underlying assumptions of the researcher which were that the black students would agree that there were advantages to being black, especially with the advent of a 'new South Africa' which is finally supposed to be looking out for the interests of black people which were long neglected by the apartheid government. Students pointed some of the advantages as being because of affirmative action and because of South Africa's wealth in terms of natural resources such as gold and diamonds and the spirit of togetherness that black people have. One student's response was:

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"Well, yes, especially at the present moment in South Africa. I mean I am female as well and South Africa is full opportunities for young black females! Apart from that, I just think (and this is not racist but from observation), black people are the highest / close knit group of people you can get. There is real support and 'ubuntu'. Maybe it's because we suffered together."

About 29% of the students on the other hand felt that there were no advantages to being in the black racial group. The main reasons pointed out by students included poverty and the inferior status that black people have in South Africa despite the 'new South Africa'. Responses from some of the students are the following:

"No, because I feel that as a black person, you suffer in terms of jobs thereby you will be discriminated because of your skin. Even at school I felt lower than the whites and Indian students because they tend to think they are better than the black person."

"No, because blacks are poor."

Finally only 6% of the black students felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages to being a black person South Africa, (Fig.8).

The responses of the white students showed that 17 out of the 18 white students responded to the question of whether there were any advantages to being in the specific racial group. Twenty-nine percent of the students answered "YES", that there were advantages to being in their specific racial group. This low percentage is also in keeping with the researcher's underlying assumption which was that white students would see it as a disadvantage to be white in a 'new South Africa'. It appears that some students still see that white South Africans are still at an advantage as compared to their 'black' counterparts. Some examples of students' responses are as follows:

"In South Africa, to an extent, although apartheid is over whites have been left with more opportunities and wealth to explore those opportunities. Better access to schools and medical facilities, can afford to live in areas of high infrastructure, whites still perceived as leaders by the racial groups."

"Yes- I feel we have been given better opportunities than others."

On the other hand 65% of white students felt that there were no advantages to being white in South Africa. The reasons cited for this were affirmative action which students referred to as reverse discrimination. Emigration is seen as the only option by many students. Only 6% of students felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages. Examples of student responses include:

"No, because of reverse discrimination."

"No! With affirmative action in this country, it is difficult to get jobs. On the other hand, it is probably easier to emigrate."

"I used to think that during apartheid, however, I am beginning to feel that the tables have turned against us as whites - affirmative action, etc. I feel that we are now losing out on opportunities due to our race and are being rejected. I honestly do not really see a future for whites in this country any more. Many people are emigrating. Although, the grass is not greener on the other side."

"I am sure there are some advantages as well as disadvantages, but I never think about it because it is never only about colour."

With regard to the Indian students, 28 out of the 30 students who responded to the questionnaire answered the question on the advantages of being in their specific racial group. Sixty-one percent felt that there were advantages to being

in their specific racial group which was a surprise to the researcher because the underlying assumption was that the Indian students' responses would be the same as the white students' responses. The Indian students focused on their culture and traditions and their unity as being an advantage. Student responses include:

"Yes Indians are a close-knit community."

"Yes eat nice food have lots of values, and have many strong beliefs."

"Yes Hindu culture has diversity and beauty."

"Yes, there are. We Indians are viewed as enigmatic with relation to our culture and tradition. People respect it and obviously want to learn more about it."

"Yes, I believe that the Indian racial group had unique cultural history and values, etc. to go with it. I am proud of being part of it."

On the other hand 36% of the Indian students felt that there were no advantages to being Indian in South Africa. The main reasons given for this were affirmative action and feeling that they were caught in the middle, neither white enough nor black enough. Only 3% of the students felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages, (Figure 8). Student responses included:

"In a sense, we always fall in the middle, discrimination is not predominantly on us whichever way the scale goes. We are given some privileges over other race groups."

"Yes! I believe that in SA the blacks have more advantage than others; jobs and study."

With regard to the coloured students out of the 4 who answered the question on the advantages of being in their specific racial group, 25 % felt there were advantages to being in their specific racial group. 25% felt there were no advantages to being coloured, while 50% felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages. Examples of their responses include:

"We can play both sides of the fence because we are neither black nor white."

"Yes and no. We are caught in the middle. Affirmative action can be an advantage."

With regard to the foreign students 25% felt that there were advantages to being their specific racial group, while the other 25% felt that there were no advantages to being in their racial. 50% on the other hand felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages. The Japanese students pointed out that they became aware of racial issues since being away from Japan and being a minority group.

Having seen what the students felt were advantages to being in their specific racial group, the following section deals with what the students felt were the disadvantages of being in their specific racial group.

4.5 Disadvantages of being in your Specific Racial Group

Students were asked: "Do you think there are any disadvantages to being in your specific racial group?" The majority of black students thought there were disadvantages to being in their specific racial group and the main reasons cited for this were the fact that black people are perceived to be inferior, lazy and untrustworthy by the other racial groups in South Africa. The majority of the

white, Indian and coloured racial groups also believed that there were disadvantages to being in their racial groups because of affirmative action and employment favouring black people and sidelining the other racial groups. Other sentiments as mentioned previously were the feeling that there was reverse discrimination from the black people toward the whites, Indians and Coloureds. Once again the Indian and Coloured students expressed the sentiment of feeling that they were in the middle having been too black for the previous government and too white for the current South African government. There were those students who felt there were both advantages and disadvantages, (Fig.9).
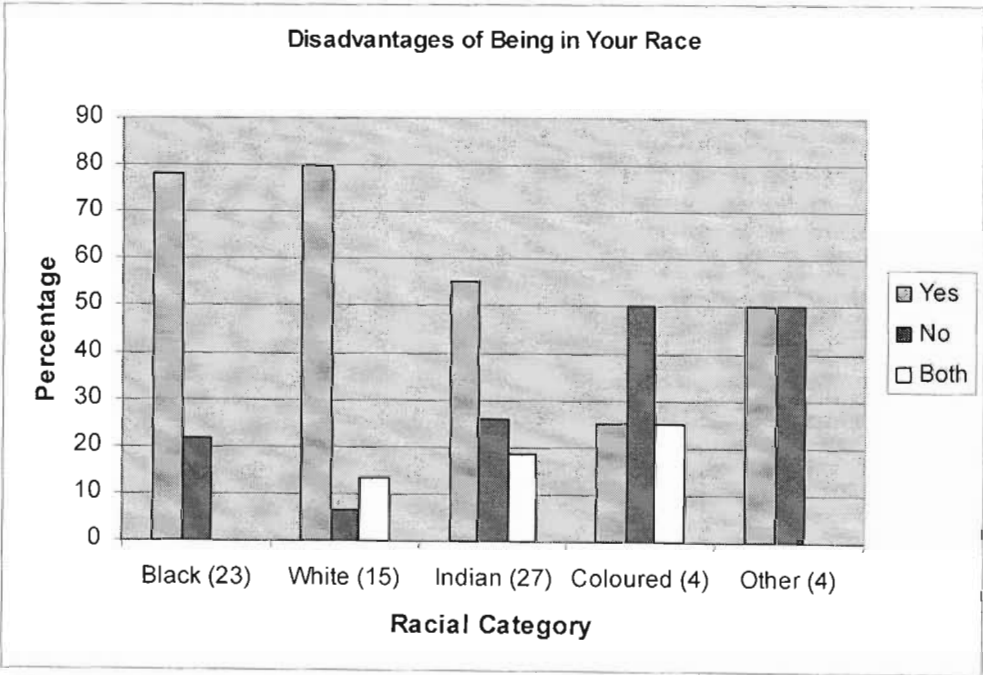
Fig.9 Disadvantages of Being in Your Race

As can be seen in Fig. 9, out of the 83 students that responded to the questionnaire, 73 students responded to the question about the disadvantages of being in one's specific racial group.

Twenty-three out of the 27 black students answered the question on the disadvantages of being in their specific racial group as can be seen in Fig. 9. Of these, 78% indicated that, there were disadvantages to being in their specific racial group. Once again the main reasons cited for this were the fact that black people are viewed as inferior, (giving them an inferiority complex) and have negative stereotypes (namely being stupid, lazy and untrustworthy) attached to them. Another disadvantage cited was the fact that they did not have a good command of English which puts them at a disadvantage at UND. Once again poverty was also cited as a disadvantage which Terreblache (2002), clearly describes as a continued problem especially for the majority of black people. Examples of student responses include:

"Yes, I get so offended around campus when people of other colour ask each other questions or ask for something and you (the black) are in that group but automatically they do not ask you. They just assume that cause I am black, I am stupid or that I don't have what they have. Apart from that I still think black people are still being exploited but the sad thing is that it is being done by other black people."

"Yes. Unfortunately some races still believe the misconception that black people are nothing and should be treated less humane."

"Yes everywhere in the world a black person is seen as a thief, an untrustworthy person."

"Oh yes indeed! Firstly, English is not our first language. Some of us are struggling to study at UND. Also people always take advantage of us in many ways because they know that it is in our nature to be humble and show respect to others and they are using that as an excuse to be rude to us."

"Yes, being black usually means being classified by other races as inferior, lazy

and thieves."

"Yes, particularly because I am black. One of the biggest obstacles is the knowing that I was once oppressed preventing me from doing or exploring things. You know that when you are black you are normally looked down upon. This is becoming hard."

"Definitely. Being black is associated mostly with poverty, illiteracy, etc. and as an individual I have to constantly prove to people how different I am to other black people. Looked down upon."

On the other hand, 22% of black students felt that there were no disadvantages to being black in South Africa. The researcher had an underlying assumption that this percentage would be higher but it seems psychologically black students have issues concerning their self image and self-esteem. Self-esteem and self-image are externally mediated, reflecting the power of racism and racist thinking, (Maré, 2002). Students clearly identified being black with diminished power, access to resources, and lower socio-economic class; all factors that contribute to being 'looked down upon', as poignantly pointed out by students.

Eighty percent of the white students who responded to this question felt that there were disadvantages to being white. Once again the biggest reason cited for this disadvantage was affirmative action which is seen as reverse discrimination and a punishment to white people for apartheid. Only 7% of the students felt that there were no disadvantages to being white and 13% felt that there were advantages and disadvantages as can be seen in Fig. 9. Examples of student responses include:

"Yes. The black community are now getting more advantages, it is harder to get a job now because of affirmative action."

"Yes. May not receive equal opportunity in work situations."

"Yes. The tables are turning. Whites are being targeted by the Govt. Fewer opportunity available and seem to be declining rapidly. Affirmative action and other policies are targeted at whites because they are the wealthiest race group. It almost seems that white people are being punished. I understand the need for empowerment and restructuring but it is a bitter pill to swallow."

"Yes. I am being discriminated against in new RSA because I am white."

"The disadvantage of obtaining employment. Also entry into medical school. Because whites in the apartheid era suppressed non-whites, whites these days are sometimes treated as if they themselves are to blame, when it was the Govt. of the time."

Twenty-seven out of 30 Indian students responded to this question, (fig. 9). Fifty-five percent of those who responded felt that there were disadvantages to being Indian. The main reason cited for this was affirmative action and once again the fact that Indians feel that they are in the middle, neither black enough nor white enough and therefore sidelined. Going back to the Indo-African conflicts of 2000 and 2002 there were students who resent being blamed for having benefited from the apartheid era. The 2000 as well as 2002, Indo- African conflicts support the fact that there is an element of resentment by black people for the fact that Indian people benefited from the apartheid era. One or two students felt that they were discriminated against within the Indian community because of their non-Indian accent. Twenty-seven percent of the students felt that there were no disadvantages to being Indian and 19% felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages. Student responses included:

"Yes. There's immense prejudice in the Indian race group. I'm 'classed' labelled

non-Indian, by the Indian race group because I don't talk in specific lingo…Absolute rubbish."

"We're not black enough or white enough and we are blamed for benefiting from apartheid."

"Personally no but politically Indians have always been there in the middle between blacks and whites even now."

"Personally no, but politically blacks are given preference in terms of employment."

"Yes. In the past white discrimination and now black discrimination against the Indians."

"No: We don't fit in the new / old S.A... for we were too black in the old S.A... and now too fair for the new. Affirmative action is the reverse of apartheid."

"Yes. We are stuck in a catch 22 situation since we remain not catered for just as we did in the apartheid era."

"Yes. I am not black enough, i.e. due to affirmative action, a black individual would get preference over me (not on merit but on colour), e.g. for a job application."

"Yes! Before whites were dominant and powerful (enforcing rules). Now blacks are dominant. So where does this leave the Indians and coloureds? (Misfits?)"

When looking at fig. 9 with regard to the responses of the coloured students, it indicated that 25% of them felt that there were disadvantages to being coloured and once again it was the issue of being neither white nor black and being in the

middle as well as affirmative action. Fifty percent felt that there were no disadvantages to being coloured and 25% felt there disadvantages and advantages to being coloured. Examples of the responses of students included:

"No, not really."

"Yes and no. We are either too white to be black or too black to be white."

"Getting a job may be more difficult in South Africa today."

When looking at the responses of the foreign students 50% felt there were disadvantages to being in their racial group and 50% felt that there were no disadvantages to being in their racial group. These centred around stereotypes, for example, of Japanese people being seen as rich.

The majority of students saw disadvantages to being in their race groups as being mainly linked to the perception they have of life opportunities. Despite affirmative action and contrary to the assumption of the researcher, black students saw a great deal of disadvantage to being black. According to Sewpaul (2001), in South Africa, "...the psyches, self-esteem and identities of the majority of people have been assaulted through the effect of colonialism and of apartheid." This assault on the psyches of South Africans needs to be acknowledged and addressed for South Africans to move beyond the thinking created as a legacy of apartheid. The following section describes the challenges students face as members of their specific racial group.

4.6 What Challenges Face Your Specific Racial Group

Students were asked: "What are the greatest challenges you face as someone from your specific racial group?" The responses of students were varied. The

majority of black students felt that their greatest challenge was trying to prove that as black people, they are as good or as intelligent as other race groups. Very few black students said that they felt that they did not have any challenges.

White students on the other hand all felt that they had major challenges. Many white students felt that affirmative action made them worry that they would not get employment in the future. There were a number of statements regarding reverse discrimination and fear as a result of crime perpetrated against white people. A few students also voiced the challenge of feeling guilty about the apartheid of the past. There were students who felt that they are being blamed for apartheid which they had nothing to do with.

With regard to Indian students the challenge of not being white enough or black enough was once again voiced by the majority of students and fear of not getting jobs in the future as a result of affirmative action. A very small number of Indian students said that they did not have any challenges.

Coloured students voiced the challenge of having to deal with generalisations that being coloured was equated with being a gangster. One student expressed the feeling of not belonging anywhere.

Foreign students felt that sometimes they were judged before any interaction with them had occurred and these judgements were that they were perhaps inferior and less educated.

Growing up for young people across all race groups during this transitional period is not easy. Achieving redress is going to be a long, difficult and painful process. Many of the concerns and challenges are reality based. White, Indian and coloured students have to reconcile with the reality of the past existence of apartheid which still has a bearing on current South African life, which is a difficult process. Young people seem to have difficulty understanding why they have to bear the consequences of the past and be on the receiving end of the

effects of affirmative action. Current realities of black people do pose major challenges as mentioned before in terms of diminished self-esteem and poverty.

4.7 GOVERNMENT

Past Understanding of Apartheid

The students were asked: " What is your understanding of apartheid?" The responses of all the students from the different racial groups indicated that the students had quite a clear understanding of what apartheid was. Most students expressed sentiments of regret that there was ever a system of apartheid in the country. There were a few white students however who felt that the past was the past and that apartheid should not be spoken about any longer. One white student gave a response, which was out of the norm with the rest of the students' responses when he said:

"Black people were well looked after by the whites. Black people got fed up and 'bit' the white people. Now. RSA is a "dump" under black man's power."

This is not just a student opinion, but perhaps a more pervasive view reflected through the writings of men such as John Morse's (2002), "South African Nightmare", where he outlines, (to use the student's words) what a "dump" South Africa has become since the demise of apartheid. An example of John Morse's description of South Africa is as follows:

"...we now have an overview of the 'new South Africa' from which to take stock. What we see is a picture of vicious and exploding crime, of chaos verging on anarchy, of corruption and incompetence way beyond anything in the country's past, and of the racial harassment and persecution of the white minority – the people who actually built the country in the first place, and without whom there would have been literally nothing for their successors to take over and bring to ruin" (Morse, 2002:7).

Morse certainly does not acknowledge South Africa's peaceful transition to democracy. South Africa stands up as an example to the rest of the world, with Mandela and Tutu having become global symbols of peace and reconciliation (Sewpaul 2001). Morse's claims are certainly exaggerated and unfounded. There is no evidence that South Africa is "on the verge of anarchy" and absolutely no evidence of persecution of the white minority.

Current Government's Handling of Racial Groups in South Africa and Affirmative Action.

Students were asked: "What do you think of the current South African government and its handling of the different racial groups of South Africa? What are your thoughts on the concept of affirmative action?"

About 50% of black students felt that the government was handling the different racial groups well in South Africa and felt that affirmative action was a way of redressing economic imbalances. About 48% however felt that the government was paying little attention to racial issues and was not handling the issue well. About 2% felt that it was not up to the government to deal with racial issues but it was up to individuals. Examples of student responses include:

"I believe than govt. is paying very little attention to the issue of racial groups."

"However, much 'things' have changed in terms of the structure, people's mind-sets are still the same."

"He (Thabo Mbeki) is involved too much in foreign affairs and what is happening outside SA. There is still racism and there is no war nor can he try and stop it. "

"I don't feel that the Govt. is quite concerned with SA racial groups as he (the

President) has done all he can up there and the rest is up to the country."

"It is doing very well."

"I think they are afraid to touch on it. The rainbow nation statement is beautiful in theory but fails in practice."

Some students as evident from their statement, supported the view that even the most wonderfully stated principles and values can come to naught if not put into practice. The challenge is for each one of us as citizens of South Africa to make an effort to uphold the principles of the rainbow nation.

With regard to white students only 18% felt that the government was handling the different racial groups of South Africa well. 76% of the students felt that the government was paying little attention to the different racial groups and was useless especially concerning the policy of affirmative action, which was seen as unfair. A number of students reiterated feeling discriminated against because they were white and feeling clear reverse discrimination especially after President Mbeki came into power. About 5% of white students also felt that it was up to individuals to deal with racial issues. Examples of student responses include:

"Govt. to be blunt is USELESS. When Mr. Mandela was president we could see definite positive change, now..."

"I don't like the govt. I think it is pro-black and Mandela needs to come back."

"It's not up to the government to decide."

"Not good. The Govt. seems to be racist towards whites now. They are not giving anyone an equal opportunity."

"To be honest, I disagree with the Govt. (not Madiba but Mbeki). I feel that Mbeki has this great bitterness inside him against whites and against what has happened to him, hence I do not feel that he has been fair but is becoming prejudiced himself. He must refrain from holding on to the past and concentrate more on the future."

"There is black empowerment and whites, especially on farms, are suffering."

"Don't think 'he' is handling anything. Our Govt. is basically black and there are hardly any representatives for coloured, whites and Indians."

"The Govt. is attempting to make a nation where everyone is equal, no matter what your skin colour is."

Unfortunately as a result of the legacy of apartheid the government has to work harder to make South Africa become a nation where everyone is 'equal', by addressing the issue of racial groups that feel marginalised.

About 29% of Indians students on the other hand felt that the government was doing a good job dealing with the different racial groups of South Africa and with affirmative action. 68% of students felt that the government was racist and was not doing a good job of handling the different racial groups of South Africa. Once again the issue of Indians being sidelined and discrimination were raised with the government being accused of only being interested in black people at the exclusion of the other population groups. Affirmative action was heavily criticised because it was said to be unfair. 4% of students felt that it was up to individuals to deal with racial issues. Examples of student responses include:

"Shocking to say the least. The govt. is interested in black and white representation, what about Indians and Coloureds? Do we just get pushed to the

side and looked over?"

"Racist.   Black people are just as racist as whites were. Look at our government they have taken revenge."

"People should get jobs because of their skills not colour."

"We are really going far in this country, so the S.A... government is doing a good job."

"Racial problems still exist in South Africa and will continue unless we change for ourselves."

"They are racist; they don't care about anyone except the black people. It is good that black people are accounted for, but what about the rest of us? Are we non-existent? Our needs and wants as a race other than black is totally ignored."

"I really do not think that they have struck a balance. During the apartheid system all races of colour were disadvantaged to some extent, but when we speak of the 'underprivileged' it is only "blacks". In most cases they are blinded by disadvantages of other races as well."

"The Govt. has to be given credit for their efforts. We must bear in mind that when the govt was handed over in 1994, the country was already in turmoil so the contemporary Govt. is working on these levels to bring about change. This is not an easy task!"

With regard to coloured students, 33% of coloured students felt that the government was doing a good job, and 67% felt that the government was biased toward the black people.

Foreign students felt that they were not informed enough to speak about the government's handling of racial issues.

The above clearly indicates that the majority of students regardless of which racial category they are from, are on the whole very dissatisfied with the government's current handling of the different racial groups in South Africa. The white, coloured and Indian students expressed the feeling of being marginalised and left out. Some black students pointed out the sensitive nature of racial issues, as perhaps being the reason the government was not dealing well with these issues, as well as too much involvement in foreign affairs. There were students from all the racial groups who seemed to have insight into the fact that it was not easy to reconcile all the racial groups and that it was going to take time. The following section deals with the way students felt about racial interaction across colour-lines both romantic and otherwise.

4.8   INTERACTION ACROSS COLOUR-LINES

"Some blacks are blacks outside but white inside".

Students were asked: "What do you think of the statement 'Some blacks are black outside but white inside'?" From the responses of all the students, it was clear that those who agreed with the above statement resented the idea of black people adopting the ways of the "superior white person". It was something that was out of place especially in the South African context where people's status was so clearly defined according to racial categories, with the result of resentment of the 'other'.

People who are said to be black outside and white inside are referred to as 'coconuts', and the so called 'coconut syndrome' is resented by many black South Africans who see assimilation into Western culture as a betrayal of being black. One student's response was as follows: "Coconuts!! Not a problem. What this implies is that there are major differences between people of different

races. Generalizations of how one acts based on colour; who decides what are white traits and what are black traits."

In South Africa where English is the main medium of instruction in all spheres of life, learning English and becoming proficient at it is a survival strategy. In other words to reach the upper levels of society and to become recognised in South Africa and globally one needs to have a good command of English. There were students who recognised these dynamics and clearly pointed out, for example, that nobody owned particular characteristics or traits and that when people interact there is bound to be exchange of culture.

It can also be argued that there might be an element of jealousy for many students who understand that a person's proficiency in English puts him/her at an advantage in terms of access to better paid jobs and higher status, which are scarce resources. It is also interesting to note that those who often complain about other students' coconut status have not had the same educational opportunities, but would not scoff at the opportunity to become proficient at English if they were given the same opportunity. On the other hand there are students who clearly point out that being a "coconut" is not a matter of speaking English well but a matter of adopting the western culture. It is the assimilation of western culture that some students resent. For example the fact that the western culture and white people are regarded as 'superior' the world over, means that some black people are literally ashamed of being black and all that goes with being black because of the inferior status of black people.

Another argument in the South African context with regard to the 'coconut syndrome' could be the fact that it is the western culture that is being adopted, with the 'black' people being assimilated into the western culture and that this is not happening in reverse. The impression that this creates for many black people is that so called "coconuts" are ashamed of their culture and language which is highly offensive to many. Another factor is that the legacy of apartheid

has created racial groups that are very suspicious of each other and who do not think that they can learn much, if anything, from each other. Different racial groups therefore do not want to adopt the ways of the 'resented' other. Examples of student responses included:

"Blacks who try and associate themselves with whites they lose black pride and respect for their mother tongue."

"That is true. There are some blacks who are "white" inside especially when they can speak English when there is no need."

"Hilarious! The question that should be posed here is, what defines a white or black? Because if it is the way we speak or act because our parents were able to afford and be flexible enough to pay for multiracial school and allow us to interact with other races. It is all jealousy and ignorance."

"It might be true because there are many black people especially the youths who are ashamed of being black; ashamed of their culture as black people and even look down on black people. They believe that they are white and lead a western life."

"This can be true. Mostly to people who have gone to multiracial schools. There are the people most blacks view as traitors. They feel that they have adopted a white way of life even though they are still black on the outside."

"I don't think so. I disagree with this statement. Their African identity still remains".

"I think while it may seem ignorant and jealousy-inspired, it has its cases where it can be appropriate. It refers to people (usually rich black people) who discard traditional and cultural aspects of being black and even the language (Zulu,

Xhosa, etc.) and even the way they behave which is not particular to blacks and even where they live."

"True , If you are black don't act white, be true to yourself."

"Its black skinned people who've adopted a "white" way of living & thinking, with no Zulu accent & sound white."

"I understand this but I feel that there are black people who had better life opportunity, but also there are those who abandon their culture I totally disagree with abandoning your culture and religion."

"Absolute rubbish. This is blatant discrimination against black people who have received an education in a 'white school' and have picked up white lingo and are persecuted for 'talking like whites'!!!"

"It's stupid. People can't help speaking like white people and dressing like them. If a black child lived in China, they would speak Chinese and eat with chopsticks."

As the above student asserts, in the same way that Chinese culture would dominate if one lived in China, western culture remains the most dominant ideology the world over and South Africa is highly influenced by it. It is further reinforced by the western cultural penetration of the media that is very powerful.

Intimate and Romantic Relationships between Different Racial Groups

Students were asked: "What do you think of people having intimate friendships or romantic relationships with people from other racial groups? Explain." The majority of students expressed the view that intimate friendships and romantic

relationships with people from other racial groups were acceptable. Many however said it was something they admired but could not see themselves involved in, in South Africa where it was unacceptable and where one risked ostracization from one's racial group. A few expressed their vehement disagreement with such intimate associations between racial groups.

The fact that South Africa comes from an apartheid past that prohibited any intimate relationships between racial groups means that this is largely a foreign concept to many South Africans. The perception of superiority of one group over another has a bearing on the way different racial groups see each other. For example people want to be intimate with people they deem to be their equals. Another legacy of apartheid is that it has left many South Africans with the perception that they do not have much in common with other racial groups. There continues to be great disparities across the racial groups in terms of educational levels, class and language. The implications of this are that the pursuit of intimate, romantic relationships with other racial groups is unlikely for many South Africans. Another factor is also the need to be accepted by ones community. South Africans are still very wary of inter-racial relationships, making it uncomfortable for those who may fall in love with people across race.

The responses of the students reflect this ambivalence. They know inter-racial relationships are politically correct and therefore the sentiments expressed were that they should be accepted if the parties concerned are happy. However while many students admire those who can take 'the leap' from a distance, they could not see this happening in their own lives. There were very few exceptions to this.

Students who think romantic relationships across colour lines are a positive step:
"I'm all for it! It simply illustrates the ability of some people to live their lives according to their own happiness and not according to history."

"I have no problem with it in fact I had a relationship with a person from another

race but when the father found out it was all over."

The above comment from a student highlights the fact that many parents of young South Africans cannot fathom how people can fall in love across race especially if it is their own children. A new challenge is therefore posed to the older generation in South Africa as young people share the same spaces, get to know each other and develop relationships across race. Other students said:

"I think that they are very brave, especially in this society we are living in. Stereotypes and prejudices are difficult to overcome."

"I think it is OK by me. It is only on colour. If people think they are good for each other and understand each other, then there is no problem."

"I like it, although it is not accepted in most societies but that is one way of bringing a diverse community together and in that way, racism would lose its power."

"It is quite interesting as well as challenging having to be ostracized by your family and friends."

"I think that it is good. For example, my sister is dating a white guy from overseas, and they are perfect with everybody. They have some challenges whereby when they go out together the white people look at them as if something is wrong. Same as when the black people when the white guy comes to visit. The black people have been pointing fingers which will cause a hardship in their relationship."

"It is wonderful, I think love goes beyond & deeper than race"

"Nothing at all. I think it is fine. Mixing of racial groups is a way of breaking the

barriers of the racial groups."

"I think that it is good because these people are able to overcome obstacles and barriers they're faced with."

"I have no objections. If the couple are happy then nothing should stop them from being with each other."

Students who think romantic relationships across colour lines are problematic:
"I do not like it! I do not know how I can talk with them. What I prefer is that blacks have relationships with coloureds."

"It is your choice but I will never ever do that."

"I feel it's wrong, but if they love each other it's their business"

"I don't agree for myself, but it doesn't bother me that other people have multiracial relationships."

"In terms of friendship, I think it is really good, because it creates links which will lead to unity. Due to cultural differences, I think it would be difficult to make a romantic relationship work."

"I don't have a problem with it at all. To be honest, though I do not think that I personally would get involved in an inter-racial relationship."

"I do not like top deck chocolate!"

"I do not really understand. I know I am not attracted to other race groups so it would not affect me."

"I am not comfortable with it. There is no wrong in doing this and I do acknowledge that love does not depend on skin colour but personally, I do not like it!"

"This often creates many issues. I think it depends on the individual who will take other things into consideration. Yes, I may and often do find people attractive from other race groups but I do not see myself entering into an intimate or romantic relationship because of religious issues."

"No problem but they must remember that there are consequences such as rejection."

"It is a challenge. By my own experience you lose friends when they are apart from you, for example."

Having noted students' views regarding interaction across colour-lines, it seems that although in general students accept that these relationships do occur, they are not comfortable with romantic relationships across colour-lines. There are however students who view these relationships positively. In this final section of the analysis and discussion of results, students' views on their future in South Africa will be examined.

4.9   FUTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Students were asked: "What do you think the future holds for you in South Africa as a person from your specific racial group?" Most of the students were uncertain about their future, especially the white, Indian and coloured students who felt that affirmative action was going to prevent them form getting jobs. Many white students also expressed concern about their future because of crime and violence in South Africa and therefore plan to emigrate after their studies. The recent emigration trends with its concomitant skills loss, has implications for

South Africa as a nation. Some of those who emigrate include social workers who are leaving for the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand. The impact of this exodus of social workers no doubt has an impact on service delivery in South Africa when some of the best social workers are leaving the country.

The assumption of the researcher was that practically all the black students would be very optimistic about their future but this was not the case. There were quite a number of black students who felt that their blackness was still a disadvantage in terms of a bright future in South Africa, because of stereotypes and poverty pertaining to black people.

Foreign students did not respond to this question because the majority of them are going back to their countries of origin. Some of the students' responses grouped under different themes included:

Poverty
"Poverty and hunger and having to be second best to the white race in S A."
The above quotation from a black student about how they envision their future in South Africa expresses what is seemingly the reality for millions of black South Africans. According to Terreblache (2002:27), "It should be remembered that the transition to democracy unleashed pent-up expectations of a restoration of social justice and a dramatic improvement in the living conditions of blacks. The fact that these expectations have not been realised may well lead to growing frustration and even to destructive rage, with the potential of undermining the social stability on which the newly attained democratic system depends. Even if we accept that it has not been possible – given specific economic constraints – to dramatically improve the living conditions of the impoverished majority within the first eight years, it is surely not unreasonable to have expected a tangible improvement in their living conditions. Unfortunately, their situation has not improved even marginally." It is clearly pointed out by Terreblanche (2002) that the issue of poverty in South Africa has a potential to explode into an even more

serious problem for South Africa unless the government finds an effective may to combat it. One of the resulting consequences of this poverty is a tremendously high crime rate which accounts for many South Africans living in fear. This unfortunately as mentioned previously has implications for South Africa's economy as skilled labour is lost through emigration. Below are some examples of student responses in this regard.

Employment Prospects and Crime and Emigration:
"The future looks challenging in terms of employment, since black people's chances of getting jobs are not so good."

"Not sure, I worry about crime and employment. God knows."

"I don't see my children growing up here, it's not safe, honestly, I feel sometimes that black people don't forgive white people for past events."

"I am worried as to whether I will get a job, I aim to leave South Africa after I have qualified, most of my family are overseas."

"Not good, I think it will be hard to get a job, and there's violence, I do not feel safe here."

"I am going overseas after my studies."

Belief in Racial Disadvantage
"South Africa is 'producing' a group of very frustrated blacks because of the pressure placed on them by the society to "make-up" for what they lost in the first place."

"There is still more hardships to come. Being black has never been easy, anywhere so still there is a long way to go. No matter what car I drive or where I

live, to some I will always be a nigger or non-white. It is all the same."

"Not much. I'm not black enough and see a bleak future for myself."

"I don't think there is much for me in this country because I am Indian."

The above quotations continue to point to the fact that students feel that racial identity will play a big role in their future. The implications of this are that if not dealt with there may be a tendency for South Africans not to want to work together to build South Africa because a scenario of every racial group for themselves might develop. The is need for work to be done to address the needs of all South African racial groups in terms of constructing a positive South African identity, that does not marginalise any racial group.

Positive Outlook Regarding the Future

"Sooner or later we are all going to be equal and have equal rights - thanks to the constitutional laws."

"Through affirmative action I'll fly up in the world of success!"

"South Africa holds many great opportunities for people of all races. It is up to each individual to create their own success and opportunities."

"Although I am disadvantaged because of being white I firmly believe there is a future for me here."

"I don't think race groups will be an issue in the future (especially if affirmative action stops) and everyone will be given the same opportunities, so no one should be given better opportunity than another."

"My future holds what I can do for myself."

"Soon racial groups will not mean much and there will be more coloured people in the world than any other race."

It was seen when looking at interaction of students with other racial groups that the majority of students had minimal interaction with other racial groups both prior to coming to UND and at the time of the study. The majority of students pointed out the importance of identifying with their own racial group for a sense of belonging and because of culture. This highlights the fact that in South Africa there needs to be social reconstruction which will highlight the acceptability of identifying with one's own racial group as well as with other racial groups in order for people to feel free to interact with other racial groups. The government's handling of the different racial groups was seen as an area that needs attention by many students, especially non-black students who feel marginalised. This will require some creative social reconstruction on the part of the government because although progress is being made, there in still a great deal to be done in terms of creating unity amongst the different racial groups. Intimate interaction was seen as problematic by many students and this is not surprising bearing in mind the lack of interaction between the racial groups and the feelings of inferiority and superiority that characterise the racial hierarchies in South Africa. The future of South Africa rests in its young people and many have issues concerning their racial identification and its impact on their future in South Africa. This combined with crime, poverty, affirmative action and inferiority and superiority complexes all play a part in feelings of having an uncertain future. In the midst of the positive voices about the future there appears to be far too many negative voices from students. These need to be addressed, and the necessary social and psychological reconstruction needs to occur before it is too late for South Africa.

When following the social constructionist theoretical framework on which the

study is based there is no doubt that the way that racial groups have been constructed in the world and in South Africa in particular is problematic. The results thereof are both economic and psychological. The psyches of the majority of the different racial groups in the study are set in particular ways in terms of racial identity as seen by the responses of the students. Even in a post-apartheid South Africa where students have an idea of the politically correct things to say and do, different racial groups keep to their own racial group. An observation made by the researcher in respect of the use of space in the classroom clearly showed that there were racial divisions that existed. Students remained in their own racial groups. When students were divided into groups that were multi-racial there were students who asked if this could be changed. Even outside the classroom there is a place on UND campus known as "Little Mecca" because it is dominated by Muslim students, (Sewpaul, 2003). This further highlights the racial and ethnic divisions that exist on UND campus. Other heated debates students had often in class centred around affirmative action and its unfairness. There were also concerns by students about the fact that HIV/AIDS was 'always' portrayed as if it was only contracted by black people and not other racial groups in South Africa.

There is a challenge for the education of human service professionals of the future who do not have much experience working together with other racial groups. This challenge is in terms of helping them deconstruct racial identities and enhancing understanding through mutual engagement with each other and reflective dialogue. Such efforts are vital in the preparation of future human service professionals, who would be expected to works across all racial groups. The following chapter outlines some of the major conclusions as well as the recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Major Conclusions and Recommendations

"I never lost hope that this great transformation would occur. Not only because of the great heroes I have already cited, but because of the courage of the ordinary men and women of my country...No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart then its opposite. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished," Nelson Mandela in 'Beyond Racism, Overview Report' (2000:66).

In the above quotation Nelson Mandela mentions that he never lost hope that South Africa would be transformed into a country without apartheid. Against all odds Mandela believed in the courage of the ordinary men and women of South Africa to create a difference and a better place for all. Having seen the students' responses about their racial identity in a post-apartheid South Africa as well as their thoughts on racial interaction and their future in South Africa, there are glimmers of hope from their responses. The researcher believes that some of the negative responses of students are a direct result of the legacy of apartheid which taught South Africans to fear and to be suspicious of other racial groups. However, the fact that South Africans can freely voice their opinions and fears means there are solutions that can be sought to deal with issues. The intrinsic value of our current democracy, compared with the apartheid past, is people's freedom to articulate discontent, and to share their thoughts feelings and experiences.

The main aim of this study was to explore the current racial identity issues resulting from different racial groups interacting in a post-apartheid South Africa. The study explored the nature and type of interactions UND students had with persons not from their own racial group prior to coming to UND as well as after

coming to UND. Students own racial identification and the possible challenges, threats and opportunities they felt was afforded by their racial group was also explored.

A descriptive research design, using a triangulated research methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the study. A non-probability sampling method was used, with reliance on available subjects. The sample of the study included 83 law, community development, nursing, psychology and social work students doing a first year Human Behaviour and the Environment module. The 83 students were representative of the four different racial classifications in South Africa, namely, black, white, coloured and Indian.

The underlying assumptions were supported through students' responses to most of the questions. However there were some assumptions which student responses did not support. The first assumption which was that, UND students did not have much (if any) interaction with other racial groups prior to coming to UND was supported by the study. The majority of student responses indicated that student interaction prior to coming to UND was minimal. The second assumption was that students generally viewed their racial identity as separate and different from other racial groups in South Africa. This assumption was supported through observations made by the researcher where students (in the classroom as well as outside the classroom) interacted primarily with 'their own' racial group, unless forced to do otherwise. Student responses to the questionnaire also supported this assumption, by pointing out the importance of staying with their own racial group in order to have a sense of belonging and culture. The third assumption that white, coloured and Indian students are generally dissatisfied with the government's adoption of the policy of affirmative action, seeing it as a threat to their life opportunities and aspirations was unequivocally supported by the study. It was seen when Indian and white students had heated discussions in class about the unfairness of affirmative action. Affirmative action was also pervasive in many of the student responses

to the questionnaire. The fourth assumption that there is hardly any interaction across racial lines at UND was supported by student responses that showed that there was minimal interaction of the different racial groups at UND. The final assumption which was that black students would be more optimistic about their future in South Africa compared with white, Indian and coloured students was also supported. There were however many black students who were not optimistic about their future in South Africa because of perceived inferiority as well as poverty which was not anticipated by the researcher.

Major Conclusions

It is encouraging to note that although the majority of students had minimal interaction with other racial groups prior to going to UND as well as minimal interaction with other racial groups within UND, there is some interaction that is occurring. The comments of students who had good interactions with other racial groups reflected how enriching the experiences were and this will hopefully happen for many more South Africans.

When speaking about identification with their own racial groups and apartheid students stressed the importance of a sense of belonging and this will hopefully spill over to a sense of belonging as a South African, instead it being focussed only racially. With regard to apartheid, students expressed regret that it had happened and a few white students mentioned their guilt over apartheid. Baldwin cited in (Roediger, 1998: 321) when speaking about 'white man's guilt' over atrocities committed against black people points out that: "The fact that they have not yet been able to face their history, to change their lives... menaces the entire world... the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do...it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities and our aspirations. And it is with great pain and terror that one begins to realise this." Bearing the fact that history has a great impact on the present, there is an enormous need to reconstruct South African history deliberately, in

terms of helping to create confidence for South Africans of all racial groups in their racial identity. As Baldwin points out this can happen effectively the world over when white people dare to look their ugly past in the face and in South Africa, this means truly understanding the plight of the black, Indian and coloured South Africans. According to Sewpaul (2003:18), "Recent socio-political shifts appear to be challenging the identities of previously advantaged groups, who "she believes" are reluctant to acknowledge the realities of the consequences of apartheid and their privileged historical and socio-economic positions."

One of the major issues that has been pervasive in this research concerning racial identity in a post-apartheid South Africa is the inferiority of black people and the superiority of white people which the students voiced in a number of ways. According to Powell (2000:45) "In virtually every country in the world (that is, every multi-racial one) people of lighter skin and European descent are at the top in terms of disproportionate accumulation of wealth and privilege, and people of African descent or darker skinned people are at the bottom. It's an incredible worldwide phenomenon." This phenomenon is deeply entrenched in South African society hence the feeling that black people have of inferiority and the superiority of white people. What is important is that only in recent decades have black peoples voices been considered, and their immeasurable past and current suffering as human beings acknowledged in general comparison to their white counterparts. This is a source of tremendous hope because fundamental issues are being discussed openly in our society. The damage done by colonialism and ideologies such as apartheid is being openly debated and solutions sought in order to build a more stable society. As mentioned before, South Africa is just a microcosm of what is happening, the world over.

One of the challenges of South African society is to create a structurally equal and an economically just society. One of the ways this is supposed to happen is through affirmative action. It was however clear from the responses of students that they do not fully appreciate the reasons for affirmative action. Despite some

of the problems affirmative action may pose, there is a need for redress in South Africa. There is a belief that, because a black South African government is in power, racism and structural inequalities have been eradicated. Thus we should not refer to or deal with any issue regarding race in South Africa. According to Ginwala (2002:68-69), "Many whites are indignant when they are accused of racism. After all, they argue apartheid is now dead, we have had democratic elections and the country is ruled by a black president and a predominantly black cabinet and parliament...Many argue that we have moved beyond race and to refer to race as a continuing feature in South Africa's social, economic, political and cultural fabric is simply a new form of racism." In South Africa however, the success of a few black people does not, by any means, prove that racism, discrimination and structural inequalities do not exist anymore. Incidents of racism in schools, the defence force, the police as well as other institutions continue to be frequent occurrences picked up through the media. There is also evidence as was clearly shown by the responses of UND students that, there are sensitive racial issues that need to be attended to for the sake of all South Africans, especially as the participants in this study were future helping professionals.

Recommendations

With regard to the inferiority of black people as well as the superiority of white people there is need for white people in South Africa to truly understand the depth of where black people are coming from. The previous apartheid government prevented the majority of white people from knowing the full truth about what apartheid did. It is, therefore, not surprising that white students in the research have complained that black people should just get over this race thing and affirmative action is just apartheid reversed now that there is a black government. According to Ginwala (2000: 69), "While one acknowledges apartheid was sustained by the physical and legal barriers erected between South Africans, we also state that the attraction of staying within the comfort zones of privilege and the protection afforded thereby, kept whites in their

ghettoes...Many did not want to know the price paid by Blacks for White privilege...Unless all of us understand the nature and extent to which race has been a factor in shaping our society and our responsibility, we will be unable to recognise the legacy of apartheid and the challenges that face our democracy." A recommendation for helping to deal with this phenomenon in the classroom is outlined by Giroux cited in (Sewpaul, 2003:21) which is a "...call for discourses that provide dominant groups with the knowledge to examine, acknowledge, and unlearn their own privileged positions."

There is no doubt that in order for post-apartheid South Africa to deal effectively with issues of racial identity there is a need to not be afraid or evasive but to deal with racial issues directly and honestly. According to Williams (2000:8), "In a sense race matters are resented and repressed in much the same way as matters of sex and scandal: the subject is considered a rude and transgressive one in mixed company, a matter whose observation is sometimes inevitable but about which, once seen, little should be heard nonetheless". The role of the educators of human service professionals would therefore be to make sure that anti-discriminatory education and practice is taught as well as emancipatory education "...which stimulates students' imaginations to challenge the social, political and economic forces that impact upon the lives of people and one which allows both educators and students to demonstrate civic courage and the power of criticism", Sewpaul (2001:8).

With regard to affirmative action it appears that there is a need to educate all South African students about exactly what it is and why affirmative action is necessary, while allowing debate on the matter. There were hardly any students who gave an indication of understanding why affirmative action was necessary. According to Powell (2000), it is necessary that affirmative action is looked at as a means of firstly destabilizing and challenging the racial hierarchy, of White people at the top and Black people at the bottom. He further asserts that affirmative action should not be viewed as undemocratic but as necessary

because of the deeply imbedded racial hierarchies in individual's lives as well as in societal practices and structures. Secondly affirmative action according to Powell (2000) should be seen as challenging racial supremacy which, as discussed throughout the research is pervasive the world over. It appears that the UND students who responded to the questionnaire are not aware of how structurally unequal South African society really is.

All students across different racial groups expressed the view that there was much to be desired in the South African government's handling of the different racial groups. In the Sunday Times newspaper, Munusamy (2003) titled the article written about President Thabo Mbeki's 'State of the Nation Address: "Mbeki Forgets the Nation in His Address". Some of the major criticisms of the 'State of the Nation Address' were that President Mbeki failed to speak about creating a unified South Africa for all the different racial groups and failed to deal with issues of violent crime which affects all South Africans. It was asserted that the government had an obligation to bridge the gap across the racial groups. The brain-drain which is the result of many non-black South Africans leaving the country (although there are some black South Africans leaving as well) is an issue of major concern for South Africa. This issue was clearly highlighted by many UND students who stated unequivocally that after their university education, they will leave South Africa and go overseas because they do not envision a future in South Africa because of violent crime and uncertainty about employment.

There were students who mentioned poverty as a continued menace to their future in South and no doubt it is one of the major problems in South Africa. According to Hinds (2000: 77), "Poverty is the single greatest burden of South Africa's people and is the direct result of the apartheid system and the grossly skewed nature of business and industrial development which accompanied it..." There is increased inequality in a post-apartheid South Africa despite, (perhaps because) of macro-economic policies such as GEAR (Growth, Employment and

Redistribution) that does not augur well for South African citizens. According to Sewpaul (2001: 10), "The principles and objectives of GEAR are antithetical to the principles and objectives of the White Paper of Social Welfare, which was designed to ensure universal access to welfare services to all citizens...GEAR adopts a narrow fiscal approach with emphasis on fiscal austerity (through rationalisation and curbing of state expenditure); lowering of interest rates; trade policy favouring export-led growth; privatisation of state enterprises, and labour market reforms." This suggests that there is a continued need for an aggressive attack on poverty with Terreblanche (2002) and Sewpaul (2003) making clear calls for a more socialist rather than capitalist approach to dealing with South Africa's enormous poverty problem.

The students are future South African helping professionals who will no doubt come across clients of different racial groups and they should be able to relate to and help them appropriately. According to Sewpaul (2003:1), "If Social work education and training has to become and remain responsive to the needs of service users in our increasingly complex world, the modus operandi of educators and the learning and teaching environment of the classroom has to be transformed. Social work educators need to incorporate more creative, experiential and empowerment based teaching/learning strategies and the development of critical consciousness in students." Although Sewpaul (2003) is referring specifically to social work education this recommendation applies equally to other human service professionals in this study. Post-apartheid South Africa with its racially diverse and multi-cultural society requires human service professionals who move beyond their comfort zones. This can be done by ensuring that they become politically aware of the dynamics of a highly stratified South African society which is a direct result of the legacy of apartheid. According to Sewpaul (2003:5), "The separation of people along racial lines, although no longer institutionalised, is still a major feature of South Africa." Critical reflection on ways to deal with current post-apartheid socio-economic issues in South Africa's diverse society is necessary by human service

professionals. Barriers to appreciating and working with diversity need to be confronted by educators of human service professionals, (Sewpaul, 2003).

Further research is also required in terms of how university curricula can be tailored to deal more specifically and effectively with preparing human service professionals for effective work with diverse cultures in South Africa.

Conclusion

This study described the current racial identity issues resulting from interaction with other racial groups in a post-apartheid South Africa, both prior to students coming to UND and currently. The findings clearly indicate that there are various predominantly negative racial identity issues that exist. The challenge for the South African government as well as all the people of South Africa is to work hard to deconstruct the psychological consequences of apartheid, by engaging in a range of processes designed to reconstruct the identities of people and to enhance self-esteem and self-concept. Social work educators, as discussed in the recommendations, have a huge role to play in this process, and should maximise the opportunities afforded them in the classroom to do so. Of equal importance, is the need to produce tangible gains for the millions of impoverished people in South Africa through the pursuit of social and economic justice.

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[ii] "Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business" (Ed) Bernth Lindfors – (1999)

Appendix 1

I am doing a study on race and identity among UND students and would appreciate it, if you could answer this questionnaire as fully and as honestly as possible. You will remain completely anonymous, as there is no way of identifying you through this questionnaire.

(Please indicate with an "X" in the appropriate box.)

1) Sex

   Male ☐
   Female ☐

2) Age

   ☐

3) Year of Study at UND

   ☐

4) Are you a South African citizen?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

   Other (specify)
   ☐

5) Which 'race group' do you belong to?
   Black ☐
   White ☐
   Indian ☐
   Coloured ☐
   Other (specify)
   ☐

6) Prior to your coming to UND, what was the nature and type of your interactions with persons other than your own 'race group'?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7) What do you think is the importance of identifying yourself with a particular racial group?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8) What is your understanding of apartheid?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9) What do you think defines your specific racial group other than colour?

_____
_____
_____
_____

10) Do you think there are any advantages to being in your specific racial group?

_____
_____
_____
_____

11) Do you think there are any disadvantages to being in your specific racial group?

_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12) What do think of the statement: "Some blacks are black
outside but white inside?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13) What do you think of the current South African government and
its handling of the different racial groups of South Africa?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14) What are your thoughts on the concept of affirmative action?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15) Do you currently interact with people from other racial groups? Explain
as fully as possible, the nature type and frequency of the
interaction.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16) What are the greatest challenges you face as someone from
your specific racial group?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

17) What do you think of people having intimate friendships or   ♂
    romantic relationships with people from other racial groups?
    Explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18) In your opinion, how are the different racial groups interacting on
    the UND campus?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19) What are your thoughts on the interaction of the different racial groups on
    UND campus?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20) What do you think the future holds for you in South Africa as a person from
    your specific racial group?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____