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A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa.

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Community-Based Counselling Psychology)



University of the Witwatersrand, 2014.

Declaration

I declare that this research report entitled "A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa" is my own, unaided work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Community Based Counselling Psychology) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed _____ this day _____ of 2014

_____

Cherilee Camara

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Abstract

Although metaperceptions and transracial adoption (TRA) have been investigated separately, research has not thoroughly investigated the metaperceptions of families involved in TRA. Moreover, little research into TRA has focussed on a comparison of the adoptive mothers and adoptive young adults' experiences of their TRA or the similarities and differences between the metaperceptions they hold. The study aimed to explore how the metaperceptions of White mothers and Black young adults are constructed in relation to their TRA. The study utilised a qualitative research methodology to achieve these aims. Four focus group discussions were held with 3 to 5 participants in each group. Two groups consisted of White TRA mothers aged 25 to 65 who had transracially adopted Black children; while the other 2 groups consisted of Black transracially adopted young adults aged 18 to 28 years. The data from the study was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The findings highlighted the differing experiences presented in TRA for the mother, young adult and the family. These experiences informed metaperceptions and the identities of mothers and young adults. Social constructions around the family and race relations in South Africa were represented in the metaperceptions of participants. The study was able to produce a social commentary on the social constructions of race relations, the family and other social categorisations in South Africa through unpacking elements of participants' metaperceptions and experiences. The comparison between the two participant groups revealed that their metaperceptions were generally similar, or were supportive of each other's discussions. The results of this research indicate that context specific interventions and support programmes should be developed in the areas identified as challenging for participants, as they may be beneficial to mothers and young adults involved in TRA. Furthermore, the results of the study highlight the current state of race relations in South Africa and the way in which they impact on the general functioning of South Africans.

Keywords: Family; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; Metaperceptions; Race Relations; Racism; South Africa; Transracial Adoption.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used within the research report:

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DSD	Department of Social Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
NABSW	National Association of Black Social Workers
NACSA	National Adoption Coalition of South Africa
NAR	National Adoption Register
RACAP	Register of Adoptable Children and Prospective Adoptive Parents
TRA	Transracial adoption
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

Chapter 1: Introduction, Rationale and Aims

1.1. Introduction

The study aimed to investigate the metaperceptions of White transracially adoptive mothers and Black[1] transracially adopted young adults in the South African context. Interracial contact within the current South African context continues to be limited, reflecting an informal continuation of the formal apartheid racial segregation system (Finchilescu, 2005). Racism may continue to effect the interactions of those involved in TRA, the views of their family, and the metaperceptions that they form as a result of broader social relations in the country.

While interracial marriages have been legal for the past 30 years, they remain a highly controversial topic. Attitudes towards interracial marriages and interracial intimate relationships in South Africa may be used as an indication of the level of transition the country has achieved thus far (Morrall, 1994; Ross, 1990). Lewis and Yancey (1994-1995, as cited in Yancey & Yancey, 1997) posit that negative attitudes towards interracial marriages reflect strong psychological and emotional resistance to interracial contact which aid in maintaining a racially organised society. It can thus be inferred that supportive responses to interracial marriages are a means of indicating less adherence to racial segregation within society (Jaynes, 2007). Furthermore, differing attitudes ranging from disapproval to acceptance of interracial relationships, such as marriages, families and transracial adoptions, may be indicative of the continued shift towards integration within South Africa. This change in race relations in the country is deemed 'race trouble' by Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011). They suggest, that while a large amount of change has occurred, race relations are still in need of improvement as negative perceptions between racial groups continue to impact on interactions between race groups (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Opposition to racial integration may be viewed as subtle racism (Ratele, 2002), a more sophisticated and disguised form of racism relating to opposition to intimate relationships between individuals of different races. This form of racism may be evident in the perceptions and metaperceptions of TRA in the South African context, disguised by non-racist arguments (Frankenberg, 1993). These may include concern for the children within such families, discussion around 'cultural identity', and other 'concerns'.

[1] The researcher wishes to highlight that the terms 'Black' and 'White' in the research report are recognised as socially constructed categories. According to these social constructions, 'White' refers to those advantaged under apartheid and 'Black' to those disadvantaged by apartheid. These terms are used for the purpose of examining the extent of transformation rather than supporting the use of this terminology.

The study therefore sought to explore the metaperceptions of mothers and young adults involved in TRA within the South African social context. South African society continues to be highly influenced by metaperceptions held by different racial groups that inform interracial interactions, levels of integration, and reactions by individuals from different backgrounds to those involved in forms of intimate interracial relationships, such as TRA. The responses of participants therefore cannot be considered outside of the unique meanings they hold within the South African context.

1.2. Rationale

In South Africa there are many abandoned babies (Blackie, 2014; Luhanga, 2008), as well as children orphaned as a result of HIV and other causes (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2012; Schroeder & Nichola, 2006). While extended family members often take over caregiver roles for these children, this is not always possible due to the high level of poverty in the country (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006). This has contributed to increased proportions of children in need of adoption. In addition, TRA has been fuelled by a disproportionate and racially skewed ratio of adoptive parents and babies available for adoption in South Africa. There are not as many White children in need of adoption as there are White families applying to adopt. There are also not as many Black families applying to adopt as there are Black children available for adoption, which has led to TRA placements (Szabo & Ritchken, 2002). This may suggest that there may be an assumption that adoptive families should be racially matched.

South African legislation is in support of TRA, as is evident in the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 and later editions. According to this Act, decisions regarding the placement of a child are made with the child's right to a family in mind foremost, with race considered secondarily (Lawson, 1995). The legislation therefore supports the view that living in a family environment is vital for the child's development, even if this family is racially different to the child, as every child has the right to grow up in a family environment (Lawson, 1995). This legislation may represent an assumption that biological families should be racially matched; and that racial disparity within families is considered to be less desirable than racial similarity.

There are a few studies which discuss issues around TRA in South Africa, such as those by Atmore and Biersteker (1997), Freeman and Nkomo (2006) and Szabo, Ritchken (2002) and Blackie (2014). Atmore and Biersteker (2006) found the effects of apartheid difficult to alter, although children from the Durban Metropolitan area placed in secure

transracially adoptive families had the ability to adjust and thrive. Freeman and Nkomo (2006) investigated the effect of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) on the increase of orphans in Black, poor communities. In traditional African cultures, the extended family cared for orphans. However, due to the increasing number of Black orphans in rural and urban communities with a high AIDS prevalence, these systems can no longer cope. As a result, Black children are increasingly transracially adopted by White families (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006). In addition, few White babies become available for adoption by White families, resulting in White families transracially adopting the high number of Black orphans in need of families (Szabo & Ritchken, 2002). Blackie (2014) found that abandonment of children has significantly increased in the last decade; and may be related to the increased socio-economic difficulties and poverty in South Africa. Adoption has not increased which may be influenced by cultural beliefs surrounding adoption and TRA.

Vonk (2001) emphasises the transracial parents' attitudes, skills and knowledge as important factors in TRA and its success. When considering these factors in combination, it is clear that all children deserve a family, although these families are in need of relevant interventions and support structures in order to create a secure environment for children to thrive (Atmore & Biersteker, 1997). This would impact positively on the adjustment and wellbeing of the transracially adoptive family and increase the success of TRA.

The existing studies on TRA in South Africa discuss various issues related to why TRA occurs in this context, but few explore the childrens' and the mothers' experiences and the specific challenges they face as a result of their TRA. An important aspect that is not explored is the metaperceptions of TRA held by adoptive mothers and adopted children, and the ways in which these metaperceptions impact their daily lives. Metaperceptions - the perceptions that individuals perceive others have of them - are an area of psychology that is in need of further research, particularly with regards to issues of race and intergroup relations (Finchilescu, 2005). TRA has not been extensively researched with regards to its relationship with metaperceptions. In addition, the impact of TRA and metaperceptions on the interracial relations of transracially adopted young adults and their mothers in the South African context has not been thoroughly investigated. The metaperceptions of adopted children are important to understand as part of their interracial experiences and social interactions. An additional factor to explore is the challenges that arise for the mother as she parents her child in the midst of the metaperceptions of her extended family and the public more broadly. This is important in the South African context where race is emphasised and minimal intergroup integration has occurred in contemporary South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011; Finchilescu,

2005). This study compares the metaperceptions of adoptive White mothers and adopted Black adult children, in order to investigate the complex family and social dynamics which these individuals negotiate in TRA.

A more in-depth understanding of how these individuals view themselves and how they feel others view them will inform future interventions and research on their racial identity, interracial interactions and their metaperceptions impact on the wellbeing of the family. Therefore, it is noteworthy to consider the metaperceptions and experiences of Black young adults who have been transracially adopted as children by White females, as well as those of the White mothers who adopt Black children. This is particularly pertinent to the South African context as our society is in flux concerning its view on interracial relationships and interactions (Durrheim et al., 2011; Finchilescu, 2005). The results of this exploration may highlight specific areas for psychosocial interventions to be developed to allow for improved support for adopted children and adoptive mothers considering the vast challenges they experience in relation to their TRA. These challenges may be related to the legacy of apartheid and the nature of interracial contact in South Africa.

1.3. Aims

The study aims to explore how the metaperceptions of Black young adults who have been transracially adopted by White mothers are constructed in relation to their TRA. To do this the study investigates the metaperceptions of Black young adults who have been adopted transracially by White mothers, and how this has contributed to their understandings and experiences of being adopted in South Africa. In addition, the metaperceptions of White mothers who adopt transracially are explored in relation to their TRA as well as how they impact on the mothers' experiences. The challenges mothers' face in TRA are examined through an understanding of their experiences and metaperceptions.

A comparison is then presented between the experiences and metaperceptions of these two groups. The comparative aspect of the study is vital in order to explore the complete phenomenon of TRA, illustrating the ways in which they parallel or depart from each other. This comparison can be understood through the relationship between mother and child, whose experiences are difficult to separate from each other entirely.

The study endeavours to create an improved understanding of these individuals, their experiences and their specific challenges, in order to enrich the perceptions of TRA, and identify ways in which those involved can be better supported.

1.4. Chapter Outline

The research report is divided into five chapters. *Chapter 1* provides an introduction to the study by discussing the background, rationale and aims of the study. *Chapter 2* offers an outline of the literature relating to TRA locally and internationally, conceptualisations of the family, the current understandings of interracial interactions in the South African context, and a discussion of metaperceptions in relation to TRA. A discussion of the theoretical framework undertaken in the study is provided. *Chapter 3* details the methods utilised by the study. An explanation of the participants, sampling methods, procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations is provided. *Chapter 4* presents the results of the study and a discussion of their findings in relation to the literature surveyed. Links are drawn across themes through the discussion and interpretation of the data. Finally, *chapter 5* discusses the conclusions drawn from the study. The limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are also examined.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the focus and motivation for the study. Various contextual factors underpin the reasons behind TRA in the South African context and the support or objection to TRA experienced by transracially adoptive families. The study rationale sought to holistically explore TRA through a comparison of the perspectives of transracially adopted young adults and transracially adoptive mothers. The chapter that follows presents an overview of the literature which informs understandings of different aspects of TRA internationally and in South Africa. These aspects include TRA legislation and perspectives on TRA; understandings of the family; race relations in South Africa; metaperceptions and the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

TRA introduces various issues that need to be explored in order to fully recognise how it is understood by those involved; and how these understandings and experiences inform the construction of metaperceptions for mothers and young adults in TRA. Thus, considerations surrounding TRA, conceptualisations of the family, notions of race and interracial contact in South Africa, and metaperceptions in relation to TRA are surmounted in this chapter. In addition, the theoretical framework of the study is presented to contextualise the theoretical perspective used to interpret the results.

2.1. Transracial Adoption

2.1.1. Perspectives on Transracial Adoption

Adoption is defined as "the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the child's birth or biological mother or father. A legal adoption order has the effect of terminating the parental rights of the birth mother and father, while transferring the parental rights and responsibilities to the adoptive parents. The adopted child must, for all intents and purposes, be regarded as the child of the adoptive parent/s" (NACSA, 2013a). There are various types of adoptions, such as related adoptions, closed adoptions, etc, although the study focuses on TRA (NACSA, 2013b). TRA is defined as the adoption of a child of one race by parents of another race (Adamec & Pierce, 2000, cited in Jennings, 2006). Specifically, it generally refers to White families adopting Black children (Perry, 1994). TRA is considered the most obvious form of adoption due to physical, outwardly observed racial differences, which prevent TRA from being private when compared to same race adoptions (Galvin, 2003). The term 'transracial adoption' is used in this study as this is the more common term found in social sciences literature, as opposed to 'interracial' which traditionally describes intimate romantic relationships rather than adoptions (Jaynes, 2007).

There is an ongoing debate in TRA literature, both internationally and in South Africa between proponents of the philosophies of 'liberal colourblind individualism' and 'colour and community consciousness'. 'Liberal colourblind individualism' holds that racism can be eradicated, and that race should not be an important factor when evaluating people, that a colourblind community should be the ultimate goal, and finally, that the individual is the primary source of evaluating rights and interests (Perry, 1994). The 'colour and community

consciousness' philosophy is more cynical about the eradication of racism, seeing it as a pervasive and permanent part of society. This view states that race has a strong influence on individuals' lives in the choices they make and think they can make, further values a multicultural society which allows for the continuation of diverse cultures and emphasises the rights of the group that an individual is identified with (Perry, 1994). 'Colour and community consciousness' is tied to the relationship between group and individual oppression. These two perspectives occur on a continuum (Perry, 1994).

In relation to TRA, the two perspectives of 'colourblindness' and 'colour and community consciousness' are in contrast. 'Colourblindness' views TRA as a positive step towards a more integrated, non-racist society. It is sometimes taken further, that preference for placing children with same race families is a step backwards towards racial segregation. This view holds that TRA can be contextualised within governmental control over private choices regarding family structure through interracial marriage and forming multiracial families. The focus is on the individual child's needs, not those of the community (Perry, 1994). In contrast, the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) displayed the most liberal form of 'colour and community consciousness' in its 1972 position paper against TRA. The group stated that Black children should be placed only with Black families, as people are products of their environment, and therefore cannot learn Black attitudes, values and other socialised concepts from White families (Perry, 1994). TRA is seen as racial and cultural genocide (possible loss of Black culture), as the child cannot develop their Black cultural heritage, and cannot learn how to cope in an inherently racist society. Thus, the child is not fully accepted by the Black or White community, which leads to racial identity difficulties (Perry, 1994).

Similar to these arguments presented by 'colourblindness' and 'colour and community consciousness' movements, further literature suggests that the transracially adopted child can be viewed as a political object. Opposing views have been discussed by Dubinsky (2007), regarding discourses of 'rescue' and 'kidnap' which reveal race-related political agendas within TRA discourses. Within political contexts which are seeking racial equality and integration, such as South Africa, TRA may be used to serve such agendas (Dubinsky, 2007).

Dubinsky (2007) bases her discussion on the moves towards integration that occurred in Canada in the 1950s, which can be applied to the South Africa context. Transracially adopted children were viewed as symbols of racial reconciliation and a sign of increased racial tolerance, either as unfortunate children being rescued by White caregivers or as an indication of the superior social values of Canadians (Dubinsky, 2007).

Rescue discourses propose that Black orphans hold socio-political value in their 'childness' and 'Blackness' which are representative of political legitimacy for White individuals who 'rescue' them; thereby gaining power in democratic societies (Dubinsky, 2007). The 'rescuing' of Black orphans constructs White people as noble and capable, while Black people are constructed as helpless. Black transracial adoptees are thus representative of White society's reduction of racism and move towards racial integration. This diminishes the racial inequality within society which may have contributed to Black children being available for adoption (Dubinsky, 2007).

An alternative discourse in TRA is that of 'kidnap'. Within this discourse TRA Black children are constructed as stolen and damaged to the detriment of both the child and the race group to which they belong (Dubinsky, 2007; Hollingsworth, 1999). This discourse is linked to the NABSW cultural genocide argument discussed above. Within this movement, Black individuals sought to reclaim Black transracial adoptees who were 'lost' to White populations through TRA, based on the idea that Black children need to be raised by Black families in order to build a strong Black nation (Hollingsworth, 1999).

2.1.2. Studies on Transracial Adoption

Research has found that TRA does not negatively affect the child (Atmore & Biersteker, 1997; Feigelman & Silverman, 1984; Lee, 2003; McRoy, Zurcher, Lauderdale & Anderson, 1982; Perry, 1994; Shireman & Johnson, 1986). However, opposing views continue for differing reasons. These include views that the results of these studies are overstated, as there were both positive and negative outcomes of TRA (McRoy et al., 1982); and that studies have methodological flaws or show contradictory results (Perry, 1994). For example, it is concluded that transracial placement is not negative, although homogeneous placement is preferred (Perry, 1994). There is also the question of interracial trust involved in TRA. Black people may believe that racism makes it difficult for White people to adequately care for Black children. In addition, it is felt that many White people do not have the appropriate skills to deal with issues of racism during parenting (Perry, 1994). These debates have led to research studies whose results support both claims, and highlight the various challenges and debates surrounding TRA.

Most research can be divided into descriptive studies on either psychological outcomes or the racial (ethnic) identity of transracial adoptees. More recent studies have sought to merge these two designs into studies on cultural socialisation (Lee, 2003). Outcome studies usually compare transracial adoptees with either same race adoptees or non-adoptees

on psychological adjustment, which did not find TRA problematic. However, this research fails to directly measure racial and ethnic experiences of adoptees and their possible effects on psychological adjustment (Lee, 2003). In the current study it is hypothesised that the mother may need to recognise and react to the children's level of adjustment to their TRA and their new family context, which may affect the mothers' experiences of their TRA. Moreover, the children may have to contend with these challenges throughout their development, particularly as they integrate into a new family, form their racial identity and participate in interracial interactions, even as young adults (Lee, 2003). However, TRA is considered to be a good care placement option; and yields good psychological adjustment in outcome studies (Blackie, 2014; Roby & Shaw, 2006).

Several racial identity studies have investigated the extent of racial self-descriptors and pride in race and ethnicity in transracial adoptees (Lee, 2003; Yancey & Lewis, 2009). In studies conducted in the US, positive racial identities are related to good psychological adjustment, and vice versa. However, a large degree of variation has been identified in the results of studies on racial identity formation of individuals who are transracially adopted (Lee, 2003). Therefore, racial identity formation was not always found to be equated with positive psychological adjustment. In addition, racial identity formation or difficulties surrounding racial identity formation and lower levels of psychological adjustment were not always related. Extrinsic factors such as the age of adoption (older ages identify more strongly with their own ethnicity), race (African American and Hispanic adoptees had higher ethnic pride than Asian adoptees), and geography (those adopted into homogenous communities had weaker ethnic identity) are also factors that may be problematic (Lee, 2003). Furthermore, racial identity may vary according to the stage of social and emotional development of the adoptee. As adoptees get older, their racial identity changes, but this is varied among adoptees (Lee, 2003; Yancey & Lewis, 2009). The combination of these three factors will affect transracially adopted childrens' experiences of their TRA and their interactions with others differently according to how these factors vary.

Cultural socialisation outcome studies endeavour to identify the racial and ethnic experiences of transracial adoptees and their families which encourage or hamper racial identity development and which facilitate adjustment (Lee, 2003; Yancey & Lewis, 2009). Healthy psychological adjustment is seen as reliant on positive racial identity development and ethnic experiences. The studies on cultural socialisation and adjustment look at how the challenges of TRA are overcome. Studies conducted by Sweden, Cederblad, et al. (1999) and Hjern et al. (2002) provide evidence that negative racial and ethnic experiences have serious

psychological consequences for adoptees and their families. DeBerry (1996) and Yoon (2001) found evidence suggesting the same relationship between positive experiences and good psychological adjustment. DeBerry (1996) also found that amongst parents of Black adoptees, half encouraged biracialism in childhood but not in adolescence, resulting in ambivalent views of race and cultural socialisation, and thus decreased racial identity in adolescent adoptees. Those who promoted racial identity had children with positive racial identities as a result. Although more evidence is needed, there is a growing body of research on cultural socialisation (Lee, 2003).

Therefore, transracially adoptive mothers need to develop a standpoint concerning racial identity development and cultural socialisation as this will affect their transracially adopted children and the family. This is one of the major challenges facing transracially adoptive mothers and consequently, their children. The challenge of racial identity affects mothers' relationships with their transracially adopted children and it is important to investigate its influences on TRA. The impact of racial identity on transracially adopted childrens' relationships and experiences outside of the family are important for the study to explore. This is especially important to explore from the perspective of young adults who are navigating the world independently from the family.

There are also various communication issues which arise in TRA. Family identity development involves creating narratives of why and how parents adopted, addressing physical differences which become obvious to the child and others, choosing a name which reflects the family identity and developing a family identity, such as White Zulu to describe White families adopting a Zulu child (Galvin, 2003). Regarding boundary management, TRA involves overt physical differences in the family and is therefore more public. Families need to develop communication strategies to deal with questions relating to differences on their own terms; and ways of addressing racial derogation (Galvin, 2003). It may be challenging for the mothers and the young adults in this study to negotiate private and public boundaries.

Cultural socialisation relates to families developing ways for children and parents to become acquainted with the birth culture of the children (Galvin, 2003). The goal is to develop bicultural identities which can function within the cultures of the birth and adoptive families. Development issues play out through transracially adopted children leaving home and searching for their roots (Galvin, 2003). When leaving home, their identities are challenged as they leave an environment of acceptance. They may experience inclusion or exclusion, as the racial or ethnic group sees transracial children as foreign, while society views these children as belonging to that racial or ethnic group. They may experience double

consciousness, identifying with two cultures but feeling tension, not acceptance, from both. Searching for biological roots impacts the adoptive family identity and the birth family who are faced by the 'ghost child' (Galvin, 2003). This refers to the experience of biological parents when they meet their children who were transracially adopted; and the way in which it impacts both the biological and adoptive family structures. These are issues that the mother may be able to anticipate and prepare herself, her child and her family for. Developing an awareness of potential challenges and approaches to managing them prepares the mother for her experiences with her TRA; but also burdens her with the inevitable pressures of challenges that she, her child and her family will need to endure. These are direct challenges for the child and later for the young adult as they form their identity and have various questions about their origins. These may include why they were adopted, health questions and cultural questions.

When looking at adjustment, Grow and Shapiro (1974) examine the influence of disruptions and adoption variables on adjustment in black transracially adopted children. The variable investigated included pre-adoption history, age of adoption, adoption by a foster family, degree of extended family opposition and degree of race-matching. They found that 77% of Black children who were adopted transracially did adjust despite the presence of these variables (Grow & Shapiro, 1974). Silverman and Freeman (1981) found that maladjustment was due to adoption occurring at an older age and a high degree of extended family opposition (Park & Green, 2000). Longitudinal studies have found that TRA tracked from childhood through to adulthood showed no barriers to the growth and development of Black children, such as the study by Shireman and Johnson (1986). Moore (1986) found that TRA benefitted the scholastic and IQ achievements of Black children, stating that a White family was better for Black children than a Black family in this context (Park & Green, 2000). These varying views may affect the mothers' decision to adopt transracially. For example, mothers may prefer to adopt children at a younger age due to fears of maladjustment if children are older when adopted. These fears are balanced by the longitudinal studies which find these cases to be as successful. These additional challenges facing adjustment may affect how the mother responds to her TRA. This may influence how she thinks others and her child respond to her as she attempts to identify with her child in order to facilitate their adjustment. The level of adjustment in the child may impact on their metaperceptions and interracial relations as a child and young adult.

All but one study of TRA found that Black and mixed-parentage children adopted by White parents tend to have as high self-esteem as White adopted children, tend to do as well

at school, have good relations with their parents and peers, and have no more behavioural problems than White adopted children (Tizard & Phoenix, 1995). However, the problem identified by Small (1986) is that these children have not developed a racial identity (Small, 1986). A study by McRoy and Zurcher (1983) supports this by comparing two groups of Black and mixed-parentage children, one group adopted by White parents and the other by Black parents (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983; Tizard & Phoenix, 1995). This showed all the similarities listed above, however, differences were noted in the development of racial identity. Those adopted by White families were more likely to have more White dates and friends, and refer to themselves as mixed, part White, or dismissed the label of race saying they were a human being. If they lived in a multiracial community they were more likely to have Black friends and think positively about their race (Tizard & Phoenix, 1995). Yancey and Lewis (2009) put forward that transracially adopted individuals do not lose their racial identity, are not less racially aware, and are just as psychologically successful as other adoptees (Yancey & Lewis, 2009). However, Grow and Shapiro (1974) found that transracially adoptive parents described their childrens' identification with their racial group as positive, unknown or indifferent. This may suggest that transracially adopted individuals experience a unique process of racial identity formation. Therefore, there is a need to identify the influences that racial identity development has on transracially adopted children and the family, to recognise how this is treated in their social context, and how this affects their metaperceptions.

2.1.3. Background to Transracial Adoption in the South African Context

In order to further contextualise South African perspectives of TRA, the reasons for Black children becoming available for adoption by White parents need to be considered. In South Africa AIDS is the leading cause of death, with HIV infection levels increasing. HIV risk is found to be highest in Black and poor communities, resulting in the highest number of orphans being Black and underprivileged (Schroeder & Nichola, 2006). Traditionally in African cultures, extended family members care for the children of other family members who are in need, such as orphaned children. Research conducted by Freeman and Nkomo (2006) in South Africa in Black rural and urban areas with a high prevalence of HIV found that the majority of people confirmed that this form of care occurs. However, due to the large and rising number of Black orphans in South Africa, extended family members cannot afford to look after any additional children financially as well as emotionally, due to the depletion of family networks related to modernisation, migration and AIDS related factors (Freeman &

Nkomo, 2006). Therefore, those families who transracially adopt these orphans may do so because they have sufficient financial and psychological resources to care for them.

Research further examining the attitudes towards TRA in South Africa is interesting as they are filled with underlying class and race dynamics. Black caregivers in different provinces in the country were asked how they would feel if their children were to be adopted within or outside of the country instead of cared for by extended family in the event of their death. The majority were not supportive of TRA. The part of the sample with secondary or tertiary education held largely more positive perspectives than those with less education (Freeman & Nkomo, 2006). Moos and Mwaba (2007) found that Black psychology students supported TRA, as they did not see it as harmful to the child, or that the child would lose their culture; but believed that TRA could aid the promotion of racial and cultural tolerance. These findings may be interpreted as evidence of White rejection of racism and changes in race relations in South Africa (Moos & Mwaba, 2007). These studies imply that how people view situations is related to their education level, as they may be able to have more informed opinions. The study by Moos and Mwaba (2007) displays a shift in the attitudes of South African youth away from racism and toward tolerance and increased interracial relations.

In South Africa, a large and mounting number of babies are abandoned every year (Luhanga, 2008). In addition, there are particular trends in adoption in South Africa which suggest that adoption levels are declining; and that same-race adoptions are preferred over TRA (Mokomane, Rochat & Directorate, 2012). A study on the adoption trends in South Africa by Mokomane et al. (2012) suggests that adoption rates in the country are low in comparison to the high number of children in foster care. The low adoption rate may be influenced by numerous contextual factors. These include socio-economic issues regarding lineage among African families and communities, social work practice obstacles or restrictions to adoption, social worker attitudes and engagement with adoption as a largely bureaucratic issue, and lastly, that alternative care placements such as fostering within the family may be a more common practice than adoption in African cultures in South Africa (Mokomane et al., 2012). Lower adoption rates combined with higher numbers of abandoned babies may lead to an increase in declining socio-economic indicators in the country such as increased child-headed households, poverty and children in institutions (Mokomane et al., 2012).

The high number of abandoned babies in South Africa is thought to be strongly related to increasing financial stress on already poor mothers who do not think they will be able to provide for their infants (Mbuyazi, 2008). The majority of these are Black babies,

with few Black families applying to adopt. Conversely, few White babies are available for adoption with many White families wanting to adopt (Blackie, 2014; Szabo & Ritchken, 2002). On November 2013 The Register of Adoptable Children and Prospective Adoptive Parents [RACAP] indicated that the largest proportion of children available for adoption are Black children followed by mixed race children, then White children, and the remainder unspecified; while the largest proportion of people applying to adopt are White individuals, followed by Indian and Black potential adoptive parents, with the remainder unspecified (Blackie, 2014).

Mothers may also abandon their babies due to high levels of single motherhood (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2009), reflected in the low levels of marriage in South Africa (Hosegood, McGrath & Moultrie, 2009; Kalule-Sabiti, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng 2007). This may lead to abandonment due to financial, emotional and parenting pressures, as well as poverty (Cooper, Morroni, Orner, Moodley, Harries, Cullingworth, et al., 2004). Factors leading to child abandonment and TRA therefore include socio-economic factors include a lack of family support, illegitimate childbearing leading to difficulties in effectively caring for children, high poverty levels, non-marital childbearing, high levels of violence including rape, gender inequality, mass urbanisation and migrant labour, diminishing family support and teenage pregnancy (Blackie, 2014; Mbuyazi, 2008; Mokomane et al., 2012).

The child protection organisations in South Africa collectively estimate that the number of abandoned babies has significantly increased over the past decade, with 3500 children estimated to have been abandoned in 2010 (Blackie, 2014). In addition, foster care grants have increased by 70% while adoption has decreased by more than 40% in the last decade. Child support grants have also significantly increased (Blackie, 2014). Of the 428 children on RACAP as of November 2013 60% were abandoned, and less than 40% consented to be adopted by family or parents. There were 297 unmatched parents available to adopt these 428 unmatched children. Overall, only 29 parents were available to adopt approximately 428 children once all factors had been considered. Therefore, only 1699 adoptions took place in 2013 as compared to 2840 in 2004 (Blackie, 2014).

While a generally positive attitude towards TRA is reported (Mokomane et al., 2012; Moos & Mwaba, 2007), low levels of TRA were recorded in the National Adoption Register [NAR]; and social workers appeared to prefer same-race placements to interracial placements in adoption (Mokomane et al., 2012). In addition, according to RACAP, the number of adoptions has declined in the last decade with the number of orphans increasing over the last

decade (Blackie, 2014). This has contributed to poor implementation of the Children's Act of 2010 and cultural barriers. Resistance to TRA and adoption needs to be understood further in order to intervene effectively. Blackie (2014) therefore aimed to examine the cultural beliefs which impact on the number of adoptions in South Africa. Blackie (2014) drew data from interviews and observations in Alexandra, Soweto and Tembisa with young women experiencing unplanned pregnancy, women who had been apprehended for abandoning their children, community members, police officers, nurses, social workers, baby home managers and caregivers, adoption social workers, foster care parents, adoptive parents, psychologists, psychiatrists, legal experts, traditional healers and abandoned children. She found that cultural understandings have a large impact on the current adoption trends (Blackie, 2014). Furthermore, current patterns of race relations in South Africa may also impact on how TRA occurs (Durrheim, 2005).

The cultural factors identified by Blackie (2014) derive from indigenous African ancestral beliefs around child abandonment. It was found that community members believed that abandoning a child was viewed more favourably by ancestors than formally relinquishing their rights as parents to allow for the child to be adopted. Formally consenting to adoption was viewed as a conscious choice; and was therefore viewed in the same way as abortion. These acts were believed to reject the gift of a child from the ancestors which might be punishable by bad luck or infertility (Blackie, 2014). However, it is interesting to consider that the potential consequence of death for the child is not mentioned. Furthermore, abandonment of a child is also a conscious choice which, if resulting in death, may by the same logic also be punishable by the ancestors.

Furthermore, a large concern in adoption was that raising a child with unknown ancestry was thought to create difficulty for the adoptive family and the child. A child who was not aware of their ancestry might be unable to fulfil their traditional roles and rituals with the family; and is believed to live a difficult life. Traditions and rituals included paying damages, paying lobola and celebrating milestones. Ancestors were also believed to play the role of guidance, assisting with decision making and aiding knowledge on the source of illness (Blackie, 2014). However, despite these beliefs the sangoma's (traditional healers) consulted during the research discussed that they would be able to assist an individual who has been abandoned with finding their ancestors. The adoptive family can also be assisted with announcing the child to the ancestors through a process called 'ubigile' (Blackie, 2014).

Poverty plays a large role in this decision for mothers involved in illegitimate childbearing, non-marital childbearing and teenage pregnancy (Mokomane et al., 2012). Data

from the NAR and the Department of Social Development (DSD) shows that the levels of poverty are rising in the country (DSD, 2012; Mokomane et al., 2012). While initiatives towards social transformation exist, racial inequality appears to persist. While an evident Black middle class is emerging, the proportion of those living in poverty is increasing, resulting in poverty and wealth remaining racialised (Durrheim et al., 2011). Therefore, the number of orphaned and vulnerable children may continue to rise and may have an influence on the number of children who are adopted in South Africa. Some of these adoptions may be transracial adoptions.

In relation to this rise in poverty it is estimated that over 2 million children have been orphaned in South Africa (National Adoption Coalition of South Africa [NACSA] 2012; Statistics South Africa, 2011). While the number of vulnerable children has not been calculated, it is suggested from the number of social grants that 10.3 million children benefit from child support grants in South Africa; and that more than 560,718 foster child grants were provided. Therefore, over 2.5 million children require alternative care arrangements and support. The reasons behind this are linked to persistently high levels of poverty, inequality and the poor general health of South Africans (NACSA, 2012). HIV and AIDS also appear to be contributing factors to the health of South Africans; and the number of orphaned and vulnerable children. In addition, the global economic crisis has also impacted on children becoming more vulnerable in recent years (NACSA, 2012; Statistics South Africa, 2011).

Statistics South Africa (2011) expanded on the living situations of South African children in the 2011 mid-year population estimates. The statistics revealed that only 33.5% of children lived with both their parents, 23.9% live with neither parent, 3.3% lived with their fathers, 39.3% lived with their mothers, and 7.6% lived in 'skip-generation' households with grandparents. Social grants were an essential safety net for many people as 62.7% of children lived in households with a per capita income of less than R570 a month, 49.3% of youth headed households did not have employed members, and by the age of 22, 56.6% of youth were not learning or working (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Therefore, child care grants were essential in assisting in the care of children. However, often the income from social grants were used for the eradication of poverty within the household by providing for basic needs rather than for the care of children (NACSA, 2012).

South Africa's social welfare system has progressed rapidly in order to align itself with the requirements of the South African constitution and the Childrens Act (NACSA, 2012). This is evident through over 14 million people benefiting from social grants, education being compulsory from 7 to 13 years old, free health care for young children and provision of

services for those in households who cannot afford treatment (Statistics South Africa, 2010). However, extreme poverty remains prevalent; and the global financial crisis which has impacted on the South African economy has further decreased access to resources and financial opportunities which contributes to poverty (Durrheim et al., 2011). This is evident in the worsening of socio-economic factors such as rising unemployment which affects more men than women (OECD, 2011) and many young South Africans are neither studying nor working (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

The DSD has developed strong legislative guidelines for practice; but seem to face challenges implementing these guidelines due to limited resources and a shortage of social workers (DSD, 2011). Difficulties arise in awarding and renewing the foster care grants, the low numbers of adoptions, and the inefficient development and use of the tools required for carrying out the Children's Act. In addition, the number of adoptions has become static; and the department is working to promote adoption to alleviate this. However, the number of adoptions dropped drastically from 2007-2010, and still remains low in comparison to the number of children in need of care. However, the DSD Annual Report (2011) states that the RACAP system has become operational with 740 parents and 936 children on the register. Should adoption increase it is hoped that this will create more permanent placements for children (as recommended by the Children's Act) rather than foster care or institutionalisation (NACSA, 2012).

The formulated aim of adoption is to provide a permanent parent-child relationship for a child who is in need of care. Within this relationship the child receives full child and heir rites. This is the most permanent care placement of all of the care placements described by the Children's Act; and may therefore be the best placement for a child in theory. However, adoptions continue to be the least utilised of all care placements (NACSA, 2012). UNICEF (2008) found that 0.002% of orphaned children in South Africa were adopted, and that 50% of those adoptions are by step-parents, therefore within the family (UNICEF, 2008). The Children's Act considers the best care placement for orphaned or vulnerable children to be with relatives or members of the child's community. The goal is to promote permanent placements for children, such as adoption or guardianship by relatives. Thereafter adoption by non-relatives is considered, with a preference for those with a similar background (NACSA, 2012). This preference may have implications for TRA, as the Act does not define at which stage TRA is considered. Lastly, foster care placement is recommended. Therefore, there is a need to promote adoption, as most people select foster care. This may be related to

the financial support provided in foster care which is not provided in adoptions (NACSA, 2012).

The low rate of adoptions can be linked to several factors. Individuals may not know about adoption, may reject the practice for cultural reasons, or may be deterred by the lengthy and complicated adoption procedure (NACSA, 2012). The slow process of adoption has been attributed to low capacity to implement the system effectively. For example, many children in institutional care or places of safety have not been assessed to be placed on RACAP (NACSA, 2012). Additional factors include poor or slow implementation of the Children's Act by the DSD and practitioners, faults with RACAP, a severe lack of social workers and resources, and long waiting periods prescribed by the Children's Act due to bureaucracy. For example, what used to be a 3 month period for adoptions now takes 7 to 9 months (NACSA, 2012).

Child vulnerability is often an outcome of poverty and unemployment (DSD, 2012; NACSA, 2012). There are several less than favourable outcomes of being an orphaned or disadvantaged child. These include increased risk of poverty, abuse, exploitation, institutionalisation, psychiatric disorders, educational difficulties and vocational disadvantages. These factors may impact on the human capital of the country; and may perpetuate poverty and unemployment (DSD, 2012). An additional outcome to decreased human capital on the country is an increased need for social welfare spending to intervene with these outcomes. Further, increased pressure is placed on the tax base of the country to fund these interventions which further strains human capital (NACSA, 2012). Other outcomes of inadequate child care include increased costs on the education and health system, as orphans and vulnerable children are more likely to have financial difficulties, dependency ratios are increased as children are taken into 'skip-generation' households, and female headed households come under greater strain (NACSA, 2012). It has been found that poverty seems to have increased for female parts of the population. Many females were disadvantaged in terms of finding work during apartheid; and the after effects of this continue to be seen in the feminisation of poverty in South Africa (DSD, 2012). Furthermore, children who have been 'institutionalised' are at higher risk for psychiatric and educational difficulties, and are less likely to be economically productive or independent, which extends to other family members. This has immediate implications for South Africa's unemployment rate, especially among the youth (DSD, 2012; NACSA, 2012).

Social and economic literature has reliably established that human capital is a vital contributor to productivity, economy and development of a country (DSD, 2012; NACSA,

2012). In addition, non-permanent and institutional care of children often has detrimental effects on the child in the long term. Therefore, an increase in adoptions provides more permanent placements and more adequate child care which is highly beneficial for the child. Furthermore, improved child care creates benefits for the community and the development of human capital which are beneficial for population development. Therefore, it is vitally important that interventions be in place to assist in increasing adequate childcare in the country, such as through adoptions (Centre for Social Justice, 2010; NACSA, 2012).

The issue of abandoned, vulnerable and orphaned children has been addressed in different ways; but more is needed to do so sufficiently. While some perspectives prefer the institutionalisation of such children to allow for the development of racial, cultural and ethnic identity when no Black adoptive parents are available, this has been shown to lead to increased psychological and developmental difficulties that continue into adulthood. This may also be due to lack of funding in some institutions (Roby & Shaw, 2006). In international and local social work organisations where same-race placements are not possible, TRA is preferred over institutionalisation, as the benefits of family life on development are greater than those of same race enculturation (Szabo & Ritchken, 2002). Due to the lack of resources and the high volume of Black orphaned children, Black children are likely to have a better quality of life in a transracially adoptive family than they would otherwise have had being orphaned or left in an institution (Roby & Shaw, 2006).

Mokomane, Rochat and The Directorate (2012) investigated the patterns and trends in adoption in South Africa based on the NAR. They found relatively low levels of TRA occurring; and found that social worker attitudes reflected a general preference for same-race adoptions over TRA. However, both positive and negative attitudes were found amoungst social workers in the study (Mokomane et al., 2012). The low levels of TRA are said to be surprising considering the generally positive attitudes towards the practice as described by Moos and Mwaba (2007). The difference in actual levels of TRA and the differing opinions of the social workers and students presented may be resultant of general attitudes towards TRA among current adopting populations in South Africa being less positive in some contexts. The current study adds to this discussion.

There are factors which contribute to the relatively low levels of TRA on the NAR. Adoptions are classified into biological, family, foster and step-parent adoptions. The ‘stranger’ adoption category found internationally is subsumed under foster adoptions as most ‘stranger’ adoptions are born from foster care cases in South Africa. Foster family adoptions have increased in recent years, making up the majority of adoptions in 2006-2008.

This is linked to another factor, the problematically slow adoption system. The delays in the system result in children being fostered by prospective adoptive parents while waiting for the adoption to be finalised in order to prevent unnecessary institutionalisation. Children may also remain in foster care as parents cannot afford to lose the foster care grants, leading to a large number of formally fostered children compared to those who are legally adopted. An adoption grant has been suggested as a solution to encourage adoption over fostering in such financial situations (Mokomane et al., 2012). However, this may be problematic in consideration of adopted children having equal rights and status to biological children. Another factor in the South African context is that in African societies, extended family members foster children, therefore they do not see the value of completing the lengthy adoption process. Added to this is the high level of HIV-AIDS morbidity and mortality (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Save the Children, 2007, cited in Mokomane et al., 2012).

Data from the NAR reflects a preference in adoptions in South Africa for White children, followed by African, Indian and Coloured children, respectively. Owing to the generally positive but fluctuating attitude towards TRA in South Africa, this may be a reflection of the extremely low levels of adoption; and the fact that race and gender are generally not important factors in successful South African adoptions (Mokomane et al., 2012).

Mokomane et al. (2012) also investigated the profile of individuals applying to adopt children. From their research, social workers held differing perspectives of the reasons for Black and White people adopting. A social worker from Limpopo reported that:

> Most of the Black people that want to adopt are employed, over 40 years of age, educated and they usually wait to find out that they cannot conceive before they consider adoption. In the White community, they have been exposed to adoption and have vast amount of knowledge about it, their reasons for adopting are totally different from Black people. They are much younger and some of those who want to adopt have children of their own. There are a lot of single people applying and most of them are highly educated (Mokomane et al., 2012, p. 353).

Trends identified on the NAR were limited to race and marital status which revealed that most adoptive parents appeared to be unmarried and White. In addition, White adoptive parents were younger than Black adoptive parents. The authors suggest that this may represent:

> A trend towards social responsibility adoption being popular among White, middle class families who already have children or single adults who are financially secure and choosing

> adoption as a route to family building, rather than traditional routes such as marriage and biological childbearing. This would suggest lowered stigma towards adoption within these populations (Mokomane et al., 2012, p. 353).

2.1.4. South African Legislation on Transracial Adoption

In South Africa, there is legislation in support of TRA (Lawson, 1995), although the effects of apartheid and racial and cultural separation are still evident and difficult to alter (Atmore & Biersteker, 1997). While efforts are made to match the child's race and culture with that of adoptive parents, the child's right to develop in a family environment are taken into account primarily (Lawson, 1995). Even though heritage is considered, it is balanced by the high number of institutionalised and abandoned babies, which creates a demand for the placement of children with suitable parents (Loffel, 1991). It has been highlighted that parents' skills, attitudes and knowledge is an important factor in TRA, including knowledge of cultural assimilation within the family (Vonk, 2001).

Legislation in South Africa is in support of TRA, evident in the Child Care Act of 1983 (and later editions), with decisions regarding placements made with the child's right to a family in mind foremost, with race considered secondarily. The legislation therefore supports the view that living in a family environment is vital for the child's development, even if this family is racially and culturally different to the child, as every child has the right to grow up in a family (Lawson, 1995). This shows that as long as the child is in a secure family environment they have the ability to thrive. A study conducted in the Durban Metropolitan area demonstrated this, as children placed transracially, in a secure home, over a four year period overcame their abandonment and thrived (Atmore & Biersteker, 1997). Studies like these contribute towards support for TRA, in spite of the contestations from those that oppose it.

However, there are different interpretations of this legislation which highlight the fact that same race adoptions are given preference over TRA in the Child Care Act 38 of 2005 and earlier editions. This indicates that this legislation has been influenced by the opposing discourses of 'colourblindness' and 'colour and community consciousness', as well as 'rescue' and 'kidnap'; as racial, cultural and ethnic groups have greater historical 'claim' on the child, based on the race of the child and their birth parents (Ferreira, 2006, cited in Hall, 2010). This seems to support a more 'colour and community consciousness' discourse unintentionally. While trying to hold the best interests of the child in mind, the legislation itself has judged what is best for the child based on racial, cultural and ethnic similarity rather

than the quality of support the child will receive from this family (Zaal, 1992). The importance of and right to a family seems to be considered secondarily when considering these points, despite legislation emphasising the importance of the family environment for the child's development foremost, followed by religion and culture (Lawson, 1995).

The legitimacy of these preferences within South African legislation has been questioned. Zaal (1992) suggests that the most pervasive divides in South Africa are likely to be associated with the apartheid system rather than religious and cultural differences which are given consideration when placing children with suitable families under the 1991 Child Care Act. These notions of culture and religion are constructed in relation to the race of children, as innate and determined by their race. The interpretations of these constructions increase the boundaries around TRA, refining such classifications and decreasing opportunities for 'complimentary' adoptions to take place (Zaal, 1992).

This way of conceptualising the legislation around TRA can be considered a form of racial discrimination. The childs' access to the economic, educational and emotional benefits of belonging to a family are denied based on perceptions of race within the family (Zaal, 1992). Transracially adopted children are also tasked with carrying the political agendas of some Black groups who are concerned with Black identity. This is difficult for transracially adopted children to understand and negotiate; and is a challenging process for adoptive mothers to support their children through (Hollingsworth, 1999).

Within a society which claims to be democratic and see all individuals as equals, the way in which we are governed by law as citizens still seems to be influenced by racial classifications and perceptions that those who are similar racially, socio-politically and culturally. should interact with one another (Durrheim, 2005; Zaal, 1992). These perceptions may impact on the metaperceptions of transracially adoptive mothers and adoptees as they begin to make meaning of their connectedness within a context that does not always consider TRA to be the most favourable option for children in need of families. Rather, it is often regarded as the last resort due to low opportunities for same race adoptions. This may call into question the legitimacy of the transracially adoptive family in relation to these views.

2.2. Conceptualisations of Family

The challenges related to TRA are compounded by constructions of the family. How TRA is understood may be unique in South Africa as compared to other parts of the world due to specific contextual factors. These may include constructions of the family as traditionally nuclear; and that interracial contact is limited, particularly within forms of

intimate relationships, such as that between mother and child. In addition, the meaning attached to being a Black child who has been adopted by a White mother in South Africa may be related to how TRA is understood.

Nuclear families are generally seen as the norm, defined as the presence of a mother, father and children, all belonging to the same race (Burman, 2008). These notions of what is considered a 'normal' family structure can be used to exclude anything that is different. In the case of TRA, family structures are evidently different, with race being one of the observable differences. Individuals from separatist camps traditionally use the basis of race as a legitimate argument against TRA as they believe that White parents may not be suitable to care for children from another race, and are not equipped to nurture and develop these children's cultural and racial identity (Ratele, 2002). Often these prejudiced notions of families, and especially of interracial families, attract negative attribution (Ratele, 2003).

Families take on different forms according to culture and historical period (Abbott, 1989, cited in Burman, 2008). Although ideals of the nuclear family are established, these are not exclusive to change (Burman, 2008). With changing constructions of race and intergroup contact in South Africa, the family may also be changing to account for changes in society, to a multicultural society (and family) in South Africa.

Research has shown that the structure of the family has shifted dramatically in recent years across the world; and that many different forms of families exist. In addition, these new forms of families are more common than the 'normal' nuclear family (OECD, 2011). Therefore, nuclear families may in fact no longer be considered the norm; and may be less common than in the past (Burman, 2008; DSD, 2012). Changes include lower rates of marriage and higher rates of divorce, less childbearing, higher rates of children born outside of marriage, higher poverty in single-income families in comparison to dual-income families, a relationship between poverty, family structure and educational attainment, and later age of childbearing in females due to higher educational advancement and higher activity in the employment market (OECD, 2011). Within South Africa several changes in family structure have occurred from apartheid to post-apartheid. These include less separation of families, particularly non-White families and an increase in different types of families (Amoateng & Richter, 2007; Anderson, 2003).

The DSD (2012) described different types of South African families according to the departmental statistics. It was noted that there is no singular definition of family; and with the multicultural context in South Africa, it is difficult to find a definition of family extensive enough to account for this. This analysis suggested that the nuclear family (defined as parents

with biological or adoptive children in the report) was most common. However, while still most common, the number of nuclear families in South Africa decreased from 46% to 40% between 1996 and 2001. In addition, households including extended family members increased from 32% to 36% over the same time frame (DSD, 2012). This may represent a shift in family structure post-apartheid and currently in South Africa (Amoateng & Richter, 2007; Anderson, 2003; DSD, 2012).

The findings above were comparable to the 2008 DSD report based on the 2005 General House Survey. The report defined family as any set of individuals within a household who are related biologically or by marriage. It was found that South Africa consisted of 13 million families in South Africa (8.5 million in urban areas and 4.5 million in rural areas) which represented 14 different types of families. The most common types of families in 2005 were the nuclear family (23.3 %), followed by the single-adult family (20.4 %), and three-generation family (16.8 %). Analysis of the types of families by racial group showed that African families had the highest proportion of three-generation, absent-spouse, single parent (bereavement or separation), child-headed and sibling family structures. Coloured families had the highest proportion of single parent (unmarried families) and married couple with adopted children families, while among Indian people the most common type was the nuclear family. The White population had the highest proportion of elder-only and married couple-only families (DSD, 2012). After due consideration, the family was defined in the White Paper on Families in South Africa as "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence" (DSD, 2012, p. 11).

Freud (1999) suggests that while standards are required as a guide for the stable running of society, ideas around normality are context-dependent social constructs (Freud, 1999). Therefore, it may be necessary to challenge the nuclear family as normal in order to establish new norms around the family that include TRA. It is clear that the transracially adoptive family deviates from the 'norm', as the child and mother (or parents) are not of the same race. If this transracially adoptive family consists of a single parent, or a mixture of both biological and transracially adopted children, it may be considered a further deviation (Burman, 2008).

However, O'Conner (1994) posits that diversity within families reflects the cultural pluralism of the individuals that make up society. In addition, the family adapts to socio-economic and societal changes over time (O' Conner, 1994). While there is no universal

definition, there is agreement about the role of the family in society and its functions. These include procreation, socialisation, affection and emotional support (O' Conner, 1994). Their primary role is the education, socialisation and care of children. One or more parents, a relative or a legal guardian usually perform these functions. This socialisation provides a template for relationships outside of the family. Another role is the inter-generation of cultural values. The family also provides mutual solidarity and the exchange of services, with each family having unique systems from which it functions. Relationships may include derivatives of both tension and love. However, strong elements of kinship usually exist regardless of tensions when family members are in need (O' Conner, 1994).

Furthermore, it is suggested that motherhood is not biologically predetermined but socially constructed according to historical, cultural and economic circumstances (Sotelo & Avila, 1997). White middle-class women are traditionally held to a view of motherhood in the domestic sphere as looking after the home and children (Coltrane, 2004). In the context of the White mother and TRA, innate characteristics of White mothers nursing only White children do not apply, as gender roles are socially constructed and have the ability to change (Jackson & Scott, 2002). Therefore, White mothers are able to care for Black children, even if it falls outside of what is socially constructed as the norm in a society.

It is important to bear in mind the issues which create a debate around the adequacy of White mothers' ability to care for children of another race. It is also suggested that constructions of ethnicity and culture are used to perpetuate racist ideology in South Africa, such as suggestions that Black children transracially adopted by White mothers will experience a lack of culture (Stevens, Duncan & Bowman, 2006). However, the socialisation process allows for children to develop a unique identity and culture. Therefore, this argument is viewed as resistance to integration and attempts to continue social inequality in a new form of racism disguised as concerns for cultural difference and incompatibility in interracial interactions (Stevens et al., 2006).

Apartheid was aimed at separating race groups to prevent reproduction, interracial relationships and intermarriage (Jaynes, 2007), as interracial relationships between members of different races were considered to be divergent from the 'norm' of 'pure' relationships between individuals from the same race group (Phoenix & Owen, 2000; Phoenix & Woollett, 1991). In addition, it was aimed at decreasing competition between Black and White population groups to ensure continued privilege and better resources for White people (Finchilescu, 2005). Before apartheid, as early as the 1930s, legislation was used to ensure limited interracial relationships, such as the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed

Marriages Act (Jaynes, 2007). While these Acts were repealed in 1985 (Ratele, 2003), intimate interracial relationships continued to be frowned upon and monitored through the use of segregation during apartheid (Durrheim, 2005). This was defended through the moral obligation of reducing intergroup contact so as to prevent conflict (Durrheim, 2005). The prevention of reproduction would have prevented racial differences in families, which is why TRA families may face opposition. In addition, they challenge the status quo that the apartheid state built into South African society regarding interracial contact, status and social rules.

According to Ratele (2002), interpersonal relationships that differ from the norm in terms of race are viewed in four ways. Rejectionism rejects the 'other' based on essentialist views of race as a natural and biological trait. Difference is symbolised by the view of South Africa as 'the Rainbow Nation', which celebrates difference. Anti-racism discards the views of rejectionism, seeing race not as a biological trait or essential difference but as socially constructed within the political environment. Africanism is centralised around Africa and the notion of an African identity (Ratele, 2002).

The perspectives taken by society in relation to these four categories may impact on the metaperceptions of mothers and young adults in the study. In addition, these views may seek to enforce or reject racist ideology; and may work to separate the mother and child as their relationship challenges the 'norms' of racial segregation entrenched in South African society. As a result, the boundaries around the family may be broken by outsiders who question the legitimacy of the transracially adoptive family. Intrusiveness may be experienced, while curiosity about the family may be interpreted as support or opposition.

While White mothers are able to mother Black children, they are still faced by differing levels of acceptance of TRA. In contrast to the past where Black domestic workers cared for White children and families, contemporary South Africa presents a new dynamic through TRA where White mothers are caring for Black children. Therefore, while Black females continue to care for White children it is now also acceptable for White females to care for Black children. The reversal of roles is interesting to consider in relation to its impact on metaperceptions of TRA (Brown, 2014).

The mother needs to assume a position or role in a social context divided by race. She has various perspectives to consider in her role of adopting a child of another race. The mothers' perspective may impact the child, as they too attempt to make sense of their social context. The child is also susceptible to the impact of society's view of their TRA. This may

be played out in young adulthood as they explore the world independently outside of the family.

Cultural socialisation refers to the lifelong developmental process that allows individuals and families to be adaptable to and competent in their unique cultural milieu (Harrison et al., 1990, cited in Lee, 2003). Parents and others play an important role in the psychological development and cultural competence of children (Lee, 2003). Mothers play a particularly important role in transmitting culture, including language, knowledge, music, traditions, rituals, remedies, recipes and behavioural patterns which contribute to identity development (O'Conner, 1994). Cultural socialisation processes have been adapted to suit the TRA context in order to develop identity in transracially adopted children (Lee, 2003).

The White mother is wedged between what it means to be White in post-apartheid South Africa and being an individual and mother in society. The ways in which these characteristics influence her metaperceptions are complex, as not only is the subject of study a White mother, but she is a White mother who has adopted transracially, in a society which is in flux around it's perceptions of interracial relationships and interracial contact (Durrheim, 2005). The mother has to contend with opinions around her race, motherhood, her interracial relationship with her child, opinions on her interracial family and views around her adequacy or insufficiency to mother a child from a different racial and cultural background than her own. While the mother may have the support of the law, her social support may be lacking.

The transracially adopted Black child is also impacted by society's perceptions of Blackness, Whiteness and interracial relationships. They too need to contend with society's views and their impact on their social and interracial interactions. These narratives may also play a large role as the child develops their identity. The child's experiences within and outside of the family will further impact on their views of themselves and their TRA. As they are faced with varied views of TRA they will need to decide for themselves what their opinion is in the midst of creating an identity for themselves. This may prove extremely challenging for the child and the family.

Erikson (1963) suggests that identity formation is a fundamental part of adolescents entering into adulthood. He conceptualised identity as a sense of knowing oneself as one develops; and to a connection between an individual, their social roles and their place in their community (Erikson, 1963). As Black transracially adopted children go through the developmental stage of identity formation they may enter a phase of questioning. Their questions about their identity may be related to and compounded by the questions that others and they themselves have about their TRA (O'Connor, 1994; Yancey & Lewis, 2009). As

suggested by the outcome studies reviewed, transracially adopted children are not negatively impacted in this area by their TRA (Lee, 2003; Tizard, 1993, cited in Tizard & Phoenix, 1995; Yancey & Lewis, 2009). Through socialisation, children develop their own identity and culture (Stevens et al., 2006).

Within this stage of development there may be particular outcomes which may impact on their identity formation. They may experience role confusion (an inability to settle on a single career choice or sexual orientation which leads to an absence of a secure identity), overidentification (the adoption of a group identity which threatens or overtakes one's unique identity), moratorium (a period of experimentation with careers, ideologies and interests which once resolved results in a secure identity), ego diffusion (the inability to integrate a secure identity), foreclosure (the quick formation of identity without evidence of experimentation or crisis) and negative identity formation (a lack of identity resolution and choosing an identity which is opposite of what is acceptable to society). As adolescents progress through this process and resolve this particular conflict they become both a member of society and a unique individual (Erikson, 1963; Hook, 2009; Maier, 1988).

Therefore, as the individual works through this process they may begin to form metaperceptions which are impacted by their identity formation. This does not imply that the outcomes may be negative, but rather that the individual may develop a unique view of themselves and the world according to their experiences, as do all individuals. This view of the world may be coloured by life experiences, including their TRA and experiences in relation to it. Their developmental experiences with caregivers and relationships with significant others and people they encounter may influence later relationships that are formed, particularly romantic relationships (Hendricks, 1992). In addition, those involved in TRA may experience some of the challenges to their identity formation.

Freud (2001) posits that identity is comprised of different elements, such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race and even family. These categories are viewed as socially constructed and impacted by social norms within society. These norms often have flexible boundaries and may be used for malevolent aims including war, discrimination and maltreatment of others. Individuals who form narrow identities, formed of only a few elements, may develop hostility towards others who are viewed as outsiders (Freud, 2001). Within TRA, individuals with these strictly formed identities may experience TRA as threatening. Therefore, negative metaperceptions may be developed in relation to those part of TRA.

However, Freud (2001) describes identity as changing rather than static. Identity is:

> A thread spun of cultural models, values and assumptions, and spinning this thread is a lifelong task aimed at supplying unity and continuity to our many selves. Identity is not static ... because different contexts, different life phases, and different political circumstances highlight different categories and thus change our identity (Freud, 2001, p. 336).

Therefore, depending on social, political or historical circumstances different aspects of identity may be foregrounded. Therefore, multi-faceted identities are formed through one's experiences. Through understanding and acceptance of individual's uniquely formed identities people may become more inclusive rather than exclusive in their understandings and perceptions of others (Freud, 2001). As transracially adopted individuals and their family members form their unique identities they may experience both inclusive and exclusive metaperceptions.

2.3. Intergroup Relations in South Africa and its Impact on the TRA Family

2.3.1. A Brief History of Race Relations in South Africa

From the beginning of colonialism in South Africa, in 1652, racial ideology began to impact on race relations. Ways of being within colonial times can never fully be separated from post-colonial situations, such as continued patterns of dominance even after independence or liberation (Hook, 2004). Similarly, apartheid continues to have an impact on current race relations in South Africa, as its impact on individuals and groups at large, such as White and Black race groups, cannot rapidly be removed (Durrheim, 2005).

The low level of interracial contact within South Africa has been regarded as informal segregation (Finchilescu, 2005). Minimal interracial contact is attributed to historic events in South Africa around race, which have changed racial and temporal-spatial dynamics in various periods of history (Durrheim, 2005). However, there have been some efforts that contribute towards interracial contact, such as interracial friendships, marriages and TRA. These efforts have not always been successful, highlighting the residual influence of the past political inequalities on current experiences of race and intergroup contact (Jaynes, 2007).

Historical events and social constructions around race influence the perceptions of race groups of themselves and others (Durrheim, 2005). These perceptions may influence how TRA is received, therefore influencing the metaperceptions of the members of TRA families. The participants' experiences of the current perceptions of race relations and the

degree of acceptance of interracial relationships and multiracial families may inform their self-perceptions and metaperceptions.

Durrheim (2005) studied race relations as connected to features of group life; and how this has changed historically in South Africa. Durrheim (2005) found that attitudes towards race in South Africa imitate the superiority–inferiority complex that was produced under apartheid. This is not only due to continued prejudice of individuals; but also due to hierarchical racial migrations and spatio-temporal interrelations between Black people and White people. This suggests that history cannot be erased by new legislation or cognitive readjustment. Psychological adjustment is reliant on alterations in spatial practices and the spaces of privilege and disadvantage that form South Africa. Therefore, the elimination of racism is predicated on changes in patterns of racial influx and withdrawal that characterise racial interactions in South Africa (Durrheim, 2005).

Tolerance may be a contributing factor towards increased interracial interactions. While tolerance is ambiguous and open to interpretation, Robinson, Witenberg and Sanson (2006) suggest four interpretations. Firstly, tolerance is putting up with others in a grudging acknowledgement of difference. Secondly, it is defined as fairness and objectivity towards those whose practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., are different from one's own. Thirdly, tolerance involves conscious rejection of prejudice attitudes and responses. Finally, the strongest definition of tolerance is complete acceptance and valuing of others while recognising differences between others and oneself (Robinson et al., 2006). The levels of tolerance across race groups within South Africa may impact on the metaperceptions of the groups under study.

2.3.2. Racism

While apartheid has ended, the remnants of the racism it perpetuated remain a part of the daily lives of many South African's, as race and racism continue to organise social relations in contemporary South Africa (Duncan, Stevens & Bowman, 2004). Racism is difficult to define and has several understandings of what it means. Duncan, Van Niekerk, De la Rey and Seedat (2001) define racism as an ideology used to organise and justify racial domination. Foster (1991) defines racism as:

> An ideology through which the domination or marginalisation of certain 'races' by another 'race' or 'races' is enacted or legitimised...a set of ideas and discursive and material practices aimed at (re)producing and justifying systematic inequalities between 'races' or racialised groups' (Duncan et al., 2001, p. 2).

This definition includes vital considerations on issues of power related to the maintenance, perpetuation and functioning of racism, as well as its pervasiveness. In addition, the definition highlights the link between racism and efforts towards social, political and economic domination or marginalisation (Thompson, 1984, cited in Duncan et al., 2004). Therefore, racism permeates all areas of social life for individuals. Furthermore, it serves to benefit the racist and oppress or adversely affect their victims. Within the South African context, White people benefitted from the apartheid system, which negatively affected the Black population economically, socially and psychologically (Duncan et al., 2004).

Several types of racism have been described, some of which will be discussed briefly here. Walker (2006) describes old-fashioned racism as blunt, hostile, segregationist and supremacist, whereas new racism is described as egalitarian. Durrheim et al. (2011) discuss the changes in the expression of racism over the past half century. Alport (1954) describes racism in the 1950s in America in a much more blatant form than presently observed. During that period, racism consisted of a collection of inferior views of African Americans which supported racism, opposition to contact and desegregation. These racist attitudes were played out through racial discrimination (Alport, 1954). This blatant or old-fashioned form of racism consisted of a belief in the White populations' biological superiority, support for segregation and opposition to equality, overt racist expression and negative racial stereotypes (Sears, 1988).

Within South Africa, Lever (1977) identified blatant forms of racism and racial discrimination through his 'Attitudes towards the Natives' scale (Lever, 1977). These blatant forms of racism seem to have decreased in South Africa over time. Duckitt (1991) observed that blatant forms of racism were becoming increasingly less socially acceptable in the early 1990s. This suggested that while racism was not necessarily decreasing at that time, it was becoming less blatant and less socially acceptable (Duckitt, 1991). Therefore, racism may still have occurred in private contexts but began to occur less openly in the general public (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Due to the emergence of new forms of racial expression, theories emerged to explain the change. Biological research challenged the scientific basis of racism as within-group variation was shown to be larger than between-group variation (Lewontin, 1987; Rose, Lewontin & Kamin, 1988). Further, anthropologists rejected Darwinian explanations of racial progress as it was viewed as false evolutionism (Levi Strauss, 1977). In addition, the political use of biological racism had impacted on world politics, such as in the Nazi genocide (Balibar, 1991). Lastly, changes in production processes after the industrial revolution and

late twentieth century changes in capitalist production led to less overt exploitation and overt racism in these spheres (Fanon, 1986; Goldberg; 1997). Therefore, these changes in behaviour and perspectives on racism resulted in the development of new theories of racism which can be understood collectively as 'modern racism' (Durrheim et al., 2011).

The emerging forms of racism include subtle racism (Ratele, 2002), metaracism, regressive racism, cultural racism (Holdstock, 2000), ambivalent racism, aversive racism (Holdstock, 2000; Durrheim et al., 2011), laissez-faire racism and colour-blind racism (Durrheim et al., 2011). This is not an exhaustive discussion of the different theories of modern racism. It is also to be pointed out that these forms are not without critique. There is a need for the constant development of more current and relevant alternatives as different forms of racism emerge (Durrheim et al., 2011; Walker, 2006).

Ratele (2002) posits that South Africa and the world have become less accepting of blatant racism. Thus, the way in which race is used in daily life is modified. This new form of racism is labelled *subtle racism*. Ratele (2002) argues that this is not racism without racism as others state. Although subtle racism is not as blatant, essentialist conceptualisations of race continue to infiltrate views of race as expressed through subtle racism. Older forms of racism are concealed in more socially accepted expressions that are not necessarily less racist despite appearing to be so (Ratele, 2002). This change represents a shift in attitudes towards interracial intimate relationships from a concern of maintaining a pure race through segregation, to disguised concern for the children of such unions, which may hide the racist undertones to such arguments (Frankenberg, 1993; Phoenix & Owen, 2000).

Metaracism is perpetuated by those who are not overly prejudiced; but display acceptance of racist ideas and values which are held and maintained by the larger culture. Therefore, metaracism perpetuates racism, albeit in a less explicit form (Holdstock, 2000). *Regressive racism* is apparent in emotional arousal, such as hatred for another race. It is used in addition to other forms of racism when these are insufficient for the individual (Holdstock, 2000). *Cultural racism* involves the degradation and assault of the culture, history, language, arts, modes of expression, traditional values and ideals of another race group as inferior and worthless (Holdstock, 2000).

Aversive racism is displayed in negative affect towards minority race groups which is evident not in destructive behaviour; but in avoidance of people from other races and the resolving of issues of racism or social problems involving other races (Holdstock, 2000). Individuals displaying this form of racism genuinely believe that they are not racist and act in ways that are not racist, displaying tolerance and sympathetic racial attitude. However,

aversive racists have deep-seated racial prejudice in their unconscious; and will act in a racially biased manner where discrimination is difficult to identify (Durrheim et al., 2011). This unconscious racial discrimination has been examined through the research using the Implicit Association Test (IAT) which found that people tend to associate positive adjectives with White faces and negative adjectives with Black faces which are flashed quickly on a computer screen (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004) found that Black people also tend to display negative stereotypes towards Black faces during this test. Devine (1999) suggests that it is knowledge of racial stereotypes and associations in society which influence these results, even if they are not actively or explicitly communicated. However, aversive racists empathise with the unfairness of discrimination and attempt to treat all racial groups fairly (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Symbolic racism signifies the circulation of ideas, values and representations that are antagonistic of another race group or certain grouping of people (Holdstock, 2000). Furthermore, this form of racism continues to be based on prejudice; but is expressed in a more subtle form (Sears, 1988). Feelings of extreme hatred and discrimination may still be held by symbolic racists. However, these are not expressed in overt stereotypes about innate differences between racial groups; but in subtle expressions about race groups which are based on prejudice (Durrheim et al., 2011). The denial of the impact of the legacy of racism in the South African context and low attempts at redress can be considered symbolic racism. For example, the competition in the academic arena between White and Black academics, and certain business practices such as affirmative action (Durrheim et al., 2011; Sears, 1988).

Bobo, Kluegel and Smith (1997) defined *laissez-faire racism* as an ideology which promotes democracy for Black citizens as opposed to White rule. Furthermore, it opposes affirmative action programmes since current levels of socio-economic inequality and segregation are considered to be legitimate outcomes of free-market and race-neutral policies. The aim is not to continue with unequal practices and segregation; but to support race neutral policies that preserve existing White privilege (Bobo et al., 1997). This demonstrates fear of threat from the group in power which work to maintain this power through laissez-faire racism (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Colour-blind racism is considered to serve the purpose of justifying White peoples sense of group position. Bonilla-Silva (2006) posits that colour-blind racism is formed on the basis of common sense beliefs which fill White peoples conversation and represent modern racism. This conversation contains the language of abstract liberalism, equal opportunity, individual choice and free trade while simultaneously disagreeing with policies aimed at

redress (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Happenings such as segregation are accepted; and cultural rather than biological difference is used to justify unequal social outcomes and minimise continuing discrimination. Arguments such as 'you can't continue blaming things on apartheid' are used to this end (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Overall the theories of modern racism present three areas of consideration for the understanding of racism in post-apartheid South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011). Firstly, racial beliefs are expressed more subtly as opposed to explicitly. The language of 'liberalism, equality and freedom' is used; and racial difference is described through cultural or ethnic disparity over biology. Secondly, continued racism is denied; and the nation is encouraged to move on from our apartheid past and build a *new* future. In addition, programmes aimed at redress are resisted in order to maintain the status quo. Finally, variability in racial expression is implied through theories of modern racism. Individuals may display different opinions in certain contexts, at times behaving in a blatantly racist manner while at other times displaying restraint as dictated by socially acceptable behaviour in terms of race. Overall, current race talk "speaks about what is good, just and possible with regard to race relations, policies, outcomes and interactions, and it does so by drawing on the language of freedom, democracy and equality – all the while denying racism" (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 76).

The research in TRA may expose underlying racist ideology in the perception of this form of interracial contact and interracial families. The study may therefore provide a social commentary which goes against the 'norm' of low levels of interracial contact; and will critically engage with the current racial context. TRA may resist social norms which perpetuate racist ideology through new subtle forms of racism, and at times, older blatant forms of racism.

Furthermore, the existence of 'race' is contested. Race can be considered a social construction rather than an actual biological category (Duncan et al., 2004). Rose et al. (1988) have shown that individuals from different race group in fact, have more biological similarities than individuals from the same race group. This disproves the genetic arguments that have been used as justification for resistance towards interracial relationships, and by extrapolation towards interracial families, such as in TRA. Rather, it is socialisation, culture and societal influences that lead to differences between race groups (Rose et al., 1988). These arguments may can be viewed rather as subtle racism and modern forms of racism; and as perpetuated by social constructions and 'norms' within society which perpetuate negative perceptions (and metaperceptions) of TRA and other forms of interracial contact.

When race is applied to humans it gains social and political meaning, which determines aspects of an individual's life. This can be related to South Africa and White domination over the Black population during apartheid (Boonzaaier, 1998; Guillaumin, 1999). Culture (as well as the aspect of inheriting culture), like race, is socially constructed and used as a way to categorise people (Caminsky, 2004). This applies to South Africa as there are many cultures and the separation of them during apartheid. Cultural boundaries are used to define people and are created as a means of transmitting knowledge continuously across time, making them permanent. Historically, culture and perspectives thereof are open to change over time. As contemporary society changes, multi-cultural environments are developing (Thornton, 1988). Set cultural categories are being challenged by new social and political accounts in support of social transformation, influencing the process of identity development in South Africa (Franchi & Swart, 2003).

In contrast to previous racial and cultural separations between South Africans, a multi-cultural society is currently being developed. Therefore, through increased sharing between people the transmission of cultural knowledge across these boundaries is increased, creating new permanent divisions which are different to those which previously separated South African society. These new divisions are hoped to be formed based on new understandings of different cultures and racial groups to increase cohesion within the country as opposed to discrimination and racism which previously divided South Africans (Durrheim et al., 2011; Franchi & Swart, 2003; Thornton, 1988).

Communities of consciousness may develop from these shared experiences, such as gay and lesbian communities, and perhaps, TRA communities. This is the idea that communities are formed due to shared history, shared environments, or a shared feeling resultant of viewing a legacy in a particular manner, rather than being formed naturally (Ratele, 2004). Communities of consciousness may therefore be formed through this period of transition within South Africa, such as shared understanding and support between those involved in TRA and a particular group identity through shared experiences.

Communities of consciousness may hold a level of critical consciousness as discussed by Freire (2005). Critical consciousness examines the status quo regarding how society is constructed based on information obtained through experiences. The status quo is viewed as impacting on the daily functioning of marginalised individuals and as perpetuating oppression. Critical consciousness may lead to questioning the legitimacy of social constructions; and may result in a more critical or conscientised view of the world.

Freire (2005) used education to develop new ways of thinking (critical consciousness or conscientisation) to challenge the status quo and change the circumstances of those who are oppressed by empowering them to think differently about themselves (Freire, 2005). Within TRA communities, this thinking may be beneficial in viewing society in need of change and conscientisation. These individuals may be empowered to think differently about the world and the metaperceptions they experience. Furthermore, they may challenge those they encounter to critically evaluate their perceptions and their level of influence by the status quo and social constructions surrounding them. Thus, through informing others of their opinion change may occur in the views of TRA held by members of society.

2.3.3. The Current South Africa Interracial Context and Transracial Adoption

Studies such as those by Durrheim and Dixon (2000) have focused on the changing forms of racism. Studies by Durrheim et al. (2011) have also identified changes in how racism is understood and expressed in the current South African context. A study by Finchilescu (2005) identified the informal segregation and minimised contact between racial groups on university campuses in South Africa. Therefore, years of racial discrimination in South Africa are evident in inequality of wealth, access to resources, opportunities and continued segregated living in some contexts (Finchilescu, 2005).

Homophily is a concept used to explain the occurrence of people preferring contact with people who are similar to themselves (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). This can be linked to informal segregation, or people socialising with people racially similar to themselves, as if apartheid were still in effect (Finchilescu, 2005). This shows that South Africa is highly racially categorised, with intergroup contact being avoided. This has resulted in segregated living areas still being in existence (Finchilescu, 2005) as well as resistance to intimate interracial relationships (Jaynes, 2007). Since interracial families go against this norm of avoidance of interracial contact, it will be interesting to identify what mothers who have adopted believe others think of them because they have chosen to adopted children from another race, as well as how young adults believe others view them because they were transracially adopted.

Ross (1990) expressed the belief that levels of societal acceptance towards interracial relationships provide accurate indices for measuring the extent to which a group is achieving social, economic and political equality. Morrall (1994) similarly saw the prevalence of interracial marriage as a barometer of social change. The level of desired change that Durrheim (2005) described can thus be estimated through the levels of societal acceptance of

interracial relationships. These levels of acceptance should be related to changes in metaperceptions of White females who adopt transracially, as well as transracially adopted Black young adults, changing from negative to positive as acceptance increases.

The South African context is filled with unique racial interactions and perceptions. These have changed and developed over time, being heavily influenced by contextual factors as the country moved towards and through apartheid (Durrheim et al., 2011). The apartheid era continues to influence social interactions and our society as a whole in many ways. Impacted areas include legislation, for example, Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE), politics, and the attitudes and experiences apartheid enveloped which continue to dominate racial perceptions (Durrheim et al., 2011). Additional influences can be found in interracial interactions, such as informal segregation, homophily and continued racism (Dixon, Tredoux, Durrheim, Finchilescu & Clack, 2008; Finchilescu, 2005). Furthermore, inequality continues to be present in South African society despite attempts at transformation (Dixon et al., 2008).

While transformation has reshaped exchanges between race groups; and increased contact occurs through work and public spaces, races continue to be distant from each other as separate, silent witnesses to inequality which has not been entirely eradicated. This form of behaviour found in differing contexts is described as being 'together-apart' (Dixon et al., 2008). These attitudes are problematic, influencing all spheres of South African life, such as schooling, social situations, employment, business and relationships (Dixon et al., 2008). Durrheim et al. (2011) refer to this as *race trouble*, as issues of race permeate our lives and trouble us, as they are difficult to discuss and change (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Race trouble can be defined as "a social psychological condition that emerges when the history of racism infiltrates the present to unsettle social order, arouse conflict of perspectives and create situations that are individually and collectively troubling" (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 27). For example, when looking through social media different perspectives can be found on racial content. Heated debates arise from viewing material that may be considered racist by some and not by others. Some feel threatened and retaliate through heated debates, while others withdraw from these discussions. Differences in opinion are apparent across race groups, and as these opinions are misunderstood by different parties and are difficult to discuss or resolve, conflict arises (Durrheim et al., 2011). Perceptions and metaperceptions across race groups and stratum of society may be impacted by these debates and race trouble. It is anticipated that differing opinions on TRA will fuel similar debates and race trouble.

Steyn (2001) investigated how Whiteness is constructed by White South Africans post-apartheid which revealed five narratives on Whiteness. The first, *still colonial after all these years* bases Whiteness on old apartheid ideals of inequality between White people and Black people. The second, *this shouldn't happen to a White* relates to Whiteness as the ideal and sees White people as being disempowered by present circumstances. According to this narrative the natural order of White supremacy has been transformed into what is deemed reverse racism, positioning White people as having lost their rights and privileges. *Don't think White, it's all right*, is the third narrative where White people view their Whiteness as part of their core identity; and are realistic about their changed position in the new South Africa. Here, White people either recoil to their cultural roots or find practical ways to ensure a continued White influence in post-apartheid South Africa. The fourth narrative is *a Whiter shade of White* and revolves around denial of any implications of being White in South Africa. Issues of privilege and power are avoided, and any sense of responsibility for the past is refused. Furthermore, there is silence around any notions of Whiteness. Finally, *under African skies (or White, but not quite)* is the final narrative that entails White people seeking out the development of new identities in post-apartheid South Africa, which are distanced from old South African constructions of Whiteness. This can be broken into three versions. First, those who support dispensation but struggle to place themselves in it, second, those who avoid the pain of dealing with Whiteness via accepting the suitability of Blackness, and third, those who mix Whiteness, Blackness and African-ness by seeing themselves as White Africans (Steyn, 2001).

Steyn (2001) established that White South Africans draw on multiple sources and discourses for developing constructs around the meaning of Whiteness. There are no unified constructions of Whiteness and White South Africans have to wrestle with a new social order that rejects old constructs of Whiteness involving assumptions of automatic superiority and entitlement. This has resulted in various narratives of Whiteness in South Africa (Steyn, 2001). Just as White individuals experience positive and negative aspects of Whiteness (Steyn, 2001), so Black individuals also experience positive and negative views of Blackness (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006).

In defining themselves, Black South Africans struggle through negative and positive associations with Blackness. Negative views of Blackness include being seen as native and echo colonial, and are linked to apartheid views of Blackness and White supremacy. Positive views of Blackness are tied to westernness, Whiteness and success. These views create a

troubling position for Black individuals as they create their identities in the current racial context of South Africa (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006).

Durrheim et al. (2011) identified various struggles that White and Black individuals face, described as part of race trouble. Troubling Whiteness presented stereotypes of being racist and superior, feeling marginalised, White guilt, racial discrimination, blame for apartheid practices, and hatred from other races. Troubling Blackness highlighted stigma of being criminals, lazy, incompetent, self-stigmatisation, interpreting racism, and conflicting levels of 'authentic' Blackness (Durrheim et al., 2011). These conflicting occurrences may be experienced in combination by those involved in TRA, especially for the child and young adult as they form their racial identity, and for the mother as she assists in the process. The social context is racially divided yet the transracially adoptive family combines racial identities to form a family identity that may be supported or denigrated by outsiders.

Perspectives on Whiteness and Blackness may therefore influence how the relationship between mother and child is understood between them and from an outsider's perspective. They may be influenced by what it means to be White and Black in post-apartheid South Africa as an individual and as a member of an interracial family, particularly a transracially adoptive family. The ways in which these characteristics influence their metaperceptions are complex considering the current flux in views of interracial relationships and interactions (Durrheim et al., 2011).

The definition of racism is debated; and may not be beneficial in understanding the causes and consequences of racism, or the social disparities in South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011). Racism is not a fixed or defined concept; and the facets of racism are a continuous matter of debate. Durrheim et al. (2011) posit that the study of racism should be grounded in the particular context under study. This may enable the possibility of exploring how the structure and functioning of social life are informed by race. Therefore, the use of the concept of race trouble is suggested. Race trouble examines the relationship between different factors in a particular interaction which are influenced by race (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Rather than describing different forms of racism in order to be able to apply a label to a particular scenario, it may be more helpful to study the areas of subjectivity that support racial privilege (Durrheim et al., 2011).

> The subjects that are produced in contexts of race trouble are imbued with the subjective qualities and investments that render their participation in these contexts sensible, necessary or even obligatory. Participants see the world across the racial divide from the mundane

> perspective of their ordinary lives and then define racism in these terms, in ways that can excuse, justify or explain their current practices (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 201).

Therefore, an individual may identify, define and deny racism in their particular context in order to support their participation in racial segregation, racism or inequality (Durrheim et al., 2011). Thus, an individual's perception of Blackness, Whiteness, racism and TRA may be subjectively defined and influenced by their social context. This may inform the metaperceptions of participants.

The predominant changes in post-apartheid South Africa highlighted by Durrheim et al. (2011) are the desegregation of social and institutional life and the rise of Black leadership. These changes have forced South Africans to challenge the way that they think and behave. "Race, inequality and violence may be repressed, or accusations and denial of racism may polarise or unite individuals" as they attempt to understand the current social context of South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011, p. 204). As a result, new stereotypes have developed which assist in understanding these changes as they impact on daily life. However, these new social norms continue to reflect the influence of previous social norms around race relations. In addition, the current privileged class continues to carry out ideals of White supremacy through separating themselves from those less privileged in new spaces and not in racially exclusive ways. Therefore, race trouble appears to change as society develops and in different contexts. There is however, the possibility for positive change should we begin to understand the ways that race trouble occurs in different social contexts and thereby take it apart and create change (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Those part of TRA may be less influenced by issues of race which 'prevent' interracial intimate relationships than some South Africans may be. This may lead to both positive and negative experiences and metaperceptions which may influence identity or views of participants. However, this does not mean that they are unaffected by issues of race. The impact of the social construction of race (Duncan et al., 2004; Rose et al., 1988) may be evident in the metaperceptions and experiences of those part of TRA. Despite literature which illegitimises the racial divisions and differences that society creates by better understanding these divisions as gender, age and socialisation differences, racism and racial discrimination continue to impact on society (Duncan et al., 2004; Rose et al., 1988). White mothers and transracially adopted Black young adults will need to develop coping mechanisms to deal with race trouble in a society which continues to be racially divided and against interracial contact (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Durrheim et al., 2011).

2.4. Metaperceptions

2.4.1. Metaperceptions in Relation to Transracial Adoption

Metaperceptions refer to a person's beliefs about what another person thinks of them (Frey & Tropp, 2006). Therefore, considering the dynamics of interracial contact in South Africa, the study investigates metaperceptions held within TRA. The influence of socially constructed norms around race and the family may be interesting to consider in the context of how participants' perceive others view them. This is interesting as it may allow for insight into the perceptions of TRA in the South African population.

Metaperceptions research has revealed that behaviour and emotions are significantly influenced by what they people think others think of them. These metaperceptions are formed by verbal and non-verbal cues during interactions with others (Vorauer & Miller, 1997). Research has described the formation of metaperceptions in interpersonal contexts, in which group membership is not significant, as involving what others think of them as individuals (Frey & Tropp, 2006). Frey and Tropp (2006) suggest four ways in which metaperceptions are formed: observing others' behaviour, projecting one's view of oneself, attempting to take others' perspectives, and relying on stereotypes.

Firstly, the behaviour of others is observed through taking cognisance of verbal and non-verbal cues that influence the metaperceptions an individual develops (Kenny & Shectman, 1994). Although these observations are informative, they do not necessarily lead to accurate metaperceptions. While people make good judgements of how they are viewed generally (meta-accuracy), less accurate perceptions arise of how certain people view them differently. This may be due to honest feedback not being readily available. In addition, people tend to think that different kinds of perceivers view them similarly (Kenny & Shectman, 1994). Therefore, fluctuating meta-accuracy may be present across contexts.

Mothers and young adults within TRA may experience several verbal and non-verbal cues which may inform their metaperceptions. Due to adverse opinions about interracial relationships (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010), participants may experience, staring, pointing and comments which influence the metaperceptions they form. This may be a difficult process to manage at times, as it may be experienced as intrusive, negative, and judgemental, or alternatively as overly supportive, praising and inquiring.

Secondly, individuals are inclined to assume that others view them in the same way that they view themselves. This tendency leads individuals to overestimate the level that others act in similar ways to themselves, known as the false consensus effect (Fenigstein &

Abrams, 1993, cited in Frey & Tropp, 2006). Self-knowledge is related to projecting one's view of oneself as people may assume that their goals and thoughts are more available to others than what they truly are, known as transparency overestimation (Vorauer & Cameron, 2002, cited in Frey & Tropp, 2006).

Within the South African context, social norms around racial interaction continue to have an impact on people's perceptions of others and themselves. These views may be integrated into metaperceptions. Individuals may feel that they are breaking the social norm and that they are viewed as doing so. They may assume that others view them in the same way that they do, either as not conforming, breaking a social 'rule' or as taking a liberal view of race relations. Within TRA these perspectives may be influenced by their reality and the fact that their family is not wrong, but different; and that perhaps it is society's views that are problematic rather than their behaviour. Therefore, they may expect that others may view them negatively due to their TRA; but may not necessarily view themselves in this way. These individuals may formulate complex metaperceptions and self-perceptions. They may be aware of conflicting perceptions of TRA; and may at times view themselves negatively due to social norms and the metaperceptions they experience. However, they may not integrate these views into their perceptions of themselves due to their ability to understand the boundary between the judgement of others and their perceptions of themselves.

Thirdly, attempting to take others' perspectives may be used to determine how one is viewed by others (Kenny & Shectman, 1994). Research on perspective taking indicates that in trying to take on the perspectives of others, individuals adjust their own perspectives until they feel that they match the perspectives of others (Epley & Gilovich, 2004, cited in Frey & Tropp, 2006).

From the discussion above, this process may be complex for those involved in TRA. The perspectives of others of these individuals may not always be positive within the South Africa context. Therefore, adjusting their perspectives to match those of others may become difficult, hurtful or anxiety provoking. This process may result in many questions for the individual regarding the self in relation to others and the racial context of South Africa. The individual may choose to engage with these perceptions or may reject them completely. This process may be apparent in the metaperceptions formed by participants and the way in which they are understood in relation to the self and society.

Lastly, people may also rely on stereotypes when attempting to predict others' thoughts (Ames, 2004, cited in Frey & Tropp, 2006), and more specifically, when trying to form metaperceptions regarding how others view them. Research has found that people

expect to be perceived in terms of stereotypes of their groups, especially when being viewed by members of the outgroup (Vorauer et al., 1998, cited in Frey & Tropp, 2006). Therefore, participants may experience stereotypes in their metaperceptions. These may include racial, family and perhaps TRA specific stereotypes. These stereotypes may be specific to those not involved in TRA or the outgroup; and may inform metaperceptions held by participants.

Metastereotypes are a specialised form of metaperceptions carrying emotional and behavioural consequences (Finchilescu, 2005). Metaperceptions research revealed that people's behaviour and emotions are powerfully influenced by what they think others think of them, which are formed by verbal and non-verbal cues (Vorauer & Miller, 1997). Metastereotypes are defined as collective beliefs held by ingroup members regarding how they deem outgroup members to perceive their group (Gomez & Huici, 2008). Put simpler, metastereotypes involve thinking about other groups' perceptions or opinion of one's own group (MacInnis, 2009).

Research on metaperceptions has focused on interpersonal settings, although research on metaperceptions is expanding into intergroup relations. It has been found that metaperceptions occur in a variety of intergroup settings, although the specifics of how this occurs are unclear. The formation of metaperceptions by individuals in interpersonal contexts, in which group membership is not significant, is described as involving what others think of them as individuals. The conceptual issues to be considered are when people think they are viewed as individuals or members of a group, and whether metaperceptions may be formed differently in an intergroup versus interpersonal setting. Whether the person is being perceived as a member of the ingroup or outgroup is also of importance (Frey & Tropp, 2006).

A study focusing on the effect of vicarious intergroup contact in reducing metastereotypes when supported by an authority figure produced three results. Firstly, vicarious intergroup contact improved metastereotypes. Secondly, this was increased when supported by an authority figure. Thirdly, changes in metastereotypes facilitated improvements in outgroup evaluations (Gomes & Huici, 2008). It has been found that stereotyping can contribute to a cycle of avoidance and negativity, while addressing these can improve relations (Almonte, 2008).

When put into the context of this study, it may be valuable to increase intergroup contact, the ingroup being those part of TRA and the outgroup being those who are not. This contact may increase mutual understanding while also confirming or denying active racist ideology. Therefore, it may be extrapolated that since intergroup contact decreases

metastereotypes for groups, individual contact between people of different backgrounds may have the same effect of decreasing negative opinions or metaperceptions between the individuals. This may result in decreased negative metaperceptions and an opportunity for challenging racist ideology active in the patterns of interracial contact in South Africa. This study investigates the metaperceptions formed based on the experiences of racial stereotypes within South Africa and how these may reflect racialised social norms. Metaperceptions have not been studied in the TRA context.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

Situating qualitative research in a theoretical framework that is used to interpret data increases its credibility; and allows for questions of bias in the findings to be examined (Hill & Thomas, 2000, cited in Mophosho, 2010). It is therefore important to discuss the social constructionist theoretical framework underpinning this research.

Social constructionism is based on the premise that human beings construct reality through interaction with their world. The meaning of this reality is interpreted in a social context, thus the knowledge that results is rooted in the perspective of an individual (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). Language provides the categories used to classify events and people; and is used to create external and internal meaning through social interactions. When interpreting experiences this meaning through language can lead to discourse, which is used in constructing and understanding the world (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998).

The beliefs and theories of social constructionism are applicable to this study as metaperceptions are based on an individual's social constructions of the world; and are open to change as these constructions and related social actions change (Burr, 1996). Further, social constructionism focuses on interpersonal interactions and how meaning is constructed through language, which aids understanding of how mothers, young adults and others create meaning in the context of TRA (Burr, 1996). This meaning may be presented in the metaperceptions of participants.

There are four core beliefs of social constructionism (Burr, 1996). Firstly, adopting a critical stance towards 'general' knowledge. This suggests a suspicious view of assumptions of what the world appears to be. The way the world is categorised is not always by real divisions but is constructed, for example, through socially generated stereotypes. Secondly, considering historical and cultural specificity. The categories used to understand the world are historically and culturally specific. The ways we view the world are relative to the time period in which we live; and are a product of the culture and history of the time. Furthermore,

our understanding of the world is dependent on the social and economic arrangements of that time. Thirdly, social processes sustain knowledge. It is through daily interactions between people that knowledge and understandings of the world are constructed through the use of language. Fourth, knowledge and social action are linked. The understandings of the world can take different forms, which lead to related social action. As times change, so these views change. The constructions of the world therefore sustain or exclude forms of social action (Burr, 1996).

These four beliefs are tied to the hypothesis of the study, that the metaperceptions and experiences of transracially adopted Black young adults and White adoptive mothers are informed by social constructions. The social interactions, the use of language, talk about TRA, as well as historical and cultural knowledge in the South African context, are the basis on which metaperceptions and experiences are formed in relation to their TRA. By understanding the experiences of the participants it may be possible to understand what part the social constructions of South African society play as they form their metaperceptions. For example, constructions around race, the family and interracial relationships may be played out in what can be understood as a form of race trouble; and may be present in the metaperceptions of participants.

Gergen (2009) discussed social constructionism as focusing on discourse as the primary mode of speaking about the self and the world, as well as the way in which discourse functions in social relationships. An individual brings to the world particular things depending on how they approach it. Our relationships in the world define the meaning we make of it through interactions with others. Therefore, our views and understandings are constructed by our interactions with others. This may provoke positive or negative viewpoints, all of which shape the realities in which we live (Gergen, 2009).

Gergen (2009) presents four key assumptions of social constructionism. Firstly, understandings of the world and self are neither required nor demanded by 'what there is'. Various descriptions and explanations of spoken and written words, photographs, media and any other representation are possible. The repercussions of this assumption are that all forms of common or true knowledge can be questioned. This questioning of assumptions results in no single concrete form of knowledge; but rather in varying understandings of the world and the self (Gergen, 2009). 'What we take to be real is an outcome of social relationships' (Gergen, 1999, p. 237). However, in reality individuals are continually affected by social constructions within their world, which impact on understandings of the self (Gergen, 2009). Metaperceptions of TRA may be influenced in similar ways.

Secondly, our modes of description, explanation and/or representation are derived from relationship (Gergen, 2009). Language and other forms of representation, such as multimedia, are given meaning through their use in relationships. What we take to be true is not a product of individual thoughts and experiences; but is co-constructed through interactions with others; where meaning, language and understandings of the world are created. Meanings are subject to change as relationships change and develop. Relations include our interactions with people as well as the natural environment (Gergen, 2009).

Metaperceptions of TRA are influenced by the representations that mothers and young adults are exposed to in their social relations, as well as the meanings given to TRA and the language used to discuss this. The relations and experiences of mothers and young adults will therefore inform their meaning making and their metaperceptions. Metaperceptions may therefore be co-constructed between mothers and young adults, as well as with the greater society that they interact with in their social relations.

Thirdly, as we describe or otherwise represent, we build our future (Gergen, 2009). Just as our language practices are conjoined to our relationships, so too are our relationships connected to widespread patterns of practice, such as traditions (Gergen, 1999). Maintaining social institutions and traditions depends then on mutual meaning making to allow for common understandings and language use. Discussing the past and making mutual meaning that is sensible to the present secures the future of practices and traditions (Gergen, 1999). In the same way constructionism suggests that social life can be changed and new futures can be created through relationships, language and new meaning making which can be transformative. This does not involve pure language and meaning change, such as avoiding sexist or racist language; but rather taking action and confronting change in the form of new language, different ways of interpreting the world and new patterns of representation (Gergen, 2009). This may be similar to Freire's conceptualisation of conscientisation and its outcomes (Freire, 2005).

Negative perceptions and meanings of TRA may be altered to positive, insightful perceptions. This is obtained through challenging and making new meaning of previously held discourses. A change in language use, perceptions, representations and understandings of the phenomenon may impact on the meaning attached to TRA. The mothers and young adults are directly involved in this process of change and new meaning making. As they interact in social relationships they shed light on TRA, generating new meaning in relation to the subject, and simultaneously form their metaperceptions.

Lastly, Gergen (2009) presents reflection on our forms of understanding as vital to our future well-being. It is arduous to balance standing traditions with the challenge of creating new traditions. Conflict arises in discussing what to keep, what to change and what meanings are created for those involved as the process continues. There can be no unanimous answer in a world of multiple and competing constructions. In these situations reasoning, evidence and values may be used in discussing a tradition and possible change, moral and political implications are considered, and a conclusion is reached. This process occurs from within a tradition or relationship; and by making use of common meaning and perceptions. Thus, alternatives are usually hindered by our traditions or standpoints (Gergen, 2009). In order to build the future, a level of reflexivity is required to allow for what is taken as truth to be questioned, thereby establishing more viable options (Gergen, 1999). Reflexivity as it is used in social constructionism is "an attempt to be aware of one's assertions, to question them, to suspend the 'obvious', to listen to alternate framings of reality, and to recognise the outcomes of numerous views" (Gergen, 1999, p. 50).

The implications of these assumptions are immense in practice. The effects of generative discourses and the challenging nature of constructionist dialogues have the ability to disrupt long-standing perceptions and traditions, particularly between the knowers and the ignorant (Gergen, 2009). If this assumption is applied to TRA, perhaps the traditional views of the family, mothering, intimate relationships and interracial relationships as historical and cultural standpoints may be able to be discussed, challenged and changed through the creation of new meaning surrounding these concepts. They may have the ability to inform others, challenge their perceptions or to re-enforce perceptions, all of which contribute to meaning making, challenging traditions and considerations of what is considered to be true. This process may be tied to the descriptions of race trouble that mothers and young adults involved in TRA may experience; and the metaperceptions they construct.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 has reviewed relevant literature and research applicable to the particular aspects of TRA under study. Background information and research on TRA in the South African context and abroad were considered, as well as conceptualisations of the family, notions of race and interracial contact in South Africa, and metaperceptions in relation to TRA. In addition, social constructionism was presented as the theoretical framework for the study. Literature pertinent to understandings of TRA was discussed including family norms,

South African racial dynamics and the impact of social constructions perceptions of TRA in South Africa. *Chapter 2* has attempted to further understand these factors and how they are understood by those involved. In addition, how these understandings and experiences inform how metaperceptions are constructed for mothers and young adults in TRA explored. *Chapter 3* will examine the research methodology used to conduct the study and explore the enquiries sparked by the literature review.

Chapter 3: Method

Introduction

This chapter examines the methods, procedures and analytic approach used to conduct the study. It includes an account of research questions, research design, method of data collection, participants, research procedures, preparation for data collection, method of analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the metaperceptions of Black young adults who are transracially adopted by White mothers?
2. What are the metaperceptions of White mothers who adopt Black children transracially?
3. What similarities and differences can be drawn through a comparison of the metaperceptions of the two groups?

3.2. Research Design

Qualitative research deals with research questions related to the exploration of phenomena and inductive knowledge (Few, Stephens, & Rose-Arnett, 2003). The study sought to investigate, explore and describe the experiences of Black transracially adopted young adults and White adoptive mothers. In addition, a comparison of the data from the two groups under investigation was conducted. For this reason a qualitative approach was suitable in examining the metaperceptions experienced by the above mentioned populations, as it was an exploratory study of the experiences of the individuals and the implications thereof. An interpretive paradigm seeks out knowledge that is only available through the interpretation of data (Neuman, 1997). Since interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is both descriptive and interpretive (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006), it was suitable for this exploration as it allowed the participants under study to present their experiences to be described and interpreted by the researcher.

3.3. Method of Data Collection

Interviews in qualitative research are usually open-ended, semi-structured interactions

on a one-to-one basis (interviewer and interviewee), which allows participants freedom to narrate their experiences about the topic. This allows for access to attitudes, understandings and values that are challenging for quantitative methods to measure, and result in more rich, complex and in-depth data (Byrne, 2004). A focus group discussion is informative and relevant to exploratory studies as it allows for investigating knowledge and experiences by capitalising on group interaction and communication between participants in order to generate rich data (Kitzinger, 1995). In a focus group setting participants interact freely. When participants do not wish to add to discussion at a particular time, they can remain silent and allow others to speak. Participants may then be less likely to create false accounts that they perceive as socially acceptable in comparison to one-to-one interviews which may create more pressure to speak (Byrne, 2004).

For this study, focus group discussions were thus appropriate as they allowed for more honest responses due to less pressure to respond and be socially acceptable. This is especially important for this study, as the topic may have been viewed as a sensitive one that not all individuals were willing to discuss. Therefore, the focus group setting allowed for free flowing discussion, silences and interaction; and thus rich data. Due to the research being on metaperceptions relating to TRA, data is required to obtain views on how participants think others view them.

Social and cultural processes that influence interactions and shape opinions in everyday natural settings are more likely to be reflected in data obtained from group interaction (Tonkiss, 2004). Thus, creating a natural setting through a focus group discussion may have allowed the data to reflect the metaperceptions of the Black young adult and White mother participants more accurately regarding their TRA and subsequent views on their interracial interactions and experiences.

The questions for the focus group discussions were semi-structured so as to allow for natural and spontaneous discussion to occur, which enriched the data. A vignette was used to stimulate initial discussion and create rapport in the group. A separate vignette was used for each participant group that was suitable to their particular location as either young adult adoptee or adoptive mother. Thereafter, the semi-structured focus group discussion questions were utilised. When using semi-structured questions, the researcher gives some direction to discussion so as to ensure that the responses align with the research questions, although this is minimal so to allow conversation to develop naturally (Byrne, 2004). This was done through semi-structured question guidelines that were adapted according to the direction that the focus group discussion took. These questions can be found in appendix F and G.

3.4. Participants

The study consisted of four focus group discussions of 3 to 6 individuals, held at locations convenient for the participants. Two mother groups and two young adult groups were conducted. The two White mother groups were sourced through NGO's, convenience sampling and snowball sampling, as were the two Black young adolescent groups. NGO's contacted to elicit potential participants included "The Love of Christ Ministries" (TLC), "Impilo" and the "Johannesburg Child Welfare", which are all involved in adoptions.

The final participants for the two White mother groups were sourced from TLC (White mother's group one) and snowball sampling (White mother's group two). "The Love of Christ Ministries" (TLC) is an organisation which cares for abandoned babies. They help place abandoned babies in suitable homes or return them to their families (About Us (TLC), 2013). The mothers groups consisted of mothers who had adopted at least one Black child (and additional Black children, or children of another race different to their own in some cases) through various channels and at any age. The age of the mothers was not limited as differences of age allowed for varied experiences to be brought into the focus group. This enriched the data and displayed a contrast of experiences amongst the mothers according to the time frame in which they adopted, such as during or after apartheid. The mothers' ages in the focus group ranged from 25 to 65 years old. Data for one of the mothers' groups (White mothers group one) was obtained from the researcher's honours research report, although a different method of analysis was applied. The first mothers' group was held at TLC and consisted of mothers involved with the organisation and mothers who had adopted through the organisation. The second focus group was held at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), consisting of mother's contacted using snowball sampling methods. Some of the mothers had adopted through Impilo, but they were not contacted through the organisation.

The young adult group encompassed Black male and/or female participants over the age of eighteen who were adopted transracially at any age by a White female through various channels. One participant was Albino, although this too is considered TRA. One of the participants was not formally adopted but fostered informally by a White family for most of his life, as is at times the case in the South Africa context. The first young adult group was held at TLC (Black young adults group one) and consisted of participants sourced through TLC. The participants were the young adult children of the mothers in White mothers' group one. The second group of young adult participants was sourced through snowball and convenience sampling; and was held at the University of the Witwatersrand. An advertisement was placed on the Wits first year website on the research merit programme, in

the Wits psychology department and the researcher advertised the study at first year lectures. While there was large interest in the study, none of the interested individuals met the criteria for the study. Snowball sampling was then used to obtain the final participants, with some of the participants being related across the mothers and young adults groups, i.e. the young adult children of the second mothers group. The age of young adults participants ranged from 18 to 28 years old.

3.5. Preparation for Data Collection

Organisations were contacted telephonically and via email to request permission to contact participants through their resources. A brief outline of the study was emailed to the head of each organisation and explained telephonically. Permission was then granted by the head of the organisation to approach potential participants that met the study criteria. The potential participants were contacted telephonically and via email in order to inform them about the study and discuss their interest in participating. Participants received an information sheet via email or from the researcher in person explaining what the study entailed and its aims. The study was also explained telephonically. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, the researcher obtained consent and a location and time for the focus group to be held was arranged. The focus groups were conducted either at TLC ministries or the University of the Witwatersrand. Informed consent was obtained through consent forms, as well as the filling out of a demographic questionnaire at the start of the focus group. All ethical considerations were discussed with participants. Each of the four focus groups ran for approximately one and a half hours.

3.6. Procedures

On the day of data collection, at the start of the focus group, the researcher introduced herself as a student from the Masters in Community-based Counselling Psychology programme at the University of the Witwatersrand. The topic was explained and the participants were thanked for volunteering their time. The aims and value of the study were then discussed. Two consent forms and a demographic questionnaire were then completed by the participants and returned to the researcher. Participants were informed of the ethical considerations; such as their right to withdraw and to not participate in parts of the discussion should they not wish to. Their anonymity and confidentiality could not be fully guaranteed as discussions may have been taken out of the focus group; and the participants and the researcher were not anonymous to each other. Anonymity and confidentiality could be

guaranteed in the write up of the results of the study through the use of pseudonyms. The participants were then urged to respond as honestly as possible, so as to create a true account of the phenomenon in the findings. Participants were assured that their names would not be used, ensuring that responses could not be directly linked to them. The focus group discussion then began, lasting for approximately one and a half hours. The researcher probed and encouraged participants to elaborate on their responses, allowing the discussion to develop. The semi-structured interview questions were adapted accordingly. Once completed, participants were again thanked for participating, and informed that they could contact the researcher should they be interested in the results of the study. Any need for debriefing was attended to through arranging for a psychologist to be available outside of the focus group for any participants that felt distressed during the groups or thereafter. However, none of the participants used this resource. Additional counselling referrals to "Lifeline" and "The Family Life Centre" (FAMSA) were also made available to the participants. In addition, they were informed that support groups and additional support information could also be accessed through www.adoption.org.za. The contact details for these centres and services were provided on the information sheet that the participants received.

3.7. Data Analysis

Data was analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). There are two aims of IPA: to describe the phenomenon to 'give voice' and understand the concerns of participants; and to contextualise and 'make sense' of these concerns through interpretation (Larkin et al., 2006). IPA therefore describes phenomena and attempts to provide an insider's perspective of the participants' experiences through not only description but also interpretation. The researcher is able to make further in-depth interpretations of the phenomenon through consideration of the factors surrounding the participant and event, referred to as context (Larkin et al., 2006). In this way the researcher is able to describe the event from the participants' standpoints and interpret their views and experiences from a psychological perspective (Larkin et al., 2006; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008). IPA involves understanding everyday experiences of reality in great detail, thereby allowing for improved understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (McLeod, 2001).

IPA is characterised by vastly detailed analysis of accounts from a relatively small and specific sample as they face situations in their lives. These accounts are usually obtained through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, or diaries (Larkin, et al., 2006). The analysis reveals patterns of meaning through the development of themes. There are various

papers describing this process (see Flowers et al., 1997; Osborn & Smith, 1998; Smith et al., 1999; Willig, 2001) which demonstrate substantial flexibility and differences in its execution. The emphasis is on describing the claims and concerns of participants and interpreting them, not necessarily the method of doing so. Cumulative (within transcripts) and integrative (across transcripts) theme generation is usually undertaken to develop representative themes. Theoretical concepts are drawn upon to assist with the interpretation of the themes (Larkin, et al., 2006). Themes are illustrated via direct quotes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), which can also be used as theme titles to further incorporate the perspectives of participants. Therefore, IPA aims to go beyond standard thematic content analysis (Brocki & Wearden, 2006).

There are two main aims of IPA. Firstly, to attempt to understand the world of the participants and to describe what it is like to be in their situation from their perspective. Their perceptions of a specific event, process or relationship are the area of focus. It is important to bear in mind that a true first-person account is impossible to obtain, as it is always co-constructed by both the participant and the researcher. The goal is to describe a third-person account that is as accurate and representative of the participants view as possible. Secondly, an interpretive analysis is presented which situates the initial description in a wider social, cultural or theoretical context. This allows for a more critical and conceptual commentary on the participants perspective (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003). In addition, this allows for the researcher to dissect the data more thoroughly in order to understand what it is like to be in the situation that has been described. Interpretations may be grounded in theoretical constructs in order to answer research questions and engage with the data critically (Larkin et al., 2006). The current study will therefore attempt to understand the findings from a social constructionist paradigm.

Heidegger, an influential phenomenology theorist, emphasised the importance of language, culture, ideology, expectations and assumptions on experience, as they form part of reality within which an individual is embedded. Consequently, it is important to consider an individual as a 'person-in-context' in IPA, as the parts that make up our reality are part of our construction. *Dasein* means 'there being' (or 'being there'), by which Heidegger implies that "our nature is to be there, always somewhere, always located and always amidst and involved with some kind of meaningful context" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 106). This implies that our context shapes our experiences, which is important to consider when describing and interpreting a phenomenon.

IPA therefore aims to explore participants' lived experiences in detail, as well as how they make sense of these events. It is phenomenological in its interest in the perceptions of objects and events of individuals, while recognising the role of the researcher in describing and interpreting them (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). IPA therefore involves a double hermeneutic: as the participant attempts to understand their world, so the researcher attempts to understand them through that process (Smith, 2004).

Qualitative research operates from the assumption that the world or social reality of an individual is co-constructed (Gergen, 1994; Gergen, 2009; McLeod, 2003). Thus, different individuals within the same social reality will have different interpretations of occurrences and experiences of what it 'true' (McLeod, 2003). This aspect speaks to the comparative nature of the study. In order to fully understand the phenomenon, it is vital to explore both the mothers' and the young adults' experiences through which TRA in the South African context is co-constructed. The study will therefore explore both the mothers' and the young adults' metaperceptions, while conducting a comparison of the same, in order to fully describe the phenomenon and the participants' lived experiences as they are co-constructed.

In the analysis of the data from the current study, themes will be identified in the data of the focus groups and drawn together to create final themes. The experiences of those involved in TRA will then be described and interpreted. The data will be interpreted with the South African context in mind, as well as the various challenges discussed in the literature review. A social constructionist paradigm will be applied in the interpretation of the data. A representation of the phenomenon that is as accurate as possible will thus be presented and co-constructed.

A researchers background and individual characteristics will influence the entire research process, from topic selection to perspective taken, methods, the findings they report on and the way in which these are corresponded (Malterud, 2001). This highlights the importance of reflexivity, which revolves around the awareness of the many influences the researcher has on the research process, and in addition, how the process impacts on them (Gilgun, 2010).

Throughout the research process, especially during data collection and analysis of findings, it was important to interpret findings in a reflexive manner, so as to not embed findings with the researcher's own objectivity and subjectivity. This was achieved by constantly considering the impact of the researcher's own views on findings, so as to control for their impact on results. The researcher was aware of her perspectives and views on the topic and was cognisant of its impact on the interpretation of the results of the study. In order

to ensure self-reflexivity the researcher kept a reflexive journal detailing her experiences with the groups and research process, which increased the rigour of the data analysis. The researcher was thereby aware of the influence of her personal ideas on the interpretation of the data. Moreover, it was important to consider the impact of the researcher being a White female. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the reflexive journal as a way of recording the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It includes decisions and reasons for them, logistical information, and the impact of the process on the researchers values and interests (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

It may be relevant to consider some of the reflections found in the researchers' reflexive journal in order to understand the impact of her background, perspectives and experiences in the focus groups on the research data and the interpretation of the results. The data collection process was interesting as each group presented their own group dynamics and specific perspectives. During interactions within the focus groups, the researcher began to identify with the participants in terms of a feeling of unfairness of the negative metaperceptions some individuals hold of something which is quite personal, that being the story of how a family was formed and the private bond between mother and child. The researcher began to feel a desire to present the experiences of participants as objectively as possible while also desiring to critique parts of this experience as unacceptable on the part of society and their criticisms of TRA.

The position of the researcher as a young White female without children may have influenced the initial levels of engagement in the groups. This was particularly true for mothers who seemed to wonder if the researcher could empathise with their experience while not having children of her own or transracially adoptive children. The researcher's race may have influenced the manner in which race was explored in the young adults groups due to the difference in race. However, through rapport this was able to be overcome and did not seem to have severely impacted on the quality of the data obtained in the focus group discussions.

In order to remain reflexive during the interpretation of the data it became important to consider different perspectives on the data. This was useful in preventing personal views from impacting on the IPA of the data. The use of a reflexive journal and other quality assurance measures were useful in assisting in balancing the researchers own perspectives and interpretations with those that can be based on literature and the research data. It also ensured that personal beliefs around freedom of expression and experiences with friends who had transracially adopted did not result in overidentification with the responses from participants in the data; but rather maintained reflexivity.

Just as in quantitative research, it is important to verify the quality of qualitative research studies, to ensure that the findings are feasible (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In quantitative frameworks the terms reliability and validity are used, while in qualitative frameworks the terms credibility, neutrality or confirmability, consistency or dependability (equivalent to reliability in quantitative terms), and applicability or transferability are used to assess quality (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An 'inquiry audit' can be used to measure dependability, which can be used to measure and examine the process and product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consistency of data is established through verifying each step in the research process through examination of items in the research. These include raw data, data reduction products and process notes during the research process (Campbell, 1996).

Seale (1999) viewed examining trustworthiness in qualitative research as an important process which is equivalent to determining reliability and validity in quantitative research (Seale, 1999). Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed the relationship between reliability and validity in quantitative research, as such; that if validity is established it is sufficient to establish reliability, as validity cannot be present without reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2002) posits that reliability is an outcome of validity (Patton, 2002). Validity is referred to as quality, rigor or trustworthiness in qualitative research (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). "If the issues of reliability, validity, trustworthiness, quality and rigor are meant differentiating a 'good' from 'bad' research then testing and increasing these will be important to the research in any paradigm" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 602). Triangulation is used as a test of validity in qualitative research as compared to generalisability in quantitative research, as well as to test reliability (Golafshani, 2003). Triangulation refers to the researchers search for intersection among multiple sources to create themes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This evaluation can be used to control bias and establish legitimate suggestions from the data (Mathison, 1998).

The study therefore reviewed its findings in order to examine consistency, dependability and rigor. A reflexive journal was used as mentioned, as well as the reviewing of coding in the data by the researcher's supervisor. The interpretations and suggestions in the research report were similarly scrutinised. Therefore, the quality of the research was established and managed throughout the research project.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations that were important to consider for the study to be ethically sound. Researchers are to protect the dignity and respect of all participants, therefore informed consent and voluntary participation is emphasised. It is important that participants are fully aware of what the study entails, its purpose, and the right to withdraw from the research. Participants are to be informed of the risks of participating in the study and the limits to confidentiality (Australian Psychological Society, 1997, cited in Allan, 2011). While this is obtained through information documents, the researcher must explain all information as part of the consent process (Allan, 2011). The study was conducted in a transparent way, advising participants of the nature, process and rationale for the study.

Informed consent was obtained through letters of consent completed at the start of the focus group, as is required in the code of ethic for psychologists (Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA], 2006). Informed consent refers to an individual formally stating that they have sufficiently comprehended what an investigation or interpretation characterises, as well as the envisioned consequences thereof (Shillito-Clarke, 2003). Informed consent is a mandatory part of the research process (HPCSA, 2006). This is tied to autonomy, a person's right to freely and voluntarily make choices regarding their lives (Allan, 2011). This was ensured as the study centred round voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time, as well as informed consent.

Confidentiality refers to when information is not disclosed, regardless of whether the person is identifiable or not. Anonymity however refers to information being disclosed while the name of the person who the information pertains to is unknown (Allan, 2011). It is important to clarify what measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality in many aspects of practice, such as research (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000; HPCSA, 2006). Confidentiality and anonymity could not be ensured for all participants. Anonymity is problematic in focus groups as the researcher and participants know each other. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as it is not certain that discussions will not continue outside of the focus group. A verbal confidentiality agreement was entered into in order to prime participants for confidentiality, although this could not be guaranteed. As much confidentiality and anonymity as possible was ensured in the write up of the results of the study as only the researcher was present in the focus groups, and pseudonyms were used in any quotes in the research report and in the transcriptions of recordings in the data. Recordings were kept safely by the researcher and destroyed 5 years post completion of the research report.

It is important to ensure that the research will not harm participants, and that the researcher is competent to carry out the research. This is referred to as non-maleficence (Allan, 2011). Participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any time, as well as to not participate in parts of the discussion, in order to ensure the safety, voluntary participation and dignity of participants. It was not expected that any distress would be experienced by the participants. However, since TRA is a sensitive subject, the opportunity for counselling through a psychologist being available during and after the group to assist in this regard, as well as referrals to Lifeline and FAMSA, were made available. The participants were also informed of support groups and information provided on relevant websites.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology used in the research study. It examined the methods, procedures and data analysis used to conduct the study. It included a description of the research questions, research design, method of data collection, participants, research procedures, preparation for data collection, method of analysis and ethical considerations. Several ethical considerations were considered and carried out during the study. The study used a qualitative research methodology to obtain data through four focus group discussions – two with mothers and two with young adults. The data was then interpreted using IPA and rigorous engagement with literature. Particular measures were put in place to ensure that the results are of a high quality and can therefore be viewed as trustworthy. The following chapter presents the findings of the research study.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Results and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and discusses them in relation to pertinent literature and research. A phenomenological analysis of the focus group discussion data was conducted in order to describe TRA in the South African context holistically. The results thereof will be presented in themes and critically discussed. Five main themes were identified from the data, which present the metaperceptions and experiences of the young adults and the mothers part of TRA.

The themes are interrelated and can be thought of as influencing one another. Links between themes are discussed in order to fully describe the phenomenon of TRA; and to create a comparison between the metaperceptions of the mothers and young adults. This includes consideration of the current nature of race relations in different spheres of South African society.

The five themes identified are: 1) Motivations for transracial adoption in the South African context; 2) Racialised constructions of transracial adoption; 3) Identity formation and social norms: Who am I and who am I meant to be? 4) Not a 'normal' family, and 5) Being a 'ground breaker': Social change and transracial adoption.

Theme 1: Motivations for Transracial Adoption in the South African Context

The mothers and young adults identified that there were differing reasons for TRA. These reasons were divergent from the general metaperceptions of TRA for the participants. Reasons for TRA appeared to be specific to individuals. The mothers and young adults seemed to share similar ways of viewing the world that are not as influenced by social constructions of race, the family and interracial contact as those of the general public. These outlooks may be related to reasons behind TRA. However, there appeared to be a disconnect between the metaperceptions of the participants' motivations for TRA and the actual background provided by participants, as the discussion below highlights.

1.1. The Mothers' Background to their Transracial Adoption

For mothers, adoption often occurred when children in need were identified and it was felt that they could provide care for that child. The identified difficulties included financial and health needs, and being orphaned. Others chose to adopt and sought avenues to do this. Some were drawn into adoption through life experiences such as volunteering and bonding

with a child through this process. Personal beliefs; such as the view that *every child deserves a family*, and viewing adoptive and biological children equally, influenced mothers' decision to adopt transracially. Therefore, mothers held values in which all people were viewed as equal and deserving of a family, which seemed to impact on their motivation for TRA.

The following excerpts elaborate on the influences on the mother's decision to adopt transracially.

> I had an instant connection and felt that this was my child, with the others nobody else came forward and I felt that every child deserves a family so I stepped in - Paula.

> I adopted after spending a couple of years volunteering in orphanages and watching children and babies die, living terrible lives, so I thought I am good with small babies and so I adopted small babies. - Theresa.

> The social workers said that we need to find a foster care family for her and because of her status she wouldn't go to a good home so I went urhh ((gasp)) and now she's in our family. – Viola.

> ...my husband and I, we didn't try to conceive biological children. We chose to adopt... – Erika.

Conversely, the metaperceptions showed different interpretations of the mothers' motivations for their TRA. The following excerpts are explored to elaborate.

> There is also that cool modern perception that they think of you as having a Sandton accessory. People think that you would actually adopt a child because it's cool. I know it's cool, but you don't raise a child… It's a lot of work... It is very cool to have a child of any form, but no one in Sandton has a child because it's an accessory. For real! ... And there's this other one, affirmative handbag. I also heard it because – you know – sometimes people don't know that your kids are transracially adopted - It was just like a passing comment, not dwelt on or even discussed. ...I certainly don't think anybody would say that to your face... I don't know what's going on, but people are really expressing what they think, and very openly. Even with that comment ...it's only for White moms of Black children. Not for other families who are ...Black families you don't really notice it. ...Most things have been positive but I have had blatant looks and comments to me because I've stolen their child. – Charlotte.

Charlotte mentioned that metaperceptions which reflected viewing her child as *a Sandton accessory* and also as an *affirmative handbag.* She felt that these terms were specifically used for White mothers who adopt children of a different race to themselves. This may be indicative of society's attempt to understand TRA and for members of the public to express their views on it. These terms may have been used in a more light-hearted way (even though still offensive), or to express disapproval. In addition, these terms seem to act to objectify a Black child as not a 'real' person. Furthermore, they may be used within TRA as a means of objectifying the adopted Black child as not a 'real' child to the White mother, who is likewise disavowed as not a 'real' mother. Therefore, considerations of the child as a legitimate part of the mother's life and vice versa are defended against, and the relationship

between mother and child is undermined through the use of either political or neoliberal discourse. Furthermore, the child is used as a political object through this discourse (Dubinsky, 2007).

Natasha discussed feeling that people *put [her] up on… [a] pedestal* and felt that she was viewed as a *good* person, or somehow superior to the average person to be able to transracially adopt a child and to cope with doing this.

> From my point of view we get a kind of 'wow, you are such good people'. We are put up on this kind of special pedestal thing, and it kind of, sort of, makes it like the expectations of who you are and what you are doing is more than as if you were just yourself and your kids. Somehow you must be, sort of, good people. – Natasha.

This may imply metaperceptions that consider TRA to be difficult, specifically, that transracially adopted children are more troubled or difficult to parent than other children. This may be true in some respects that are unique to TRA, such as parenting in terms of identity and children understanding how they came to be in their adoptive family. However, other parts of parenting, such as caregiving, discipline and development, are no different to parenting biological children. Further, these metaperceptions may place pressure on TRA mothers to be exemplary in their parenting styles. Participants did not generally agree with these perceptions.

Others, like Erika, expressed metaperceptions that assumed there must be an ulterior motive behind TRA, rather than considering that it was a choice:

> I was having material cut // and the guy actually asked me who had fertility problems was it you or your husband? ... assume you had to be desperate. What's interesting is that // my husband and I, we didn't try to conceive biological children. We chose to adopt. That was our choice. It was no one else's business, firstly... Often I feel like, people are leading me to tell them that. But it's private. Also // I don't feel it's right to my friends who adopted because they couldn't conceive children.... Neither of these families are more real. We are both real families. – Erika.

Ulterior motives included being unable to conceive biological children, as Erika posited. She shared that discussions of this felt extremely intrusive; and somehow moved to question the legitimacy of the family and the different situations that led to TRA. Other perceived ulterior motives, such as those expressed by Viola, viewed TRA mothers as seeking some kind of recognition or benefit from TRA. They suggested that TRA is *a project,* rather than as requiring *the same amount of effort* as parenting a biological child.

> ...Thinking it's this selfless thing that it's like a project. It's kind of saying that it's great I take my hat off to you but I would never do it; but you would have kids? People perceive it as a very selfless thing whereas for

> me it's not any different than if I had a biological kid, so why is it different. It's still the same amount of effort to parent. – Viola.

Further, participants identified motivations for TRA and the process involved as specific to the South African context. Viola stated:

> You're not on the adoption list waiting for children to come into your life, you're actually doing it the other way around. – Viola.

These findings show the experience of some mothers as being involved in contexts that resulted in them building a relationship with a particular child, which then led to TRA. Other mothers wanted a family and sought out TRA as a route towards this, such as Erika. However, the views of TRA do not seem to have largely influenced how mothers adopted transracially; but do seem to form part of their experience as they receive feedback about their family from others. The extracts suggest that TRA is yet to be viewed as completely socially acceptable in South Africa. In addition, participants alluded to South African contextual views of interracial relationships over time, such as different views pre- and post-apartheid. These views influenced metaperceptions. For example, Theresa expressed:

> Going back to 1993, it was very difficult. It was as horrifying to see a White lady pushing a Black baby in a pram as it was to see a Black man with his arm around a White girl! It was really unacceptable in those days but I think we've grown a lot since then. – Theresa.

Therefore, it can be concluded, that the mothers had distinctive backgrounds to and motivations for their TRA. This can be compared to the unique backgrounds discussed by the young adults, confirming that TRA is specific to each family, much like the birth stories of biological children in other forms of families. TRA is influenced by the South African context through the factors contributing to children becoming adoptable, although motivations are personal and not always linked to the social context. However, the context of race relations in South Africa influences the perceptions formed by those outside of TRA and the ways in which the mothers (and families) experience them as metaperceptions.

1.2. The Young Adults' Background to their Transracial Adoption

The young adults had their own background histories which were often kept private as part of their own life story. This story was protected from the invasive or insensitive questioning of others, as at times, this questioning seemed to stem more from curiosity than from care for the individual. These stories included abandonment at birth, families not being able to care for them any longer, death of family members through the struggle against

apartheid or illness which led to the need for a family to care for them at a young age, or mothers seeking out children to adopt by choice. The following excerpts elaborate on the background behind the young adults becoming adoptable.

> I was three, my birth-mother died, and it was just my father. And all my siblings from my real family were way older than me… My father couldn't look after me, or my family couldn't look after me. It's kind of weird. I have two families now… It has never really been like a full on you know, like I grew up in both areas. Because it was more like; we need help with the child then like a straight cut off all contact. – Pumi.

> I was six weeks. So I don't have any contact with my other family. It was a closed adoption… My birth-father died in some Alexandra uprising. And then also a question of I had all the siblings and I was the youngest. So they were like; you don't know things we can bounce. I think it was also because financially my birth-mother couldn't support another child, because of the death and that kind of thing. – Natalie.

> I was abandoned, and then, my mom found, well, Richard and myself were abandoned on the same day, and she took us home. I think – to a house – where those days it wasn't allowed… There were so many rules and regulations and I think she just decided to adopt us. We were the first two that weren't biological children to be adopted. – Jonathan.

Metaperceptions of the young adults included being a helpless child that was 'saved', being seen as blessed or needing to be grateful, or as not having had a choice in being placed with these families as they were in need. Pumi expressed this in how she was told *you better be thankful* and people feeling, *oh shame [her adoptive mother] is helping out this poor Black child.* This resulted in her feeling she needed to behave as if she 'deserved' being given this opportunity. This led her to questioning whether or not her parents truly cared for her, or whether they would abandon her if she did not live up to their expectations. These metaperceptions seemed to be similar to some of those experienced by mothers of having 'rescued' their children or seeking out a 'fashion' accessory rather than forming their family; objectifying the child and their position in the family. This relates to discourses of 'kidnap' and 'rescue' as discussed by Dubinsky (2007). The extract below from Pumi supports this discussion:

> I remember lots of people asking my mom; like what exactly is the deal? ...family and friends would come to me and be like; do you even understand the opportunity you have here! You better be really thankful. ...their point of view was very much like; oh shame she is helping out this poor Black child. She has such a good heart, look at her helping out this – that irritated me... I felt like I had this responsibility, because of what the people said, because these people are so nice to me, I am now responsible to never do anything bad. Because otherwise they might chuck me out. When my mom said she loves me and whatever I had to start believing that it might be true or it might not // because it was all on me. There was nothing she could do to change the situation because it was what I believed. So I had to go; no, what the hell? You people are talking crap. And only then I could really be a part of the family, I guess. Or feel like I am okay. – Pumi.

Some metaperceptions held by the young adults were related to the assumptions that people had made about them based on their outward appearances.

> I guess people judge books by their cover, and they don't fit each individual in the context of the environment that they were brought up in. They don't know I was adopted so they're just assuming that because he looks this way, because his hair is like that, he must be Zulu or Tswana – so he should speak the language. ...Some people were upset by it, especially because of the colour difference. If I were raised by a Black person they think then you are gonna get an African language and things like that. A lot of people in my school didn't actually mind about that. But then I've met quite a few people, Zulus; that actually really wanted to know, to see you speak an African language. Those are the hardest times you have. You're just trying to explain to them that you only speak English... But, ya it is exactly like that. I've had lots of people who actually want to support you a lot, and then you get people who just disagree because your parents are White. They would understand it if your parents were Black. – Timothy.

The extract above alludes to Timothy's experiences of people assuming that he could speak an African language, being upset that he could not do so, and then blaming his TRA. Other metaperceptions were related to people being upset by the colour differences involved in TRA. He expressed that *people don't fit each individual in the context of the environment that they were brought up in*, assuming that they should, for example, speak an African language because they are Black, before getting to know their background.

Some of the young adults felt that their personality had shielded them from the potential negative impact of metaperceptions and questions. For instance, as Natalie stated:

> I don't know if I have // I've never really had a problem with people's perceptions of – like the bullying thing – anything like that. I mean // because I am a very loud person I say what I say, and if you don't like it you can chuck... People are curious, and I am open to explain. So it's never a problem for me. - Natalie.

Others, such as Monde, experienced the questioning of others as difficult to deal with:

> …It got to a point whereby I was like... if you really wanna get to know me stop calling me names and ask me about my situation instead of assuming. – Monde.

Therefore, while the metaperceptions experienced by the mothers and young adults in the study had some similarities, the ways in which they are handled were unique to the individuals involved. The metaperceptions of the young adults seemed to impact on their outlook on life; eventually resulting in them rejecting the status quo and accepting themselves as individuals. The mothers appeared to support this process in their similar rejection of the status quo, the objections to their TRA and any negative experiences that come with this. In addition, the reactions young adults and mothers experienced seemed to represent race trouble present in interracial contact in South Africa; and the different forms of racism that continue to occur (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the situation leading to their TRA had an impact on the young adults' identity formation. The young adults seemed to narrowly engage with the circumstances leading to their TRA; and rather chose to identify with their current family. It appeared to be a difficult balance to strike between understanding why their biological parents could no longer care for them, while simultaneously bonding with their transracially adoptive family who were able to provide for their needs. For example, due to the devastation of the Alexandra uprisings and similar apartheid struggles, as in Natalie's case, children and families became vulnerable which at times resulted in TRA or other alternative care placements. Apartheid resulted in change in family structures, a decrease in emotional and physical resources, and changes in family relationships through relocation, incarceration, death or other factors (Durrheim, 2005). Other families were highly impacted by poverty which led to seeking alternative care (Pumi), abandonment (Jonathan and Timothy), or the relinquishment of parental responsibility (Monde).

For the young adults, these parts of their life story appeared to be painful to integrate, and were at times avoided or distanced. Rather, the young adults engaged with their new family identities. These held more positive narratives, such as those related to care as compared to rejection, loss or abandonment. However, these narratives held their own advantages and disadvantages. These included feeling pressure to perform well or to deserve the care they received (Pumi), struggling to understand where they were able to fit in (Monde), or perhaps feeling that they would somehow be different if they acknowledged their history outside of their adoptive family (Natalie). Engaging with having come from situations of severe deprivation, unrest, poverty or discrimination and being taken into resourced situations which are in stark contrast to that, was absent in these participants' narratives of the background to their TRA.

The young adults' discussion of the circumstances surrounding their TRA seemed to focus on relational rather than material factors. In addition, there appeared to be an absence of acknowledgement of the class differences, lack of financial resources, lack of provision of basic needs and other inequalities in South Africa. The absence of deeper engagement with the impact of difficult backgrounds on the young adults may be linked to the mothers and young adults avoidance of internalising any of the metaperceptions of the child being helpless and being 'rescued'. However, these metaperceptions appeared to be part of their adoption process to an extent; but not part of the reason for becoming a family. The separation of these narratives and backgrounds may occur here. While extremely disparate circumstances led to the child's availability for TRA, the motivating factor was not to 'rescue' or steal a child

away from the 'Black side' to the 'White side'; but to build a family with a child and parent who came into each others' lives through TRA.

1.3. Personal Values

Personal values also affected reasons for adopting transracially, and influenced the development of values in the adopted young adults as they dealt with creating understandings of their TRA. Some of the mothers in the study expressed views like Paula that *every child deserves a family,* and that children in need would not be excluded from their family based on race and social constructions of the family. In addition, the mothers held liberal views of interracial contact, seeing all races as equal and not as separate. These views were in opposition to those they experienced through reactions of others to their family. These reactions were filled with racist ideology and a desire for race groups to continue to be separate; propagating racism. Anti-apartheid views of equality and democracy were expressed in participants' perspectives and lifestyles. Therefore, constructions of race and the family in South Africa impacted on motivations for and metaperceptions of TRA.

Mothers felt they could assist children who had become available for adoption; and adopted children whom they bonded with or whom they felt would not otherwise be well cared for. Furthermore, mothers did not only adopt children because they were available for adoption; but had made a choice to adopt over having biological children, as Erika discussed. Alternatively, mothers had both biological and adopted children, or had transracially adopted a child that they bonded with very strongly pre- or post- adoption. Some mothers also constructed adoption as fulfilling their own needs, rather than vice versa. As Charlotte discussed in the extract below:

> They don't understand that for us it was really easy and you know I didn't save him he saved me!
> – Charlotte.

Similarly, the young adults had values that reflected equality and acceptance of all individuals regardless of race, family of origin or other preferences. These values seemed to stem from their mother's (and family's) perspectives on life, as well as their own lived experiences of being different to the 'norm' and having to challenge others who questioned their identity based on views of their TRA. The young adults saw their mothers as open, free-thinking individuals, and as having chosen to adopt them. Their circumstances were not always the motivating factor for their adoption; rather, their mothers had chosen to adopt them. Natalie shared part of this experience:

> I think it was a question of they wanted to adopt a child, and obviously I was adopted in the new South Africa, so because they already had a son, and they wanted a daughter, and they are just those kinds of people... they adopted me. - Natalie.

This was similar to the sentiments expressed by the mothers, who did not want their children to feel like they 'saved' them; but rather that they were desired and loved members of their families. Once the child is eligible for TRA, these factors contribute to their availability for adoption; but not purely to their reason for adoption within their specific family. They may have been abandoned or orphaned due to factors which made them vulnerable; but may have been adopted due to the personal values and motivations of their adoptive families. According to the findings, these include establishing connections with specific children, choosing to adopt rather than to have biological children, or being exposed to the child's circumstances that led to adoption if the situation allowed for this.

Therefore, while the South African legislation considers placement with biological family members as the primary option for children in need of care (Children's Act 2005), mothers in the study did not appear to allow this to hamper their decision to transracially adopt a child once they became available for adoption. This reasoning is based on the incorrect assumption that a biological family cannot be transracial. Thus, this argument has its roots in notions of separate development and symbolic racism (Durrheim et al., 2011).

While there are many reasons for children becoming vulnerable, these situations do not always result in TRA (DSD, 2012). Social work intervention such as places of safety, child and youth care centres, and temporary care facilities, may be used until such time that the links to the biological family have been exhausted and the child can be considered for alternative care placements, such as TRA.

Therefore, as found in Mokomane et al. (2012) and NACSA (2012), the adoption process may at times feel frustrating for families seeking to adopt transracially. In addition, while family reunification has benefits to the child and families (DSD, 2012), it may also represent a form of symbolic racism (Durrheim et al., 2011), as White families are perceived to not be able to care for Black children based on their not being Black. This symbolic racism may be the root cause of some of the resistance to TRA in social workers, as identified by Mokomane et al. (2012).

Existing research supports some of the reasons for TRA provided by the mothers and young adults in the study. These include socio-economic factors such as a lack of family support, illegitimate childbearing leading to difficulties in effectively caring for children,

poverty, non-marital childbearing and teenage pregnancy (Mbuyazi, 2008; Mokomane et al., 2012). In addition, there are high numbers of abandoned babies in South Africa (Blackie, 2014 Luhunga, 2008; Mokomane et al., 2012), and the majority of babies are Black while those applying to adopt are generally White (Blackie, 2014; Szabo & Ritchken, 2002). In addition, according to RACAP, the number of adoptions has declined in the last decade with the number of orphans increasing (Blackie, 2014). This has been contributed to poor implementation of the Children's Act of 2010, cultural barriers and mixed attitudes towards TRA (Blackie, 2014).

Despite these considerations, the mothers in the study had chosen to adopt their children. Nevertheless, these factors were still apparent in their metaperceptions. It appeared that TRA often occurred in an idiosyncratic manner due to personal values and situations, which were often in contrast to the views of the general public. The emotional bond formed between the child and mother through this process seemed to override the perceptions which did not fully support TRA. Furthermore, it heightened the motivation for forming a healthy relationship with their child; and forming an inimitable family which was filled with love and not viewed as different. Personal values influenced reasons for adopting transracially, and impacted on the development of values in the young adults as they dealt with metaperceptions of TRA and created their own understanding of their adoption alongside their mothers.

Theme 2: Racialised Constructions of Transracial Adoption

The following theme presents how racialised societal constructions of 'normality' regarding the family and intergroup relations influence the metaperceptions and experiences of the participants. Social constructions of a 'normal family?' were underpinned by the aftermath of racist apartheid ideology, which continues to infiltrate perceptions of different forms of interracial contact. Views of racial integration, racism and racialised interactions in social spaces were evident in the experiences of both participant groups in response to their TRA. The ways in which racial ideologies emerged in the data are explored in the upcoming theme.

2.1. Apartheid versus Integration and Views of Transracial Adoption

The nature of reactions to TRA, observed in the metaperceptions of the participants, appeared to differ across racial groups; and were related to the socio-political history of South Africa. As changes have occurred in racist ideology and related social norms, so outwardly

expressed opinions of interracial relationships seem to have shifted and become more positive. However, these outward expressions of racist ideology continue to be in flux. While socially accepted behaviour surrounding race has shifted, this is not the case in all situations. Thus, while socially accepted perceptions may have shifted or are in the process of change; individually held perceptions of racial groups and interracial contact have not shifted as much in all contexts. Therefore, reactions to TRA continue to be loaded with racist ideology and differ across contexts.

The following excerpts present the impact of these shifting social constructions in the metaperceptions of the participants. It is hypothesised, that participants experience the impact of these conflicting views as they interact with others. The participants' TRA and outlook on life may represent an expression of ideologies of interracial integration. These ideologies may be in conflict with different levels of explicit and implicit perceptions of racial integration in others which are still highly impacted by racist ideology and social constructions of 'normal'. For example, Theresa, a TRA mother, experienced these changing views over time as part of her TRA.

> I was really shocked that people reacted this way, everybody was, so I thought that they were, so excited about what I, especially that the new South Africa was excited about what I was doing, so it was a bit of a shock for me when it didn't turn out that way. I went through a long period where I just didn't make eye-contact with people anymore, because I just didn't want to get hurt by their looks and stuff. But now I really don't care what they think. – Theresa.

This suggests that as perceptions have changed over time so have the experiences and metaperceptions of these mothers, and most likely young adults, in response to these shifts. However, coping strategies have also shifted and have culminated into perceptions from the participants that it is society's need to change rather than themselves. This includes rejecting negative experiences and building on strengths in order to live meaningfully for themselves, rather than have continuous concerns around the feedback they receive from others. Jonathan, a young adult, expressed similar feelings around changes in perceptions over time and its relationship to his TRA.

> I think if she let people's thoughts affect her she wouldn't have done what she has done. Because when she had me and Richard she got punched in Knysna by some boereman, she got spat on, she got shunned by the church, the Catholic Church. So those days, people's perceptions of the world were, I'd say backward thinking. I guess nowadays it doesn't really affect us because it is the norm now. It is integration now.
> – Jonathan.

Further, Jenna, a TRA mother, experienced that public responses were not always a true representation of people's perceptions of TRA, further revealing the influence of

changing social norms around race. In addition, these somewhat superficial responses may represent subtle and aversive racism as part of the race trouble within South African society.

> I've noticed that as my children have gotten older most adults know that it is socially correct to accept it so they accept it to your face but their children say things that tell you that at home it's not acceptable. – Jenna.

Natasha, a TRA mother, shared a similar sentiment:

> The generation I am coming from now are very conscious of undoing the wrongs of the past and a lot more sensitive to racism and things like that. It's almost a reaction to their parents to do things differently.
> – Natasha.

Therefore, as those involved in TRA interacted with others in their social milieu they may have unknowingly ignited the unconscious or conscious consideration of these ideologies within people. This process may have taken them off guard and led to a particular response to their TRA. In addition, they have been exposed to individuals who sought to behave differently in response to South Africa's apartheid history of racial discrimination; but this exposure is interspersed with individuals who resist the change to a more integrative and less racially discriminatory society. Therefore, participants' metaperceptions of their TRA are complex and fluctuating.

Jonathan, a young adult, presents a further demonstration of the progressive changes in South Africa regarding race and the nature of responses to TRA:

> Because I have young adopted brothers and sisters // I can see it's a lot easier for them. Whereas when I was at school, primary school especially, it was very hard because you are either a Black family or a White family. There was no // you can't be both, kind of thing. I remember Grade 1 was very tough. We had an Afrikaans teacher and she hated me and Richard just because we were different. – Jonathan.

This extract reflects the different experiences of TRA individuals from the same family over time and how they perceived reactions to have become less negative over time. From the excerpts, it is suggested that in the past reactions to TRA were more disapproving, hurtful and intrusive than the current social context. Racial integration in any form was viewed disparagingly under apartheid. It was not only unacceptable; but was considered to be criminal. Integration in the workplace and general public was highly unacceptable, and more so within an intimate setting such as the family and the intimate bonding between mother and child (Durrheim, 2005; Durrheim et al., 2011). While participants reported that responses to TRA were not as unfavourable as in previous years; and positive reactions to TRA were perceived to be increasing, undercurrents of resistance continued to be evident in social behaviours which are presented through critical responses to TRA.

While South Africa is in the era of democracy and integration, the past experiences in the country cannot be separated from how individuals currently interact and understand each other (Durrheim et al., 2011). The impact of racial discrimination, cultural differences across race, metaperceptions across racial groups, and perceptions of interracial contact cannot be removed from how individuals view themselves and others in daily interactions. Therefore, social constructions of race continue to impact on the metaperceptions of TRA.

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2.2. Reactions to Transracial Adoption and Race

Participants experienced differences in reactions to their TRA across racial groups. Mothers' experiences of reactions from race groups varied, as found below:

> The Afrikaaners struggle to grasp it, like you are trying to make a point. Amongst the English people it's very varied. The Black people mostly think you are doing a great job but I do get some saying 'is this child your project' or 'where is her family'. – Theresa.

> You get positive and negative reactions from White people as well. The White people aren't thinking that it's our child, why have you taken our child. They are more like; why did you take one of them? Now we're banning you as well. – Charlotte.

> I find that the 'oh you are doing such a good job' or 'this child is so lucky' comes a lot from the African family, as if she is their responsibility and I am doing them a favour. I find it very strange. I am not doing you a favour you don't have to thank me. From the White people it varies but it comes through in the kids like comments at school, like 'is it difficult to be Black and have a White mommy'. You think that came from a parents mouth. I find with English people there are funny, like racist, but, subtle nuances. - Viola.

> Sometimes I've had Black ladies look at me – give me filthy looks because I've got one of theirs. Not everybody – most of the experiences have been positive. This ownership issue ... it's not great. You do get the perception of; you've stolen something from us... which is our children, from some Black people. But it's not always. At the same rate we've had perceptions from a lot of White people as well saying, you know // one of the worst statements was when war breaks out in this country, the White people with Black children must be killed first because they have // but I mean it's stupid White people. It's the most ridiculous ...It completely flabbergasts me that you still get people out there that are so narrow minded… - Lindy.

According to these participants, reactions differed across racial groups. Furthermore, there seemed to be a particular race trouble in South Africa regarding TRA, as evident from the statements above. Individuals across racial groups seemed to express common supportive and disapproving views of TRA. Black African individuals seemed to support TRA but viewed it from a standpoint similar to that of Ubuntu. That is, it was viewed as helping the family care for a child who they could not care for, rather than as a legitimate change of families for the child. Others were disapproving, bringing in elements of 'colour and community consciousness' discourse, that the child was being stolen, losing their culture and losing their heritage rather than gaining a family as in 'colourblindness' (Perry, 1994).

Similar discourses were those of ‘rescue’ and of ‘kidnap’ (Dubinsky, 2007). Responses from White people seemed to be loaded with the racist ideology associated with apartheid dogma that Black people should not mix with White people; and that those White people who did were unacceptable and not worthy of their Whiteness. Other White individuals who presented positive responses seemed to express less of this racist ideology, which may be considered an aversive racist response (Durrheim et al., 2011). In addition, mothers felt judged and challenged for having adopted and for their ability to mother their adopted child, which was evident in their metaperceptions. However, they did not regret their decision to adopt and viewed negative responses as indicative of problems with the other party or society rather than with themselves.

The responses from young adults reflected a similar stance to that of the mothers in the study. Positive and negative experiences from all race groups were discussed. Natalie felt that people in general were overly critical and were too quick to interfere in the lives of others. From her perspective, people believed they should comment on things that they did not agree with, or which seemed different to the ‘norm’. Natalie expressed this as:

> …Everyone is just flipping judgmental. Not race specific. – Natalie.

It was reported that Black individuals were particularly concerned about the apparent loss of Blackness perceived to be represented in the loss of the ability to speak African languages and other ‘Black’ cultural behaviour. This perceived ‘loss of culture’ is used as a means to justify objections to TRA which may not be the true reason for resistance. This justification can be viewed as symbolic racism (Durrheim et al., 2011). Jonathan’s response presents some of the discussion around this and a particular way of approaching this type of discussion in which young adults in the study have become ‘strong’ and respond to resistance to TRA or choose to not be affected by such comments.

> Black people, when you can’t speak a Black language and you look like them; they look at you with a shock face and are like; why is this and why is that? …I just tell them, I’ve got White parents. What do you think? And if they ask, I tell them. I am a strong character, so they don’t ever challenge me. - Jonathan.

Overall, responses were indicative of differing views of TRA across racial groups. As change continues to occur in the patterns of racial interaction in South Africa it seems that these understandings or ‘misunderstandings’ across racial groups about interracial relationships, such as those in TRA, may continue to change. However, cultural differences across racial categories continue to be influential in the way in which people understand each

other. It is the attitudes around TRA that appeared to be in need of change in order to eliminate forms of racism and prejudice that were part of the process of understanding differences in people and establishing societal norms.

2.3. Race, Language and Culture

Within the metaperceptions of participants, race, language and culture were an integral part of the reactions to TRA. Race, language and culture were used to validate objections to TRA, and also formed part of the questions that were asked about TRA, specifically with regards to mothering and 'loss' of these parts of identity for transracially adopted children.

The extracts below reveal that mothers acknowledged the importance of knowing ones cultural heritage and its relevant language and ritual implications. However, they found the child's identification with them as a mother to be as important. For example, Sandra's experience was that:

> I did wonder about this cultural thing // feeling that I had a responsibility to help her get to know her culture, to figure that out. But I think it became clear very quickly that she is who she is and that's not related entirely to her birth family but to me as well, and that she will ask. – Sandra.

Theresa added that it was difficult to inform children about their birth culture if they were abandoned as it was unknown. As Theresa stated:

> If you have an abandoned child you don't know what their culture is, I think it's hurtful and separating for the child. – Theresa.

Mothers reported that at times exploring questions around culture and heritage with their children felt like a painful reminder that they were abandoned. This was viewed as hurtful; and mothers felt that this resulted in the child feeling different to their other family members. Mothers felt that it was also difficult for a child to feel that they were different from their mother based on notions of culture.

This theme highlights the issue of whether culture and language are inherent to one's connection to one's birth family; its collective implications for one's race or nationality; and the culture and language one obtains from the family one lives with. As one would develop these elements in a biological family, so this occurs in a transracially adoptive family. The culture and language one obtains may not be that of the birth family, or that of the adoptive family alone; but it may be a combination of both or only that of the adoptive family. In addition, language and culture may develop as a result of secondary socialisation and

experiences outside of the direct influence of the family. Perceptions of an individual's language and culture are often judged based on race. Therefore, due to the difference in race of the family members, a difference in culture and language between family members may be assumed if one is not aware of the TRA. However, the language and culture found amongst family members may be particular to their context.

Situations may arise relating to assumptions about race, language and culture, particularly with TRA. Each individual may deal with these situations as they apply to them. For example, Paula related the following situation:

> If you are in a lift with your child and someone gets in, they will immediately assume that they can greet the child in a Black language, and they will do that and I feel that that's my role to say to them 'they only speak English'. And then I leave it, I don't say anything more. If they choose to then greet them again in English, then that's fine, and if they don't then that's also fine. – Paula.

At times these situations became heated in the presence of opposition to TRA, in which the 'loss' of language and culture were used to validate such opposition. These forms of justification for this opposition are based on a racist ideology. While some elements of the birth family's language and culture may not be practiced, the child may be aware of these, therefore they are not lost. In addition, the child will have the language and culture of their adoptive family, and therefore is not without these parts of identity. Moreover, the birth family heritage may be unknown due to abandonment, and is therefore difficult to practice. Furthermore, from a social constructionist perspective culture is developed through interactions in a given social context and not by birthright (Gergen, 2009). However, it is interesting to consider that the loss of culture due to TRA is directed at the transracially adoptive family rather than the factors which led to the child becoming available for adoption, or at the family who could not care for the child for whatever reason. This may be a form of symbolic racism in which the White transracially adoptive family is blamed for the situations of inequality and poverty which underpin the reasons for TRA. Moreover, White people are assumed to be unable to care for Black children. Arguments concerning loss of language and culture in transracially adopted children are used to justify this position, which may constitute symbolic racism as defined by Durrheim et al. (2011).

Those from a similar culture to the one that is 'lost' may feel they want to inform the child of other parts of their heritage, which mothers would be open to should the child choose to do this. It can be understood why individuals may feel parts of the birth culture of the individual may be lost. However, this was not the view of the participants in the study. Mothers understood the differing arguments presented but felt it was divisive within the

family to artificially enforce ‘cultural differences’ due to racial variance. For example, Jenna explained:

> So this is my biological child, you’re not Tswana so you don’t need to know Tswana or anything like that, but you, you’re Tswana so we must teach you Tswana, so you’re constantly doing this you’re not mine. Saying you’re not my child. So it’s a very silly idea. – Jenna.

A distinction can be noted between those who seek to expand on the child’s knowledge of their heritage and language; and those who wish to denigrate the adoptive family’s culture and language. Mothers would be prepared to inform the child of their culture as far as their knowledge of the child’s birth family would allow, and encourage them to learn their birth families language if the child wished to do so. However, mothers expressed that individuals outside of the family desired for their children to develop language and culture related to their birth family, which seemed disparaging of the transracially adoptive family. The mothers attempted to balance allowing the child to explore the elements of their identity which relate to their birth family with those of their adoptive family; but ensured that the child felt loved and part of their family rather than different through this process. For example, Jenna felt that this was separating for her adoptive child. Alternatively, Charlotte expressed trying to balance being the most natural version of a mother to her child that she could be in terms of her background and teaching them her heritage with informing her adoptive children about their birth family background as much as possible for her, creating a unique family identity.

> As his mom I am teaching him everything I can, and he is not going to grow up a Zulu, say in Tim’s case, but he will... I always teach my kids historical things and whatever. – Charlotte.

The extract below further demonstrates the points discussed.

Extract 1:

Sandra:	At the time that we were adopting in 1994, it was a bit of an issue generally. It was unusual. Felicia Mabuza-Suttle, at the time was running a talk show; and she invited a few of us onto the show. At one point during the show there was some fancy psychologist, somebody from the States, who was part of the panel. He was very against TRA, because it wasn’t culturally, ‘appropriate’. Someone in the audience stood up and said he thinks it’s disgraceful, because how are these White people going to know how to kill a bull when it’s necessary (laughter) for rituals. I think that was a cultural thing because of the difference, and not able to embrace the kind of inclusiveness about it. And it was inappropriate in spite of the fact that she might have been, you know, otherwise not had a parent.
Charlotte:	And you’ll find they don’t even see those children as your children, even. They don’t see them as yours. I think it’s part of the issue.
Lindy:	Exactly! My sister-in-law... I said to her I came across the article,... and the reason why, originally, years ago they didn’t, and even still they obviously prefer to place Black children with Black families, and just where the history of that came from. Part of it was obviously for

these children to grow up in their culture and also to help them as they are older. ...I said to her, you know in a way you can feel guilty, but, what is the point because how many million children are there that are sitting in children' homes, and still not being raised in their culture. Because don't tell me that they're doing all the cultural stuff in children's homes. But people don't look at it that way.

Cindy: Why are you saying you feel guilty?

Lindy: No, no, no. If you read these articles you see how they're basically slashing TRA, then you sit and you can actually be, maybe guilty isn't the right word for it, but you can basically be overwhelmed in, like an insecurity of; I understand where they are coming from. You don't regret that you've adopted, but because of this, you almost feel, maybe getting back to that woundedness for your kids not having that part of themselves. The part, not of themselves, but of their culture. So, for them to be missing that. But, you can't think of it in that way because at the same time, as I said; these children, if they are being raised in safe-houses or children's homes or whatever the case may be, they would be in a far worse position than what they are now because they've got loving parents, they're growing up in I feel healthy environments. It's interesting for me that there are so many people out there that have this specific view of how it's so bad to TRA because of the cultural issue. But they don't think about the parenting issue.

Sandra: I don't believe that children are born with a culture. They're certainly not born with a language. So for me I am not taking anything away. Because it wasn't there in the first place. I am giving her my perspective, my values, my whatever, in the same way that you give any other child that you raise as well. So I am not taking anything from her. And I think it's just that people don't see it that way. So for me that's, the issue.

Cindy: I suppose, you don't come from their culture. That's the thing.

Sandra: But she also has her culture.

Cindy: Yes. That's what I thought. My daughter is Italian.

Charlotte: But you know people who judge that probably are judgemental generally. I think that we need to put it in perspective and say yes; there is this issue. Yes I am not his Zulu mom but he didn't have a Zulu mom before he came to me because he was an orphan. In the eyes of the law, he was adoptable and that meant he didn't have a mom. So the up-side of that is // I've had friends come up to me and say, not that they had issues before but obviously it's obvious that I didn't give birth to Tim or Branden, and they've said to me; you know when we hang-out with you guys as a family they really are your kids. I hope you don't mind me saying that! I'm like no, I get it! And if you get it, I am happy.

The above extract highlights that discussions around culture cannot be understood in isolation. This particular aspect of human existence is not separate from other aspects. Culture includes traditional practices, values and norms shared and transmitted by a particular set of people. Therefore, it can be understood why mothers feel defensive about the way in which culture is used as a means of validating objections to TRA, as culture cannot be separated from their children's position in the family, their values, their beliefs and their relationships to others in the family, particularly their mothers. Viewing their connectedness to their culture as being solely that of their birth family left the mother feeling as if their child is being viewed as separate from them and their family. As mentioned by the mothers, the culture of their birth family was acknowledged if it was known, and mothers tried to make

their children aware of those parts of their heritage while also teaching them the heritage, values and practices of their adoptive family.

It becomes difficult to establish which set of cultural practices is more important, which is where the debate begins. Some feel the birth family culture is more important, such as 'Colour and Community Consciousness' and 'kidnap' views, while others feel both are equal and the adoptive family's practices also need to be acknowledged, such as 'Colourblindness' and 'rescue' perspectives (Dubinsky, 2007; Perry, 1994). However, for the mother, this separation is uncomfortable, as it implies that their position as their child's mother and the bond between them is, by association, also in question. The bond between mother and child will be explored more in the coming discussion, although it is important to contemplate the link between views of culture and those of mothering or family relations.

The young adult participants also experienced difficulties evident within their metaperceptions regarding race, culture and language. They are often assumed to be able to speak particular languages based on their race or their perceived cultural group. Thus, they are also expected to know and understand cultural practices which belong to that group. This at times made daily activities frustrating. For example, Jonathan explained that:

> …The only big problems I have are with the organisations; like the police, and trying to get your ID …Because your parents are not there for you, once you're getting your ID at 16, you stand in the line yourself... They look at you and they speak to you in their home language and you don't reply, they think it's disrespectful, but you don't know how to speak their language. – Jonathan.

Furthermore, young adults experienced racialised responses, which were common across races in terms of language, and at times, cultural norms. When with different racial groups they are expected to be able to speak the appropriate language of that group. This results in young adults having to be somewhat chameleon-like in their interactions, changing their language and manner of interacting according to who they are with and which part of themselves it is appropriate to express in a given context. Pumi described this as:

> I find a big barrier when it comes to people with language. When I speak over the phone, people think I'm White, and when I meet them they're like; oh! You're Black! Or when I speak Afrikaans, they're always like; what! But the irritating part about that is; mostly I find with races, with White people; like Afrikaans people, White English people and Black people, I only find acceptance with them if I can speak their language. So if I show up in a Black environment and speaking Afrikaans; they're all like; uuh! Yaa! You think you are somebody! You know. Or if I get to an Afrikaans environment and I am Black and I'm speaking Sotho; they're like, nhh! And when I speak Afrikaans; ahh! My goodness, we love you! – Pumi.

Alternatively, young adults took on a perspective of being proud of their identity regardless of the situation, as Timothy discussed:

> Those are the hardest times you have. You're just trying to explain to them that you only speak English. I still walk into shops and stuff and you end up having people speak to you in another language. Immediately when you talk English and explain that I can't speak this... I've had lots of people who actually want to support you a lot, and then you get people who just disagree because your parents are White... I guess people judge books by their cover, and they don't fit each individual in the context of the environment that they were brought up in. They don't know I was adopted so they're just assuming that because he looks this way, because his hair is like that, he must be Zulu or Tswana, and so he should speak the language. – Timothy.

Should they not be able to speak the appropriate language they may be rejected by the individual, questioned on this 'difficulty', or misunderstood, which appears to be frustrating for young adults. It also seems to be annoying to have to explain oneself, especially when others are critical or disinterested in the response. While it may be bothersome at times to explain their identity, they are also in a favourable position, as they are able to interact effectively with people from different contexts through these experiences. This process involves sharing of personal information about oneself, a process which is often unappreciated or unnoticed, as if people were entitled to that information as an explanation and therefore similarly entitled to share their opinion on it.

The metacommunication seemed to be that they were not complete or not adequate enough as individuals due to their perceived lack of culture, language or racially defined behaviours. However, these metaperceptions appeared to be rejected by the young adults as judgemental, incorrect and ignorant. As a result, they perceived themselves as unique individuals with their own identities based on their individual family and social context. A similar stance was held by mothers who concluded that they would balance their approach to culture by providing their culture and the child's birth culture and ultimately let their children decide what their identity was.

2.4. Homophily and Racial Integration

Within social contexts people generally choose to interact with individuals similar to themselves (Durrheim, 2005; Finchilescu, 2005). These similarities may be based on different traits, such as race, gender, class or interests. In considering that homophily in the South Africa context was historically based on race, and there are differing levels of acceptance and criticism of intimate interracial relationships, it can be expected that some opposition may be directed towards TRA based on social norms that seek to limit interracial contact. The transracially adoptive family may be experienced as different and threatening to these social norms. From the findings, mothers felt that their children and themselves interacted with

those who were within their context. This included interactions with those in a similar school class, extra-mural activities and social situations. Lindy stated:

> I think it's the school and where the interest is. ...The school where my kids are they've got five classes per grade. So four of the classes are Afrikaans and one class would be English. The majority of the Black children are in the English classes. // With Thato I find that with most of her friends at this stage at school is White. From our friends' group she would have Black friends and Indian friends and also White friends. But most of the children from the school where she goes to ballet and all of that // are White. – Lindy.

This is more the basis of relationship building rather than using race as a deciding factor. Sandra added to this discussion with the following:

> An interesting question for me has always been, talking about Natalie's perceptions of herself and other people. She has always chosen not only African friends, but non-White friends... her White friends have generally been from my connections, people my age, and we had children at the same time... I've discussed it with her and she said it's just how it is. Her response to me as well was, well Dylan has White friends? And then I think well that's true, although he does have a couple of Black friends too. It's an open issue in the family... She said things to me like; 'oh no they don't like the same music'. So there's a cultural element. I think. But I also think there is a class element, because, most of her friends are from the school. And it would be middle-class children who go to that school. So she doesn't interact much with people from poorer families, so I think there's lots of issues there. It's not just race. The high school which she went to is ex model C so it's a mostly a Black school. I think it's just circumstance too. I don't think you choose your friends based on race. – Sandra.

Others furthered this discussion by mentioning that racial divisions are decreasing in some areas. As Erika mentioned:

> In Joburg, especially in the northern parts of Joburg where we live, it's not that uncommon, it's a real melting pot. I don't actually think it's a race issue. – Erika.

Therefore, Erika put forward that in some places, such as Northern Johannesburg suburbs, race does not largely impact social interactions. This suggests that class may be becoming a homogenising social agent; and that class may be dictating privilege and social stratification more than race. In addition, new class struggles are associated with a rising Black middle class by the participants. This is supported by Durrheim et al. (2011), who suggest that privilege is increasingly difficult to analyse as it is no longer purely related to a White upper class; but to a racially mixed privileged class. In addition, there is an increase in Black leadership and management which has changed the racial nature of class division and race relations (Durrheim et al., 2011). Therefore, participants suggested that at times race no longer impacted on social relationships; but it is clear that new racial stereotypes and social norms with regards to race and class are emerging.

It was evident that mothers acknowledged how others outside or inside of the TRA situation did not always choose to mix with those of a different race to themselves. According to Paula:

> People in a canteen will group together; you will have a Black group at a table and a White group at a table. They have that at school already. …but I think every new environment is, you gotta make a new way, you have to find a new balance, and I think it's hard for them. – Paula.

Those in similar situations, such as a cafeteria, may then find those within that context who they can relate to, which may often include racial similarities as a basis for this decision. This alludes to part of finding an identity as a transracially adopted young adult due to their ethnicity and adoptive family background. In addition, notions of class influenced who transracially adopted young adults chose to interact with. Mothers alluded to the fact that at times children chose to socialise with White individuals over Black individuals, as they felt that it gave them more status. Theresa mentioned:

> My children can't associate with them because it's different and also, sadly, they feel that's a little bit beneath them. – Theresa.

The extract above posits that young adults are influenced by racial and class norms in the manner that they interact with people. Specifically, they identified with elements of Whiteness which provided them with a higher class position. This is supported by research conducted by Durrheim et al. (2011) which suggests that Whiteness continues to be associated with higher class and desirable traits, while Blackness continues to be linked to lower class and negative perceptions in some contexts. However, privileged spaces in South African society have changed from solely held by White people to largely taken-up by Black people. Therefore, privilege continues to be influenced by race and class dynamics (Durrheim et al., 2011). These social categorisations influence the metaperceptions held by participants. Further, it appeared that transracially adopted young adults desired status to not feel lower class due to having previously been orphaned. Paula added:

> For our kids it's very important not to be seen as lower class because they were orphans or Black or whatever. – Paula.

Sandra also mentioned that her daughter became friends with individuals at her school who were of the same class and race as her, although race did not appear to be a large part of the decision to be friends. It may be that class, mutual interests and similar attitudes determined friendship choice. The amount of influence race and class has in these decisions

may differ across contexts. Durrheim et al. (2011) put forward that race trouble should be considered within context in order to fully understand the factors underpinning particular forms of interactions and how race influences the way that they unfold (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Therefore, even within the same individual, they may experience views of others differently across situations; and may choose to associate with different people accordingly. Thus, at times race may not influence who they interact with, while at other times it may. According to the metaperceptions experienced by participants in the reactions to TRA, it appears that individuals from all race groups showed some opposition to TRA at times. This indicates that homophily and low levels of racial integration are still practiced in South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011). As social norms continue to change, homophily, different expressions of racism and opposition to forms of interracial relationships may diminish or increase in certain contexts.

The results indicated different ways in which homophily occurs for transracially adopted young adults. These individuals socialised with White individuals as they felt they shared common cultural experiences with them. As they became older, others socialised with individuals of different races and made a point of not selecting friends or judging others based on race. They became somewhat 'colourblind' while simultaneously often being judged by others based on their race or what they should or should not do in relation to these characteristics. Jonathan discussed this by sharing that:

> I've been expected to speak a home language and I don't... With my friends at school you would see that, predominantly they are all White, because I relate to them. In other situations because I am Black I can relate to Black guys. It's because I am, I'd say a coconut. It's easier to relate to people that I've been culturally exposed to their cultures. I would say nowadays that division has gone down because I've met a lot of Black guys who, some are my best friends, at home they can't even speak their home language because English has taken over so much. Whereas other families, it depends where you are, I guess. – Jonathan.

Homophily was evidenced by those involved in TRA at times, although they had mixed groups of friends rather than exclusively following this trend. Timothy and Wesley expressed having racially mixed friendship groups. Timothy explored his school experience as:

> If you were standing in a very corner of the school and it was break time, you could actually see there's all the Indians, there's all the Coloureds, there's all the White people, but our group was one massive group that just accept any colour, any race, let's say. But I think that that was one out of the whole school that just had a mixed group of people, but everybody else was always so separate and stuff. – Timothy.

He also mentioned that this experience was further emphasised for him personally being an Albino individual and *blending* in anywhere. Jonathan further discussed that:

> I went to a White school. It's hard to kind of say that there's a barrier between groups and people that I hang around. There's a term called 'token Black'. Where it's a group of White people and then a Black guy that's there. I see myself as myself, I guess. I think now that I am at Wits and I am out of that closed environment that was my school, where it was predominantly White, I see that I can nowadays interact with anyone. I think people are a lot more understanding than they were when I was in primary school. – Jonathan.

The extracts and discussion present ways in which those involved in TRA have experienced elements of homophily in their lives. At times this homophily stems from social norms as displayed in the behaviour of others, while at other times these norms seem to be played out in the behaviour and views of the participants. This highlights the widespread and deeply entrenched nature of these norms within South African society, as every individual, regardless of their context, has been affected by racially based social norms and behaviours. Alternatively, while participants discussed the impact of homophily in their lives, such as their own or their children's choice of friends and its links to racial similarities or differences, it was also presented that relationships were not purely built on race; but rather on context and other commonalities between people. Other perceptions suggested that race did not influence social interactions. However, this may only be true for particular contexts and situations. These perceptions may be related to both class and racial dynamics as part of race trouble.

Thus, homophily and metaperceptions seem to be related to context, personal experiences and the individuals personal views on who to interact with. Furthermore, homophily and metaperceptions include references to identity within South Africa such as being *a coconut* or the *token Black* amongst peers which make reference to the racial categorisation of individuals.

Being between Black and White worlds, in a sense, seemed to influence transracially adopted young adults' interactions. This is found within their narratives of becoming available for adoption. Participants felt that some elements of Blackness were *a little bit beneath them*, as Theresa mentioned, suggesting that race and class influence young adults' identities and social interactions. Participants formed identities which were influenced by both Blackness and Whiteness, thus integrating their race and adoptive family culture. Participants viewed themselves as being *coconuts* in some respects, or as unique individuals. It is therefore clear that different forms of social categorisation are evident in the metaperceptions and experiences of TRA. Moreover, this appears to be in the process of

change, thus accounting for the different experiences across and within participants according to specific situations and contexts.

2.5. Subtle (and Direct) Racism and Social 'Norms' – Race Trouble in TRA

Subtle racism, as explained by Ratele (2002), can occur in many forms, and presents as a more socially acceptable manner in which to express racist ideals. Racism may be expressed in joking comments rather than direct confrontations; but express racist ideology nevertheless. Subtle racism was experienced by the participants as the following excerpts demonstrate. In addition, direct racism was also experienced at times.

The excerpts below identify the mothers' experiences of subtle racism. This took the form of negative attitudes towards TRA; negative non-verbal cues; queries regarding the living arrangements and care of a Black child by a White mother; and the child not being accepted as a full member of the family by some members of society. Significant experiences of race trouble in TRA of mothers are presented below:

> I took them into a salon and that was the most negative experience I've ever had. …I felt she purposefully spoke over me in words and jargon that I didn't understand; to try and tell me that, how can I be raising this child because I can't even do their hair. I just left because, I mean, that's ignorance about it // …She didn't approve about the situation and she made it known by showing me that I was ignorant on this topic. – Erika.

> We were going to this nature reserve... we stopped at this shebeen... the manager kicked us out. We had Tim and he said there's no under-18's allowed there... Then he said I'd like for you to stay, because I'd like for you to have a conversation about this. // ...He just said; why did you pick him. Duncan said we didn't pick him... This man was clearly not impressed, because his attitude was that why did you do this? Why did you take one of ours? Not like they adopting or helping anyone. It is invasive. I think South Africa is actually, we've always travelled with Tim (overseas) and we didn't have the same reaction. Maybe people either are more accepting or they don't feel they can just go into your space, which is a very cultural, South African thing in general. Also we do classify each other by race still, which is a very unusual to the rest of the world; this is a generalisation, as much as South Africa. So I do agree that there is a point about being in South Africa that it might be a bit even more pronounced. – Charlotte.

> People are really rude sometimes. You cannot believe how they will really stare either in a restaurant or // Some people it's not necessarily that they are being mean, but some are. – Cindy.

Mothers also reported less intrusive experiences of race trouble as presented below:

> As she has grown up the staring and the comments have stopped. Mostly... there was the initial staring, and I agree that the staring is worse than someone rather coming and asking me. Generally when people did ask the response was very positive. Natalie herself would comment on it but did not appear to be hurt. – Sandra.

This indicates the period of change that TRA families continue to experience in terms of displays of racism, informal segregation, homophily, opposition to interracial relationships, acceptance of interracial relationships and overall 'race trouble'. Furthermore,

negative perspectives are contrasted with positive experiences which gain more emphasis. Therefore, negative metaperceptions are rightly externalised as the others' own difficulties and inability to accept racial integration and freedom of choice. Paula put forward that:

> I think once you've got past that and once you've loved across the boundaries that people put there, everybody is the same, you don't see it. I think we groom the idea that it's their problem. – Paula.

Overall, less direct racist experiences were evident, with racism more frequently expressed in staring and questions rather than directly racist comments, as well as through withheld discussions rather than direct confrontations. For example, rather than saying 'I object to you having a Black child in your house', questions are raised regarding living arrangements, as Paula discussed:

> Does she use your bath? How do you comb her hair? How do you manage?' All insinuating that somehow they are still different. – Paula.

The move to more indirect racial objections to TRA is also suggestive of an increase in subtle racism and less direct racism, as evident in Jenna's experience:

> ...Most adults know that it's socially correct to accept it and so they will accept it to your face; but their children will say things that tell you that when they go home it's not acceptable. – Jenna.

This extract displays the hidden nature of racist comments that are more commonly experienced by mothers rather than overtly racist behaviour. However, regardless of how presented, these views and behaviours remain racist. In addition, these experiences of racism are just as damaging as direct racism and may be more difficult to confront.

Subtle racism was experienced in the metaperceptions of young adults in the following ways. Young adults felt judged by their peers due to their little or no knowledge of African languages. However, this was not always true depending on their peers' language ability. Jonathan reported:

> I have had countless situations where people just expect me to speak a home language, but I can't really. – Jonathan.

Furthermore, young adults faced opposition to TRA based on racial differences between them and their parents. Timothy explained:

> I've had lots of people who actually want to support you a lot, and then you get people who just disagree because your parents are White. – Timothy.

Opposition was validated through the 'loss' of language and culture, as discussed earlier. The young adults also experienced subtle and direct racism when they became engaged in romantic relationships, such as Pumi's experience, as well as when walking with one of their parents, where at times, they were confused for being romantic partners. The responses indicated continued opposition to interracial romantic relationships; and the influence of race and class related social categorisations in the reactions to TRA.

> My husband is White, and when we walk around, people put down their forks and knives and stop eating, and whisper, or shout things at him... I was so surprised of how little people have changed with regards to any interracial things. – Pumi.

> Other people judge. It depends on the person. People always look. Always! I think I've become numb to it. I don't see it anymore. I always do my own thing... Especially when I'm with my dad, because my dad is also White, kind of thing. Like what's this White older man doing with this Black young girl? – Natalie.

Differing reactions to TRA were reported by the young adults, which were indicative of direct and subtle racism. These reactions were experienced from both friends and family. As Jonathan and Timothy discussed, examples included the disapproval of some family members leading to divisions in the family; and older siblings losing friends once their parents had adopted their siblings. In addition, the young adults reported that they knew individuals whose romantic relationships had ended once their TRA was discovered. A resistance to interracial relationships and TRA seems to represent fears of interracial reproduction found in racist ideology and 'Colour and Community Consciousness' philosophy. TRA combined with further interracial romantic relationships appeared to produce disapproving responses from those within these schools of thought, increasing their unprecedented resistance. These norms around racism and subtle racism appeared to have influenced the young adults' views of themselves and others; and may have influenced how they made meaning of metaperceptions they experienced. Collectively, this formed the nature of the race trouble surrounding understandings of TRA.

Theme 3: Identity Formation and Social Norms: Who Am I and Who Am I Meant To Be?

In consideration of the metaperceptions discussed thus far, it can be imagined that negotiating issues of identity may be challenging at times for both the mothers and young adults in TRA, particularly for the young adults. The experience of having one's language, culture and status in the family questioned by others, coupled with subtle and direct racism, may make the developmental phase of identity formation and moving into adulthood a more

turbulent phase of life. The way in which this phase is negotiated may be related to the bond between mother and child, levels of communication between them, resilience and individual experiences. The following discussion presents the mothers' experiences of moving alongside their child through this process by developing their identity as a TRA mother, as well as the young adults' experiences of forming their identity as a child of TRA and the associated metaperceptions they articulated.

3.1. The Role of the Family in Identity Formation - Realising you are Adopted and Facilitating Discussion around Identity

The following excerpts present the mothers' experiences of facilitating the process of identity formation for their children; and the experiences of the young adults around learning about their TRA and forming their identities. This process seemed to be unique to each individual involved in TRA, and was at times difficult to resolve, as many questions about the self and their place in the family emerge. The racial context of South Africa appeared to have impacted on how identity is discussed within the family. The family sought to ensure that societal views on racial integration did not interfere with family relationships. Should racist ideology infiltrate the family system, it may have resulted in feelings of antagonism between family members. This would not only have resulted in feelings of difference between family members; but also in subjugation, power imbalances, and differences in feelings of superiority and inferiority.

The family system therefore prevented this by attempting to acknowledge these views and the difference in race between family members, while simultaneously criticising societal views on racial difference; and constructing a relationship within the family which acknowledged race; but did not separate family members based on this. The family identity within TRA appeared to acknowledge racial difference without including any acknowledgement of the norms which separate individuals of different races. This seemed to create a loving and unified family system, holding the same bonds as other forms of families.

Mothers played a significant role in supporting their children through the process of understanding questions they had about themselves, their family and where they belong. At times this process was very fraught for mothers, as seeing their children hurting while working through these issues was painful for them. As Charlotte added:

> We all experience that not being able to mend the wound. It is something that we've been thinking about a lot in the last year. Tim has asked me – why didn't he grow in my tummy. He said to me but I wanted to grow in your tummy. I have to explain to him that I am still his mummy and I wish so too, but it doesn't

> make a difference, because we still come from each other. So he accepted that I // ya it's // I know it's coming. His realisation // but I hope it will be okay it's not something that, it's hectic. – Charlotte.

The mothers therefore had to manage their feelings and their children's feelings about not being biologically connected; but feeling strongly emotionally connected. This highlights considerations of biological similarity versus relational attachment. The participants accentuated the notion that connections are not formed purely organically but through interactions. Furthermore, identity is developed though experiences and the meaning made of these experiences. Thus, the young adults' relationships and experiences were viewed as forming their identity; and not their biological make-up exclusively. This seemed to assist mothers in containing their feelings and their child's feelings regarding forming an identity which was different (but not separate) to them as a mother and to the family.

At times, the mothers felt helpless due to not being able to take away the difficult process of their child having to realise that they were not biological children and were transracially adopted. They were aware that their transracially adopted children may face different challenges to biological children, such as realising they are adopted, having to make meaning of that for themselves, and facing questions from others as they developed. As Lindy discussed:

> It's not that you are upset for yourself. You are upset because you don't want your child to be hurt… You almost feel helpless // you don't know how you can keep them in a perfect bubble and protect them. – Lindy.

Furthermore, the mothers experienced metaperceptions framing them as *saints*, and as having saved their child. The mothers were concerned about the effects of these metaperceptions on their children and the way in which they made sense of their TRA. The extract below from Erika exemplifies this.

> I think people are positive about the situation. They ask and I say they're adopted and they say great you know // But then I think the part where people go overboard. One guy said to me; you are gonna have a special place in heaven, you are a saint. I also feel for my children then for one day when they understand – like what would they understand about it… That they owe me or that I have taken on this huge thing by being their parent, which isn't really what I want them to understand. Everyday I'm just their mom. I'm not Mother Theresa… People are positive about it, as though, I guess as though they don't deserve a parent. They should feel extra blessed that they... And that's not the way that I want it to be. ...When I hear other people speak about it // then I always wonder what is he gathering from this // about himself. – Erika.

This excerpt demonstrates that the mothers were aware of and concerned about the effects of metaperceptions of TRA on their children and the way they understood themselves. This may impact on their identity, their self-concept, and the way they formed relationships with their family members. The mothers appeared to try to prevent any hierarchy from

forming, not wanting their children to think they *owed* their family anything or should be *grateful*, as metaperceptions at times suggested.

The young adults described their experiences of acknowledging and working through understanding their TRA in different ways. Once their TRA was discovered, the nature of understanding it was related to the background to their TRA, such as if they were abandoned, adopted as a baby, or adopted at an older age. Some participants discussed noticing differences in the anatomy of their mothers as compared to themselves as they became older when adopted as a baby. Jonathan discussed the beginning of this process for himself as follows:

> I only started realising that I was adopted like at age... five. I used to say to my mom; why is your hair like this and my hair is like that? Why do you talk that way and I talk differently? Why is my colour like this and you like that?... – Jonathan.

His family assisted him in understanding the background to him becoming part of their family, and supported him as he accepted his TRA as part of who he is. Family relationships are therefore important in assisting young adults in understanding their identity and their TRA. Furthermore, the mothers played an important role in facilitating discussion around the questions that their children had about their TRA; and understanding differences they identified between themselves and family members in the process of identity formation.

Jonathan also went through a process of questioning why his TRA occurred and blaming his birth parents for abandoning him, while simultaneously working through accepting his adoptive parents as family. While working through accepting his adoptive parents he also experienced blame towards them for some of the difficulties he experienced during this process. He discussed that:

> It also says that she had a brother that blames a lot of the stuff on the adoptive parents [vignette]. I think I used to do that. It's because you don't understand... // I guess with maturity you get over it, and life is life and you make the best with what you have I guess. - Jonathan.

Accepting his adoptive family was more difficult for Jonathan's brother who was abandoned on the same day, highlighting how different this is for each individual. Jonathan added that:

> He found it hard to find himself... whereas I found myself in grade four. – Jonathan.

Therefore, making meaning of the background to their adoption, accepting this background, identifying with their adoptive family, and forming their own identity around

this information was specific for each young adult; and was more turbulent for some than for others.

Monde shared a similar mode of questioning as he processed his TRA, although his TRA had a different background. He struggled to resolve his understanding of who he considered his parents to be. In addition, he had to deal with people's perceptions of him as a *coconut* or as being abandoned. Moving towards identifying who he was for himself, was an exploration that he worked through. The extract below expands on Monde's experience:

> There was that whole battle with what am I?... Here is this White family, here I am Black – where do I fit in this? My mom abandoned me - What is the situation? Can I love you as a mom and a dad? Or should I just hold onto this thing? So for me it was quite messed up. And it played quite a major role in my younger years, and I became rebellious... My way was sort of bashing them when they sort of tried to challenge me... And then it got to a point whereby I was like... if you really wanna get to know me stop calling me names and ask me about my situation instead of assuming... I think people finally accepted me for who I was. But still I was still having my own battles... for me it was really difficult. It took me a while to get to say it's cool, you are my mom. – Monde.

Monde's experience demonstrated that identity formation was a complex investigation filled with several questions. At times these questions, such as 'where do I come from?' did not have answers within the context of TRA. Furthermore, these questions were coupled by similar questions from others, which then informed their metaperceptions and influenced their identity. Therefore, this developmental phase may be more complex for transracially adopted young adults, which may be expected. However, it appears that this enquiry is distinct for each TRA individual, being influenced by factors such as context, environmental factors, personality and personal beliefs.

Pumi shared her view that part of understanding your TRA is related to how you choose to perceive it, and that getting to the point of acceptance depends on your outlook. Pumi discussed:

> You can see it as an opportunity, or you can see it as someone hates me, doesn't want me, or somewhere in-between. It's hard if you see it as someone doesn't want me. You're never happy and you're never content where you are. ...You see rejection where it isn't and the rejection becomes bigger in your life. – Pumi.

Pumi presented a strong narrative of making the best of a difficult situation. It is difficult to consider why someone may abandon a child, or why a person became unable to care for their child at any stage, and especially, to be that child who was left alone. To overcome this reality requires resilience and courage. The positive outlook Pumi discussed, of making the best of a situation which has some difficult elements, may assist with this process. An individual may become driven to take on a positive outlook to the situation,

balanced by not feeling that their family is doing them a favour, and forming bonds with family and friends who support them in overcoming some of the difficulties they may face in understanding their living circumstances and identity.

3.2. Considering the Birth Family

The family forms a large part of identity formation for any individual as they consider who they are in relation to others in the world (Freud, 2001). In this process, mothers and young adults faced considering information about the birth family and the transracially adoptive family.

Mothers discussed feeling that they needed to inform their child about the cultures and norms of their birth family (where possible) and of their transracially adoptive family in which they lived. It was important to emphasise their bond with their child and not wanting their child to feel different from their transracially adoptive family in any way, while simultaneously engaging with questions they may have regarding their birth family. Furthermore, mothers had questions around how to approach the matter of their transracially adopted children possibly wanting to meet their birth families where information on their birth families was available. The extract below from Paula highlights the importance of the relationship between mother and child in TRA and how this supported the process of identity development.

> We leave the door open. Your identity, I mean all that stuff you will deal with as a teenager like any teenager does when it comes the time. As a child, all you want to know is you are loved, you belong, and these are the things we do. To add all that other stuff is complicated and confusing. We do a lot more acceptance and tolerance education instead of trying to shape their own identity. We try say it actually doesn't matter. It's terrible that our country has a preoccupation with putting people in boxes. –Paula.

This extract above emphasises the role of the young adults' relationship with their mother (and family) as they are supported through the process of identity formation. Paula expressed that when the time comes to face questions around identity, such as during adolescence, this would be supported. However, it was important to have a relationship with their child in order for them to be able to discuss things that trouble them. Therefore, feeling part of the family and *loved* was vital. Lindy shared the view that:

> The biggest thing would be what we are trying to learn and that our kids are open and that whatever challenge comes up, it could be adoption related or not, we hope that our kids continue to have an open relationship with us so that they would share anything they need to in the future. - Lindy.

In conjunction with forming a trusting and strong relationship with their child, the mothers expressed leaving the decision to learn about or meet their birth family in the child's hands, allowing support for both options. Sandra discussed that:

> I've made it clear to her that if she wanted to learn more about the Batswana or learn to speak Setswana that's her choice. She has never ever expressed interest to do that. So I think you follow their lead // in the same way you follow other children's lead. You know their interests. ...When we were in our adoptive group... with the issue of meeting biological parents // if they are around, has been shown to be beneficial. Her brother has often said to her so when are you going to meet your biological mother. She said I am not, I am not interested. –Sandra.

The mothers felt they would *follow their children's lead*, as Sandra discussed above, allowing them to indicate if they would want to meet their birth family or learn more about their birth culture. The mothers also expressed that a child wanting to meet or learn about birth parents is part of the normal process of understanding your TRA; and considered what their role would be in this as their children became older and could do this independently. The extracts below expand on this.

> Worrying about when it will come... In a way it would worry me if it didn't come ...it's something I see as abnormal. I suspect that it is something that is part of rounding off how she is kind of made, that she is okay with who she is, well that's my view, maybe it is the other way around. ...I wonder how it will be if she does go... I've always known there's been a support system to do that, and that if Natalie had tried to do that when she was younger she would have been helped through that. Now, I would still encourage her to go and see them... I wonder about what my role would be in that. – Sandra.

The mothers acted as sources of support and facilitators of their children's explorations around identity. Within this process they allowed their children to take the lead but also felt some pressure to ensure that their child processed the questions they may have had. Their goal was for their children to not feel different from the rest of their family. However, while the children may have experienced feelings of difference, the relationship between them and their caregivers was vital in how they made sense of this difference and developed further bonds with their parents.

The responses of the young adults similarly demonstrated the role of the bonds they had formed with their mothers, through the way in which they sought to investigate or meet their birth families. For example, Natalie discussed that:

> It's not like you wanna go and find them and leave your other family behind, just like a curiosity. – Natalie.

This extract shows that it was a question of wanting to know more about where they came from as part of identity formation, not necessarily that they were unhappy with their

adoptive family. The young adults felt they could not acknowledge their birth parents as their parents. They felt that their adoptive parents were their parents due to having raised them over giving them life. The extracts below from Jonathan, Natalie, Monde and Timothy demonstrate this. Furthermore, the young adults appreciated what their parents had done for them in spite of having some negative experiences. The extracts below exhibit some of the feelings transracially adopted young adults had in this regard. They did not acknowledge the birth family as caregivers; but recognised their role in giving them life.

> If I got to meet them again, I probably wouldn't acknowledge them as my parents. Maybe just people that brought me to this earth. I could never see them as my parents on any level. I feel like I could never ever ever look at my mother and say 'you are my mother'! Because of the hurt and the things that I felt as a child. As I say, when I was adopted it was '93. It was very hard for my mom, hearing stories from her // what other White people were doing to her and saying to her. I was just like what for, it's just a child. It's funny how people's perceptions of different ethnic groups are. So // and it's their stuff in a lot of ways. – Jonathan.

> When people ask me why don't I search for my biological family, I am like I have no // not that I don't care or anything, but I am so comfortable and I am // to me it's like six weeks of... I am not missing out on anything. I don't know these people. Obviously curiosity kicks in at a point, but I don't know these people. I respect them for – okay, I am alive right now –but I have never really like – I need to go and look for them, because me and my mother have a very strong relationship. I feel like it's me because I don't wanna go and look for them – It's gonna open a whole other can of worms I don't feel like investing myself in. – Natalie.

> For me it's like I'm free, I am happy with what I am, I've accepted my situation, I've accepted who my parents are. I still love my mom, I speak to her, but me and her we're not // I don't know, maybe I was a bad child. I love her, but I don't love her because it's... ya she gave birth to me, but... it doesn't feel like she's my real mom or something... And that side of the family... They don't understand me as well. – Monde.

The extract below from Timothy displays a different perspective. While he accepted his adoptive parents as his caregivers, he would still acknowledge parts of his biological family as having had some role in his life. This may be the experience of some transracially adopted young adults.

> I would see my parents. It's also because I have some kind of memory of my birth parents. ...If they had to come back to me I would still acknowledge mainly my mom. ...I was told that I have a sister out there, but I've also never really searched for her. ...I've gone back to see what // where everything began... – Timothy.

The extracts above again highlight the individual nature of identity formation within TRA. Furthermore, the experience of connecting to their transracially adoptive family was different for each individual in relation to the background to their TRA. This appeared to have an influence on whether or not they would investigate their birth family. For example, Timothy had some memory of his birth family and was more receptive to them. Natalie did not know her family at all since 6 weeks of age and therefore did not feel any connection to them. Therefore, the relationships between adoptive mother and child were stronger than their

biological relationships. However, there were some questions which needed to be dealt with in a way that was relevant to the individual to assist them in further understanding themselves. This process may been very difficult at times, which seemed to be why some individuals did not engage in it fully. For example, Natalie did not want to invest herself in exploring her birth family as she felt content with her adoptive family; and did not want to *open a whole other can of worms*. Monde, who on some level blamed himself for his mother leaving him, had to work through this as he negotiated his identity and his questions about his TRA.

3.3. Identity Formation – Exploring Race and Culture

In addition to the elements of identity discussed thus far, racial and cultural identity played a role in identity development within TRA. The mothers felt there were large amounts of 'White culture' inherent in their Black children due to their position of being adopted into a White family. However, they were treated as having Black culture due to their race in larger society. At times, this created conflict in the social interactions of the mothers and young adults.

The mothers had different experiences of their children becoming aware of the racial difference between them and how they handled it. The extract below demonstrates an exchange between Theresa and her son that was pivotal in his racial identity formation.

> He turned and ran to me and said 'oh my God mommy, all these people think I'm Black'. That was his wake up call. I said to him 'that's very interesting my son then what colour are you'; and he said to me 'but you know me, I'm your son, I'm not Black!'. They didn't know they were Black and then they would say 'but we're not Black we're brownish'. - Theresa.

Theresa discussed her son's experience of realising that they had different races as he exclaimed, *all these people think I'm Black.* It seems that perhaps it is not necessarily that he did not know that he was Black or that they were racially different; but that he did not want to consider that he might be different to his mother, and what that meant to others in society. Hence, he described himself as *brownish*, in-between Black and White; and thereby less racially different to his mother. Galvin (2003) describes this as double consciousness: identifying with elements of two racial groups simultaneously.

The mothers further discussed the ways in which their children expressed their questions about race and about their relationship with their mother:

> It's her own identity and her acceptance of her own colour. There's things like that little game on my cell phone where you make people. She doesn't like to be Black. When she makes herself she wants to be White with blonde hair. ...I think it's just her dealing with that kind of challenge at the moment. – Viola.

> I think as a mother how do you navigate with that? What we try and say is you know what, it actually doesn't matter. Your skin is seven layer of very very thin skin like you know it really doesn't make a difference. And it's terrible that our country has such a preoccupation with putting people in boxes. And I tell my kids, you are the ones that have to show people, that you can't box people, that people aren't boxable. ...And I think for them it will be their journey it will be their challenge to try and overcome. – Paula.

Viola articulated how her daughter explored her race through a cellular phone game in which you created people. She discussed this as a process through which her daughter developed her identity through her *acceptance of her own colour*, rather than wanting to be *White with blonde hair*; and trying to identify with her mother. It seemed that the mothers supported this process as the children worked through their questions.

Paula expanded on this by discussing that as mothers they attempted to explore with their children that race was only *very thin skin, it really doesn't make a difference*. This enforced that nothing could separate them and that others had a *preoccupation with putting people in boxes.* The mothers held the view *...that people aren't boxable,* implying that others had a problematic worldview rather than TRA and them as people being problematic. This narrative may serve to reinforce the bond between adoptive mother and child and assist the child in forming an identity that is strong enough to withstand the criticism of others and metaperceptions they experience. It may assist the child in developing their racial identity while maintaining their relationships with their transracially adoptive family.

Mothers experienced that their children preferred to identify with a White racial identity and culture as it provided them with more status in their social context; and it was part of what was familiar to them due to being raised in a White family. Paula expressed that *they are seen as coconuts* and Theresa expressed that they are seen as *traitors* due to their identification with Whiteness. This links to arguments from the 'colour and community consciousness' perspective (Perry, 1994), which do not support TRA due to a perceived loss of culture. However, although transracially adopted young adults may experience some loss of Black racial identity, they develop within the identity of their family, as discussed. In addition, these notions may be influenced by class and race dynamics in South Africa (Durrheim et al., 2011) and may be coupled with particular experiences of double consciousness (Galvin, 2003) during identity formation. The extracts below present the discussion from Theresa and Paula.

> They fight. They make their way to be with the White people because they are White. The people they are inside the Black is White and it will speak stronger than the little bit of skin on the outside. They don't have anything in common and that's what makes you come together. They don't have anything in common with those other Black children because their culture is Black and they speak Black language together and stuff and my children don't associate with them because it's different, and also, sadly, they somehow feel like that's a little bit beneath them. They associate it with the squatters that come to the garden, with poor people. It's really sad. – Theresa.

> Our kids need to know where they belong. There has to be a lower and a higher with regards to themselves and they want to know how close to the best part are they. Often in a child's mind well then I must denigrate the thing below me because it makes me higher. ...I think it's a lesson that they're gonna learn. – Paula.

Theresa further discussed that it is a continuous battle within her transracially adopted children as they *fight* to socialise with White people as *the people they are inside the Black is White*. From her experience her children seemed to socialise more naturally with White people as they shared more similarities than they would with Black people due to their upbringing. Young adults such as Jonathan shared this view, as will be explored. Furthermore, Theresa experienced that her children felt that Black culture was *different* and *beneath them*. Paula felt that this also related to them not wanting to feel they were of a lower class due to their TRA, therefore *denigrating* other Black people to make themselves feel better.

These experiences highlight some of the complexity regarding racial and cultural identity. From the extracts above, mothers may at times minimise the role of race and culture in the identity of their children, intentionally or unintentionally. Considering their children as *coconuts*, and more White internally, may be problematic as young adults form their identity. This is because they are Black children raised in a White home which does not make them *White children* as Theresa discussed; but a different type of Black person with a unique racial and cultural heritage. Mothers may not engage with the different elements which make them a different Black person; but rather seem to emphasise their sameness with White people and perhaps by extension with themselves. Therefore, it may be difficult to tolerate their child's feelings of difference towards them as a mother. However, it is important to highlight that a different identity to family members does not necessarily separate transracially adopted young adults from their transracially adoptive mothers and family. Therefore, it is important to discuss that there are different kinds of Black and White people in the world; and to develop an acceptance of their uniqueness in facilitating their identity formation.

An absence of discussion about their Blackness and integrating this with their TRA and place in the transracially adoptive family may be problematic for identity formation, as it denies their race, which is an important aspect of identity. In denying their race, this logic

may encourage young adults to view themselves as White, thereby ignoring racial dynamics in people's identities, and re-enforcing negative racial stereotypes, particularly around Black identity as undesirable in comparison to White identity.

Transracially adopted young adults and their families were influenced by society's views of Blackness, Whiteness and interracial relationships. These views appeared to play a role in their identity formation. As they were faced with the differing perceptions on what their racial identity should be, they needed to decide for themselves which elements of their Blackness, age, gender, social position and family they combined in creating their identity.

Fanon (1986) considers the diminishing of Blackness as part of the young adults' identity as highly problematic, as it hampers the process of including their Blackness in their identity. In addition, this may be viewed as racist and as a betrayal of Black consciousness, as it disempowers Black identity and substitutes this for White identity. This may symbolically represent oppression of White people over Black people as White ideals and Whiteness are classed higher than elements of Blackness. This may also display theories of Whiteness as discussed by Steyn (2001).

Furthermore, racial stereotypes are played out in the manner in which racial identity formation occurs (Durrheim et al., 2011; Fanon, 1986). For example, that White people are rich and have more status; and that Black people are poor and uneducated (Durrheim et al., 2011). Therefore, these views may influence the identity and metaperceptions of Black young adults who are transracially adopted. In addition, their White mothers may also experience this thinking in their metaperceptions, identity formation as transracially adoptive mothers and their facilitation of their children's identity formation.

The following excerpts display the challenges for the mothers related to investigating the culture of their children's biological families and its links to their racial identity development. The mothers generally felt that culture was not innate but learnt through the family system. Jenna expressed that:

> Culture is not something that you can teach. ...It's always going to be a foreign culture that they can learn about but you can't acculturate someone into a different culture to yours. You can only teach them the culture that you have. But the people in the social work and adoption world feel like that is very important. – Jenna.

Jenna further expressed that individuals in organisations working with adoptions felt that TRA mothers needed to supply cultural information for their child; but that this was not always possible and was somewhat artificial. Sandra supported this by expressing that *children are not born with a culture* much like *language;* and that mothers imparted their

perspective, values, etc. to their child, therefore *not taking anything away* that *was not there*. Sandra posited that:

> I don't believe the children are born with a culture. They're certainly not born with a language. So for me I am not taking anything away. Because it was not there in the first place. I am giving her my perspective, my values, my whatever, in the same way that you give any other child that you raise as well. – Sandra.

The mothers acknowledged the role of culture and supported their children in exploring any avenue they desired. However, they expressed some pressure to discuss culture with their children in a way that was viewed as acceptable to others. As Lindy discussed, *I decided I will do everything I can to inform them but I can't turn into a Zulu mom*. She further emphasised that she was focused on providing for all the needs of her child, and that cultural exploration as part of identity was not always something that was prioritised over other basic needs. However, she acknowledged that *I do want to be aware of it for their sake*. Examples such as this indicated that the mothers were aware of the importance of culture and identity formation; but that they attempted to balance this with developing a good relationship with their children and providing for all of their needs. It may be possible that mothers minimise the role of culture in their children's lives through this process, as they are aware that they are at times unable to *cover all the bases* or in other words, model for their child their biological culture and their socialised culture from their transracially adoptive family. Lindy stated that:

> I don't think that we can be // we can cover all bases or that we have the capacity to. Because I do also think that about myself // especially when people talk about culture and the importance of culture. To me // yes I have decided I will do everything I can to inform them (.) but I can't turn into a Zulu mom. ...When people start talking about it I actually just switch off. I don't like discussing it because I don't see it as that important. And I don't mean to belittle it in any way. It's just lower on the priorities. I do feel; shuu! I don't wanna be that mom that ignores race and culture. But to me it's not something we think about every day. I do want to be aware of it for their sake. – Lindy.

Furthermore, mothers, such as Erika, expressed some concern about how to discuss culture and race with their children when issues arose. The advice she received was:

> You stick close to your children, and when the issue comes up... that's when you... confront. – Erika.

Following the child's needs seemed to be a reasonable approach, as each mother and child dyad's experience was idiosyncratic. It further suggested a reason behind TRA mothers being particularly protective about what others say to their children, such as statements about having to be *grateful*, as it affects their relationship and has an impact on how these questions are dealt with. As Theresa mentioned, it can be *hurtful and separating for the child* as it emphasises the difference between them and other family members. However, culture and

race should also be acknowledged so that it is an open discussion, which the mothers seemed to do.

The mothers appeared to be sensitive to their children's background, whether it was known or unknown, and considered how this would be discussed when necessary. The metaperceptions experienced by the mothers seemed to influence how they felt about the impact of the TRA on their children. When their children became rebellious in their adolescent years, the mothers would blame themselves and the TRA as the cause of these difficulties, rather than considering difficult behaviour to be part of development or locating the problem within the social domain and identity formation. The mothers attempted to be cognisant of the impact of the TRA on their child's identity formation and tried to support them through this phase of life. Paula expressed this view in the extract below.

> A lot of adoptions where they start to have problems when the children are adolescents that's when they take it onto themselves, that 'oh it's my fault I adopted them' they don't think that that child is at that age going to do that at that age with something else. They blame it on the adoption. ...I think when you've got a child who's transracial you have extra ammunition and extra baggage ...and you try and bring them up as best as you can... But I think that's the hard part of anybody raising a child. – Paula.

The young adults' experiences of identity formation appeared to be specific to their story and supported in inimitable ways by their family members, as the mothers alluded to. Identity formation appeared to be less turbulent for some than others. As discussed throughout theme 2 and 3, socially constructed norms around race, culture and class impacted on the ways in which people interacted with the transracially adopted young adults, as well as the metaperceptions they formed, and the ways in which the process of the young adults understanding themselves unfolded. At times, they felt in-between Black and White; and not quite sure where they would fit in. They interacted with people from many different backgrounds and opinions on TRA, particularly in terms of identity with regards to race, language and culture. Jonathan described this as follows:

> My characteristics talk to whoever I am around. ...I can fit in there, fit in there. But I still know where I am grounded. It's more like a shift of a foot instead of a movement of your whole body across the floor.
> – Jonathan.

Therefore, as young adults interacted with different kinds of people they were able to adapt to fit in. Within this, they needed to form an identity as a foundation to work from as they interacted with many different people in order to be sure of themselves and not become 'lost'. As Jonathan described it, *it is more like a shift of a foot instead of a movement of your whole body across the floor.*

Pumi was unsure of her identity until she left high school and was able to explore her identity away from the negative influences she had experienced. She was then able to develop the confidence in herself necessary to develop a unique identity; and moved away from feeling that she needed to please her family in order to gain their care. She was able to form her identity through self-exploration and increased confidence in her relationship with her transracially adoptive family in her own time. Pumi shared that:

> I always struggled with who I was ...the moment I left my parents' house to take a gap year from studying it felt like I could just be alone and figure out in my mind who I want to be. ...They will be my family but they will never really be my family ...I felt like I was in-between... I don't actually know where I belong, because a relationship with both is never that tight with me. – Pumi.

Monde had a similar experience of working through understanding his ties to his birth family and his transracially adoptive family, particularly concerning where he fitted with each of them, which was a difficult exploration for him. This was resolved through the support of his adoptive family allowing him to explore his identity and accept who he was:

> My parents were very supportive of me, more so because of my previous behaviour. I feel like the stuff that I did – you know, fighting, this whole thing – who I am and what am I supposed to do with myself, and who they are and who my real family is. Sort of what culture should I follow? Should I go up to the mountain and become a man or not become a man. Or I must just kind of like just accept stuff. I think I did get like a lot of support around my behaviour, and still I sort of came to a point where I said okay; I am alright with who I am, I don't need anybody's opinion. – Monde.

For other participants, their bond to their transracially adoptive family was not questioned; and they did not feel a need to explore links to their birth family, be it in relationships, culture or language. Identity formation occurred with the support of a secure relationship with their mother and other adoptive family members. Questions around identity were processed without questioning their place in the family, or what their identity should be in relation to that. Natalie expressed that:

> I think I am weird because I never really had a problem with who I am ... because I've always had this open relationship with my parents, I always knew I was adopted. ...I identify myself as an individual. ...If you don't wanna accept who I am, then that is your situation, that is your complex. I am not gonna carry other people's problems or insecurities of my life on my shoulders, just because you do not understand who I am. – Natalie.

This emphasises that the process of identity formation in TRA is unique, linked to context and supported through the family system. Natalie further discussed that she would not allow the opinions of others to effect how she behaved and understood herself, therefore being seemingly unaffected by these metaperceptions. Natalie displayed a strong sense of

character and an ability to be comfortable with herself, having integrated her different experiences into her identity. Other participants found this endeavour more challenging as the metaperceptions were at times hurtful and difficult to understand. Pumi added that *how it* [TRA] *turns out depends on your personality* and effectively how you process and perceive your life experiences, either positively or negatively.

> I think with adoption in general it depends on how // how it turns out depends on your personality. If you're like a [life grabbing] person and you go for things then it's easier for you. If you are not as much then it's a little bit harder to accept // just because it tends to be more negative than positive. – Pumi.

Furthermore, once they established their identity, this influenced who young adults chose to socialise with. They generally chose to socialise with individuals they could identify with and who were similar to themselves. Those who formed their identity impacted by White 'culture' appeared to not always be comfortable with engaging in activities which required knowledge of Black 'culture'. Young adults were therefore influenced by homophily (Finchilescu, 2005) in the way that they socialised with certain people based on their identity. For example, Jonathan discussed having *mostly White friends* and feeling that he is a *coconut*. In addition, he discussed that he did not fit in when socialising with Black peers; and not being able to *dance*, etc. However, he expressed that Timothy was able to do this, indicating that identity and choice of peers was distinctive within TRA. As discussed previously, Timothy felt his friends were of many different races, while Jonathans' friends were largely White, thus highlighting their social behaviour and different identities. The extracts below expand on this.

> About going to Soweto and those things; I don't enjoy it. It's not my scene, because of how I have been brought up. So, definitely I can't dance like that and do those things. It's just not what I do. Whereas Timothy just [adapts] and he goes at it and he does whatever. Whereas I look at it and I'm like I am not gonna be a clown. – Jonathan.

> I've been expected to speak a home language and I don't. I haven't been taught or anything. With my friends at school you'd would see that // predominantly they are all White. That is because I relate to them. In other situations because I am Black I can relate to Black guys. It's because I am – I'd say a [coconut]. It's easier to relate to people that I've been culturally exposed to their cultures. – Jonathan.

Overall, identity formation was a complex and idiosyncratic process for the young adults in the study. The endeavour was supported by their adoptive mothers and other family members. Identity development was more difficult for some than others, and was influenced in differing ways by the metaperceptions they held, both positively and negatively. Through this exploration, the young adults appeared to answer the questions they had about

themselves and became able to effectively withstand the metaperceptions they faced (Stevens et al., 2006). Throughout their lives, these young adults may continue to face negative and positive metaperceptions; and curiosity and invasiveness from others. Having completed the process of identity formation may assist them in integrating or rejecting feedback they receive on their TRA and their identity as they deem appropriate. Furthermore, the identity formed by the young adults and their mothers appeared to impact on later relationships. However, similar to outcome studies reviewed, transracially adopted young adults were not negatively impacted in their identities by their TRA. Moreover, racial identity was not absent. Rather, it was from idiosyncratically (Blackie, 2014; Lee, 2003; Roby & Shaw, 2009; Yancey & Lewis, 2009).

3.4. Choosing a Partner

The findings showed that the young adults' choice of romantic partner in relation to race was something both the mothers and young adults contemplated. Mothers were curious about the race and culture of the partner their children would choose; and how their children would navigate issues of race and culture in their intimate relationships. More importantly, the mothers wondered what their role would be in the process of supporting their children as they transitioned through different life stages, particularly identifying a life partner. For example, Paula wondered:

> What race will they choose. ...We have no expectations or desires either way. If they choose a Black child, will they be raised in Black traditions and how will that effect them integrating into the family. If they choose a White child, how will that affect them, because they are technically like White people like Theresa says, but, people don't treat them that way, so you have a whole separate level of measurement and expectation. And for either choice, it is going to be hard. – Paula.

The mothers considered that, regardless of the race of the partner their children chose, they would need to adapt to their family situation and integrate into their culture and traditions. This does not seem different to all individuals who become involved romantically, however, due to the nature of their identity as somewhat distinctive, there may be more questions for them to ask and answer during this process. Areas of contemplation may specifically relate to the race of their partner. For example, Theresa expressed that:

> I can't imagine them marrying a Black girl because of what's inside you, but ...they both say they will marry a Black girl, but Jason said he will marry a Black girl so long as she has a White mom. – Theresa.

The extract from Theresa alludes to her earlier comments about transracially adopted young adults being thought of as *White children.* This is highly debatable, as their racial

identity may be formed through socialisation and not purely through biological elements. However, their Blackness and the meaning that race holds within society is highly influential in terms of their identity development. In relation to choice of romantic partner, their identity and the meaning attributed to Blackness and Whiteness in society appeared to penetrate this decision making process. Young adults' choice of partner may therefore be influenced by their own racial identity, as well as the racial identity of their family. Mothers seemed to feel that their children may select partners who were similar to themselves in some way. Theresa suggested that they may be racially similar, while Cindy suggested that they may be characteristically similar. Theresa also suggested that they may select a racially similar partner who is able to provide them with similar traits as their mother (or family), perhaps in terms of culture and familiar practices that are learned through primary socialisation: *a Black girl so long as she has a White mom*. Cindy added that:

> I feel like my daughters would go for someone like their father. You do generally. Not necessarily racially. – Cindy.

The quote above suggests that personality is an important consideration, as one's choice of partner may not necessarily be based solely on race; but may consider compatibility, attraction and similarities, which may or may not be attributed to race. Therefore, transracially adopted young adults may choose either Black or White partners. Apart from other reasons for becoming romantically involved, Black partners may be similar racially, while White partners may be similar culturally or in terms of class. Thus, selecting a partner may be complex; and the factors leading to a specific choice of partner are difficult to identify.

The mothers also faced the metaperceptions of friends and family which provided insight into their underlying resistance to TRA. This was not related to TRA itself; but rather to the potential for the romantic relationships of transracially adopted young adults to 'cross the colour line'. This ignited fears of a future society that is highly integrated and which reproduced out of interracial relationships; one of the underlying objections to TRA. For example, Cindy experienced objections from family regarding the possibility that her daughter may *marry a Black man*, and thereby bring another Black person into a White family, which was viewed as unacceptable. Lindy also experienced objections from friends which suggested that her White biological daughter may marry a Black man due to her having a Black transracially adopted sister. The mothers did not agree with these ways of

thinking which seemed to highlight underlying racism and objections to intimate interracial relationships and TRA. The extracts below expand on this issue.

> Before we adopted Jabu, one of my very close friend said to me on the phone // thank goodness. And she said you do realise that she could marry a Black man! But I actually didn't know what to say! They've come a long way, let's put it that way. – Cindy.

> I had exactly the same thing. However, // they said you know that Refilwe could marry a Black man. I said yeah so what! So they didn't say Thato could marry a Black man. For them that is acceptable. But do you know that Refilwe could marry a Black man. Yes! I mean, come on. – Lindy.

Overall, the extracts presented above highlight what Fanon (1986) conceptualises as lactification. This refers to the pursuit of White sexual or marriage partners by Black individuals as an attempt to ascend the social hierarchy (Fanon, 1986). Lactification refers to the "idea of the possibility of moderating one's race, of lessening the degree of one's Blackness, and 'becoming more White'" (Hook, 2004, p. 98). Lactification is considered to be achieved by becoming fluent in a White language, the acquirement of White culture, and attaining increased wealth. Marrying a White spouse may also be perceived as an indication that lactification has been achieved (Hook, 2004). Therefore, young adults seeking to marry a White spouse may be suggestive of desires for lactification. However, it may also be linked to their specific identity and context; and not to racialised motivations. The opposition to interracial marriages may be considered to be a form of symbolic racism.

The young adults presented differing views to the mothers regarding race and their choice of romantic partner. Rather than a collective trend, they displayed individual preferences. However, they generally appeared to consider how their identity as a transracially adopted young adult would impact on their romantic relationships. For example, Timothy discussed that if he were to become seriously involved with a Black partner, he would be unsure regarding the processes of negotiating lobola and related cultural practices, as he was not knowledgeable about this. He shared that:

> ...in general culture would be a bit of an issue in the future ...things like lobola ...we don't know about it – so we kind of, don't wanna go down that road! ...I hear a lot of people what they do is they have an African wedding, and they have a White wedding. In an African wedding what do we do? Jonathan also shared, say I am with a Black girl, and I am expected to pay lobola, but I come from White family, what do I do?
> – Timothy.

The following extracts demonstrate differing reasoning on the preferred race of romantic partners for different young adult participants. Some participants preferred White partners, and others Black partners. The underlying theme appeared to be that transracially

adopted young adults desired to feel understood by their partner; and they felt that a particular race or type of person could provide this.

> I don't really get with Black girls. ...Normally I've only been with White girls or coloured girls ever, since Grade seven. ...A lot of my friends say there is something wrong with you. It's just who I am. – Jonathan.

> I've never really dated out of my race but I do not have a problem with it. – Natalie.

> I am easy with White, coloured, Indian, Black. I actually don't have a thing about Black chicks. ...I'm like trying to find sort of this perfect girl that's like White but they must be Black – sort of all that mix sort of thing in one girl. Like it's not possible. I've been more comfortable with White chicks because ...you know just like speaking about stuff. ...It seems like to a Black chick I can't. Or she just goes right over her head, she doesn't get me. – Monde.

> Before I met my husband I could never date someone who doesn't have academic // like have a deep connection with someone that doesn't have the same cultural background as me. So, because I was raised western, it was very hard for me to connect with anyone that was raised South African... Regardless of what they were. ...Anything that wasn't // I don't know why, but anything that wasn't kind of the same cultural background as me. It doesn't matter what the colour – I found it very hard to connect with people. ...With my husband it was // this guy is the same cultural background as me. He is American. Americans are completely different from South Africans. Even from White South Africans. But somehow in the middle of Virginia in that little small house with his family, it's almost like they are like // my family. ...It was just always a cultural understanding thing. – Pumi.

Overall, their choice of romantic partner seemed to be influenced by who the individual was attracted to; and who they thought can understand them and their background. The mothers played a role in supporting young adults as they explored romantic relationships. Their identities influenced who the young adults gravitated towards as a potential romantic partner; and who they thought they would be able to integrate into their family and vice-versa.

Theme 4: Not a 'Normal' Family

The transracially adoptive family structure integrates individuals of different races and backgrounds, challenging social perceptions that a 'normal' family is a racially homogenous one (Burman, 2008). Individuals who did not understand this family system at times questioned how this family functions. External threats emerged for the transracially adoptive family that challenged their boundaries, the mothers' authority as a parent, and the child's validity as a family member. The participants experienced metaperceptions of the family as 'not normal', as an attempt to diminish the relationship between mother and child, and the legitimacy of the transracially adoptive family. The TRA families appeared to challenge these metaperceptions by taking a position of being different but not abnormal.

Rather, they felt that they represented an inclusive family system that did not fit with social constructions of the family that perpetuated difference; and that was alternative to the socially endorsed norm.

Participants were faced with questions from individuals outside of the family; and described metaperceptions regarding the family as negative and positive. Negative metaperceptions were experienced by the family as being under scrutiny. However, the family was able to collaboratively develop coping mechanisms when these challenges occurred. Positive reactions to the family appeared to reinforce the strength of the family.

4.1. A Different Kind of Family

The following quotes illustrate some of the feelings of difference that the participants encountered regarding their families in relation to experiences they have had. It was emphasised that negative experiences were equally as common as positive experiences. While both had a lasting impact, negative experiences that were hurtful resulted in the development of coping mechanisms. These included reframing these metaperceptions as incorrect, in order to not be continuously adversely affected by such views. At times, the family was positioned as different to 'normal' families. In addition, the child's legitimacy in the family and their relationship with the family, particularly with their mothers, was questioned. The mothers experienced others as viewing their adopted children as non-permanent family members, and as different to their biological children.

The mothers felt that these metaperceptions undermined the position of their child in their family, which was both hurtful and frustrating for mothers. Paula expressed that:

> They never really accept them as mine. They always say 'you are doing such a good job' and think that my children are work, like a project. There is always a degrading of their status in my family because they aren't biologically mine. Like 'what happens when they turn 18?', like they not really your family or you just going to show them the door. It's this idea that it's not a real family. You are ostracised from the normal. – Paula.

This extract epitomises the reactions to the transracially adoptive family, which viewed the child as a temporary rather than permanent member of the family. This metaperception may be tied to unsupportive reactions to TRA; and the race trouble surrounding TRA. As Paula discussed:

> Children are viewed as ...some kind of social project... not understanding that ...adoption is very different to giving children a home for foster care or something like that, it's forever. – Paula.

The mothers further discussed that people's responses to their family as different were at times hurtful. Mothers interpreted enquiries about the permanency of their TRA as questioning the love and bond between them and their child. Theresa presented the view that:

> ...People say but it's my kid // why do people say that it's hurtful and dreadful and I love my child, why do they think it's different just because it's got a tiny bit of skin that's a different colour... ...You keep telling them but you know, they just normal children, they White children. They don't speak a Black language and they don't do anything that Black people do because they mine. Why would they do anything different because they are mine. You wouldn't ask me if my biological son speaks a Black language, why should he, he's mine. They don't really get it until you tell them, it's like it's so engrained. –Theresa.

The mothers suggested that views of their families as different may be related to a separation between expectations of biological children versus transracially adopted children; and a perception that an adopted child is less loved or valued, especially when they are of another race. These are some of the key matters that families dealt with as the child developed. They highlight the metaperceptions of the family as different to other families; and of the transracially adopted child as different to the adoptive family. Mothers felt that this was an incorrect perception; and encouraged others to accept their children as similar to the rest of their family and to them as mothers. These views were identified in the school environment within issues of language and culture. These perceptions may be regarded as symbolic racism (Durrheim, et al., 2011) and as being informed by social constructions of the family (Burman, 2008).

In addition, Theresa mentioned that *you keep telling them but you know, they just normal children, they White children. They don't speak a Black language and they don't do anything that Black people do because they mine.* This seems to be an attempt of transracially adoptive mothers in emphasising that their children are legitimate, permanent and akin members of the family; and that they are similar to the family culturally. However, the interpretation that the children are *White* because they are culturally similar to the family seems to be problematic. Rather, they are a different type of Black person with a particular identity due to their TRA, their race and their family, social and cultural context.

This further suggests that love across the 'colour line' constituted through social norms is difficult for those outside of TRA or other interracial relationships to understand. The concept that TRA involved legitimate love and care which was not formed through ulterior motives was questioned by those outside of TRA. Perhaps these individuals did not share experiences of love within interracial relationships; and therefore TRA seemed

different or not ‘normal’. However, Charlotte put forward that people’s reactions appeared to be changing, especially when children were present.

> People see Tim call me mummy... They might look, but they’re far more respectful. ...Then they do act like this is your son ...they might have a look of surprise or maybe judgemental, but they don’t come and openly say // it feels like there is a barrier there now. – Charlotte.

Lastly, the mothers experienced views of their family as different within people’s reactions to their TRA and the invasive nature of questions that people ask about their TRA. Erika described this experience:

> I was having material cut // and the guy actually asked me who had fertility problems was it you or your husband? – Erika.

This quote indicates an inappropriate place to ask such personal questions, and the invasiveness and violation of privacy due to the man being a complete stranger, but feeling he could ask about this topic. It also shows an assumption that TRA could not have been a choice but a response to a problem. Regardless of the reasons behind TRA, as Erika mentioned:

> We are both real families. – Erika.

Therefore, regardless of social norms or different understandings of families, the participants felt that every family was *real* regardless of how they were formed. Questions indicated that members of the public did not respect boundaries around the transracially adoptive family that usually apply to families. This suggests that curiosity gets the better of people when they are encountered with TRA, as they want to know ‘the story’ involved. Furthermore, people may then become insensitive in their approach to enquiries about TRA and the family. Charlotte added that she told friends:

> Just be careful when you ask those questions, because it’s the same as asking anybody else about their child. And there are things I can’t tell you because they are Tim’s story. And they are totally respectful and they say you know I've never thought of it like that. - Charlotte.

The extract from Charlotte suggests that people do not always respect the privacy of transracially adoptive families; and may be invasive in their approach to discussion with transracially adoptive families. Similarly, the young adults experienced the invasiveness of inquiries about their TRA. They often felt judged, and questioned people’s resistance to their TRA based on the difference of race within their family and their family being different to the

'norm'. Natalie compared this to the resistance that interracial and homosexual couples experience, who also seem to be challenged based on their difference to the norm, which is difficult for some individuals within society to tolerate and accept. Natalie shared that:

> People are curious, and I am open to explain ...This girl came up to me and she was like; so what are you? And I'm like; huh! Okay, that's weird! Because obviously you see me I'm Black - and then suddenly because my mother is White so I am suddenly not Black anymore? So I was like, I am a human being, what are you? ...I never get insulted by a thing, I am just like it's your ignorance. – Natalie.

The extract above suggests that young adults were also exposed to questions from others and expected to provide a response, which was, at times, experienced as invasive and ignorant. However, the young adults were generally willing to engage in providing explanations to the questions they faced. In addition, they held strong views that were communicated in the process; informing individuals about TRA and related social issues. Freire (2005) may argue that these discussions serve as conscientising others as young adults are conscientised about challenging the status quo.

Natalie further discussed that often the *minority* is encouraged by society to adapt to what is deemed 'normal' and therefore 'appropriate' behaviour.

> I think it is always the minority that always has to kind of compromise more on certain things. ...It's like we must compromise all the time so you feel comfortable ...with the interracial thing. Why must // if you are walking with your husband somewhere, it's your life. ...Whereas I see it as, no I am gonna do me. I am an adopted child, I have a White mother, we're gonna walk together regardless of your // you know! ...Why don't you accept // just because my family is a little bit different to what yours is? Why can't you meet me half-way? ...I don't know what a normal family is. ...I think once you get to know me or once you get to know us, you kind of just block out colour. ...I think it's refreshing so it's like we're like an open minded household. ...To us it's normal. –Natalie.

Natalie expressed a view that the *minority* often adjust to fit in with the majority or social construction of 'normality'. She felt this was unfair and unnecessary, taking the perspective that she would be herself in every context, therefore displaying a questioning and rejecting of the status quo. This was further displayed in her view that it was incorrect for people to view her family as different based on their racial differences. She felt that her family was a unique family system which should be viewed as equally legitimate to any other family. She shared that *I don't know what a normal family is,* epitomising the view that social constructions of normality were not always necessarily accurate or acceptable, and that at times the status quo was in need of challenging.

It seems as though the *minority* of TRA has become conscientised (Freire, 2005), represented in their ability to question the status quo and acknowledge that resistance from

some parts of society against TRA, and other forms 'different' relationships, is not sufficiently justified. While TRA may be challenging for some individuals to understand, the resistance that those involved in TRA face creates metaperceptions that are at times difficult to manage. While participants were able to reason with these metaperceptions, they still felt that they were unwarranted.

4.2. Separating Mother and Child

In addition to the transracially adoptive family being viewed as different to the norm, the mothers and young adults felt that metaperceptions viewed family members as separate rather than as a bonded family. This may be a response to the transracially adoptive family structure challenging social constructions around interracial relationships as legitimate relationships; and the role of genetic links in determining perceived legitimate status of relationships in a family. Attempts made at separating the bond between transracially adoptive family members seemed to elicit varied feelings from the participants; and were often linked to general metaperceptions of and reactions to TRA.

The mothers felt that people had difficulty accepting their children as theirs due to their difference in race and their not being biological children. Paula expressed that:

> I feel their acceptance is only because it is socially required, …people aren't allowed to say what they actually think about mixed race, …so what you find people will avoid you instead of face the idea. The perception, I feel, is that they never really accept them as mine. ...There is always this degrading of their status in my family because they aren't biologically mine. And it really offends me greatly. And so I tend to stay in safe places because of that. I don't like my children to feel like somehow they are inferior, to me and to the rest of the world because they were adopted by someone of a different colour to them. – Paula.

This reveals that mothers held metaperceptions that viewed their TRA as non-permanent members of the family. Mothers therefore did not acknowledge the idea of their children being non-permanent family members in order to avoid their children feeling like they were a less valid member of the family. Lindy shared that such *ignorance* had an impact on the metaperceptions of transracially adopted children as separate to the family or mother in some way. She discussed that:

> You are so used to your situation and how you've grown up, anything outside of that is strange to you. – Lindy.

Therefore, the extract suggests that people might not realise that they were being offensive when questioning the legitimacy of the family, or creating an ideological separation between mother and child, as this thinking is normal to them. This alludes to the generational

transmission of social norms and therefore, a slower rate of attitudinal change. As Theresa mentioned, these separations were hurtful for the mother and child to experience, and were based on assumptions of difference implied by overt features such as race and language.

Attempts to enforce the separation of mother and child were further experienced in questions about having biological children. Viola shared that:

> Something else that we get a lot is 'are you gonna have your own?' Like, she is my own. Am I going to have biological children I don't know, but no I have one of my own children. – Viola.

This extract demonstrates that questions may seem innocent are in fact quite offensive and representative of the view that a transracially adopted child is not sufficient in comparison to a biological child. Individuals do not seem to understand the strength of the emotional bond formed between TRA mother and child, viewing them as separable and emotionally unconnected. Charlotte shared a contrasting view:

> So the up-side of that is I've had friends come up to me and say …you know when we hang-out with you guys as a family they really are your kids. I hope you don't mind me saying that! I'm like no, get it! And if you get it, I am happy. ...You are used to it because you chose to do that. ...Then when they see you // and they see that your boys see you as their mom and you see them as your boys, and you are functioning as a family unit // they are surprised that that thinking flies out the window and they weren't even aware that it was there. I think that it's good. – Charlotte.

Charlotte demonstrates that with time, and as people witness the relationship formed between mother and child in TRA, this perceived separation begins to fade. It seems that personal experiences that provide evidence for the strong bond within these dyads act to change perceptions of a separation between transracially adoptive mother and child. People begin to view the family as legitimate and similar to other families. The unconscious nature of these perceptions may be indicative of aversive racism (Durrheim et al., 2011).

The young adults also experienced metaperceptions that separated them from their mothers or viewed their position in the family differently to biological children. Due to the separation Dieketseng felt people implied between her and her mother, she chose to not disclose or discuss her TRA. Dieketseng discussed that:

> …because my mum is White they ask; am I adopted, I say no. Because I hate the word. I don't feel I am adopted in any way. I feel my mum is my biological mum. There is nothing – there is no other mother. And I just // I don't know, just listening to stories, just make me miss my mum. – Dieketseng.

This shows a reluctance in Dieketseng to consider any separation between her mother and herself; and a level of resistance to this metaperception. Further, it demonstrates the

strong bond formed between some of the young adults, their mothers and their families. Therefore, bonds are formed beyond racial and genetic boundaries set up by social norms.

The low motivation to seek out biological families by the young adults further demonstrates a desire not to separate from their TRA mother; and may emphasise the bond they share. Natalie shared that:

> …because me and my mother have a very strong relationship. I don't know why. I feel like it's me because I don't wanna go and look for them. – Natalie.

Natalie therefore showed the bond she shared with her adoptive mother and family was real and secure. While some curiosity about their biological family was present, the young adults felt their places in their adoptive families were secure and permanent.

Furthermore, participants felt that people seemed to perceive a separation or superficial emotional bond between them and their parents due to their difference in race. This seemed to be an externalisation of internally held racist ideologies. This argument posits that based on racial disparity, it is assumed that a true emotional connection cannot be formed. Natalie felt that she did not consciously separate people according to colour as she found people she encountered doing automatically. For this reason, understanding her story was at times eye-opening for people she shared it with. This emphasises the perception that emotional connections are formed based on racial similarity. However, those experiencing emotional connections across racial groups and the social constructions of intimacy felt they no longer formed relationships based on race. Natalie shared that:

> To us it's normal. Like the different thing is normal. So we don't // to me, I don't see colour. – Natalie.

Therefore, it is contentious as to whether the perceived separation between mother and child is related to the absence of the biological conception of the child, or if this separation is based on racism and discrimination. It may be suggested that these separatist perceptions are rooted in racism and race trouble.

4.3. An Unbreakable Bond

In addition to the relationships that the mothers and young adults shared, they discussed experiencing a very strong mother-child relationship. Mothers were at times concerned about how to explain their TRA to their children. They were surprised when their children discussed things with them that demonstrated their own way of making sense of their

TRA. In addition, they expressed a particular sense of being bonded to their mother, as evident in the extracts below:

> Tim came running to me and he said 'mommy, mommy, when I was in my birth mommy's tummy I was dreaming of you'. He was crying for me when he was in his birth mommy's tummy. – Charlotte.

> We had to go over the umbilical cord and you know I explained about his birth mommy and showed him a picture and how she helped look after him until he came to me. It was a prosperous conversation, and just as quickly he was in a conversation about the dog outside and that was it. – Erika.

Charlotte discussed her son's expression of *dreaming* of her when he was in his *birth mommy's tummy*. This may represent an expression of the love between TRA mother and child; and a sense that despite their biological and racial differences they were not emotionally separate from each other. Erika shared how she explained to her children about the birth process and about the birth mother passing on the care of him to her. She further shared that he seemed to engage with the conversation only briefly and moved back to playing. This may suggest that the process of understanding their TRA is an individual one. What appeared to be important, was building a strong relationship throughout development to assist the child in working through any questions they may have.

Charlotte further shared a discussion she had with transracially adopted young adults she had met socially who shared what a positive impact their TRA had had in their lives; and how much their relationship with their mother had supported them. She explained:

> ...this girl was talking about how she was adopted and that her mom has been the joy of her life... ...their mom gave them that poem and it helped them so much in life, and that they don't feel any different. That talk encouraged me not to worry because this was the outcome. – Charlotte.

The experience above seemed to assist Charlotte in working through any initial doubts she had felt about whether TRA was the best thing for her children due to challenges they might face as a result. Charlotte and other mothers in the study appeared to be reassured that though their relationship and the bond with their children they would be able to support them through any difficulties they may face. Sandra shared a saying that epitomised how the transracially adopted young adults and mothers viewed their relationships. This emphasised the unique relationships they shared which was not based on physical similarities; but rather on emotional closeness.

> You weren't born under my heart you were born in my heart. – Sandra.

The findings above display the power of the emotional attachment between TRA mother and child. This relationship assists both sides in working through the difficulties they faced through TRA. At times, some of the mothers feared that having adopted their child might have provided them with challenges that other children did not face, and felt a sense of guilt due to this. However, they disagreed with this on further reflection, stating that they would have otherwise not have had a family and would have then faced other challenges. Hearing the stories of others involved in TRA was encouraging to hear as it demonstrated that despite difficulties, the relationships built within the family are a *joy* to those involved.

4.4. Boundaries and Pressures Surrounding Mothering

There were some tensions expressed by the participants that were specific to the concept of mothering in TRA. The mothers felt pressured to mother in ways that would be acceptable to others. The mothers felt that they were at times scrutinised in terms of their parenting skills; and that their children were treated more harshly due to their TRA. The young adults also expressed experiencing the invasiveness of the questions of others in terms of their family and themselves which they had to learn to cope with.

The mothers felt that people outside of the direct family seemed to overstep boundaries in certain areas. These areas included discipline and questions about how the family functions due to their TRA. They felt that biological parents did not face the same issue. Paula expressed that:

> It becomes quite invasive and privacy is a big issue. With boundaries, other people feel like because my children aren't biologically mine that they have the right to discipline them. There seems to be this free for all. I dislike it because at home we all know what the rules are. They think they have rights that I haven't given them. ...If they had a problem, they should have come to me, it wasn't their place. Because they feel like these children don't really belong to me, somehow they have rights that I haven't given them. – Paula.

Paula discussed that it could become quite frustrating for her as a mother and for her children to experience people interfering in the family. People seemed to overstep boundaries due to viewing the family as illegitimate or separate to the family, and therefore open to input from outsiders. People seemed to overstep the parenting boundaries that TRA mothers put in place, as people would separate mother and child, intervene in parenting and disavow the mother's parental role. Mothers may therefore become overly protective of their children and rejecting of the input or interference they received from outside parties.

The young adults confirmed that their mothers were at times protective of the boundaries they set as parents, becoming frustrated when people outside of the family became involved in disciplining them as children. Jonathan shared that:

> I think it only happened twice, but it made her extremely extremely mad. ...But it always comes down to that; we're different to her. – Jonathan.

At times, the mothers became frustrated and angry at these interferences. They may have been able to manage the situation without affecting their children, as the young adults did not recall many of these experiences. They seemed to be aware that others viewed their family as different; but were protected by their mothers from being negatively affected by this in terms of discipline.

The mothers felt that they were criticised more than biological mothers in terms of the adequacy of their parenting. Mothers reported that people would more readily express their views on their parenting than they would with biological parents. Therefore, it seemed that when mothers were viewed as separate to their child in some way, outsiders felt they could more easily become involved in that child's parenting. Therefore, an almost communal view of raising a child was adopted due to the child being perceived as not truly having a permanent parent; but rather, as having a temporary TRA mother. The mothers and young adults found this extremely offensive and disrespectful of their family. Lindy discussed this by stating that:

> If you look at your own group of friends or family or whatever, you don't necessarily always approve of the way that your brother is raising his kids, but nobody really makes an issue about it. But because you have Black children now it almost becomes a cultural thing where // ...So normally // it wouldn't be an issue, but I think in that situation then people would come and say; oh no, but you know what // ...they always bring the culture into it because // of the fact that they can see that the children are adopted. – Lindy.

Therefore, something related to the TRA, such as culture, was used to validate their interference into the transracially adoptive family parenting, much like it is used to validate objections to TRA. This may be considered symbolic racism (Durrheim et al., 2011). Any negative behaviour, albeit developmentally appropriate or not, may also therefore be used as validation for objections to the parenting of transracially adopted children and to TRA itself.

The mothers further discussed that the metaperceptions seemed to be critical of their parenting. In addition, this may not have been a critique of the parenting itself; but a representation of objections to TRA. Erika discussed that:

> ...we all raise our children the way we would like to // ...I think they might be judging the way I am raising my children. I think sometimes it's a culture issue. I am raising my children very much to be ...spontaneous and confident and free. ...But in another culture that may be pretentious or disobedient. – Erika.

Further, Charlotte shared that:

> ...I do feel like sometimes people look and say; these kids are totally wild. But if they were my own biological kids they would probably behave the same way. ...I became an insecure mom when I was out in public. ...So now ...I don't feel that way because I am the mom and they are not, and I don't need to feel insecure or behave in any way because that's actually not good for Tim. ...I just close my eyes and I just deal with the issue. Because they are my kids and they do need me to be strong and not – I find that I was becoming a weak mom when I was in public – and it wasn't good. – Charlotte.

With experience, the mothers learnt how to deal with input and metaperceptions of them with regards to parenting and their family. Ultimately, they did not allow this to alter their parenting style or interactions with their child.

Despite being faced with the unsolicited input of others into their parenting, the mothers seemed to continue to raise their children as they viewed appropriate, as Erika and Charlotte discussed above. Furthermore, Theresa mentioned that:

> It's very exhausting. ...I do think it's really it's important to tolerate it because ...It's a learning experience for them and they prod you like that because they really want to know. ...they want to understand. – Theresa.

Therefore, the mothers felt that despite some questions and experiences in terms of parenting being frustrating at times, sharing their views and opinions would influence others to view TRA differently. Therefore, the mothers and young adults played a large role in conscientising the public about their perceptive on TRA (Freire, 2005).

Besides from the critical eye of others, parenting in TRA at times held its own particular challenges. However, the mothers emphasised that parenting any child may have had its challenges, and that blaming the TRA may not always be valid. Jenna shared that:

> That's what people adopting don't expect. A lot of adoptions start having problems when the children are adolescents. That's when they take it on themselves, that 'oh it's my fault because I adopted them' and they don't think that a child at that age is going to do that... – Jenna.

Therefore, transracially adopted adolescents and young adults, much like everyone at that phase of life, may become more challenging of their parent's limits and structures as they developed into adults (Erikson, 1963). This may at times feel like the TRA is making this phase of life more difficult. However, the children seemed to be able to cope with exploring their identity with their mothers support. Jenna further shared that:

> You have to be prepared for everything and to answer every question as honestly as you can. – Jenna.

Therefore, mothers chose to be honest with their children as they explored identity and questions about their TRA. In this way the child was supported while maintaining boundaries within parenting. Paula added that:

> There is this insinuation that you robbed them of a life they could of had. You have to highlight the reality that that was not an option for you... when you've got a child who's transracial you have extra ammunition and extra baggage and you try bring them up the best you can. That's the hard part. But I think that's the hard part for anybody raising a child. – Paula.

Therefore, parenting in TRA may be difficult at times, particularly when offering support through adolescence and identity formation. It may be especially trying when experiencing anger from transracially adopted children as a transracially adoptive mother. Furthermore, Paula felt that:

> You have to trust that you've loved them enough and offered them enough tools to make their way... Some will do it more successfully than others and some will resent their upbringing more than others, and you can't really do anything about that. – Paula.

The mothers therefore felt that they could only do their best to provide their child with all of their emotional, physical and other needs as they developed; and that ultimately it was their choice what they made of their life situation. It was hoped that through good relationships and open communication transracially adopted children and mothers would manage any difficulties that arose.

Another difficulty mothers discussed, was people who applied less discipline to their children when they became aware of their TRA. For example, Paula discussed that:

> It's like as soon as your child stumbles they're there, and they're saying 'well you know he's only adopted what can you expect.' It's like there is this expectation of failure in their lives ...if they misbehave, 'ja well they're not really yours' ...teachers will have comments that insinuate that somehow, their bad behaviour is expected because they are adopted. It is very hard because they get away with a lot as well because people think oh well they were orphans and nobody was there for them. – Paula.

Parenting therefore became difficult in these situations as adolescents became less responsive to their parents at times as they *[got] away with a lot* in other environments. This may lead to conflict within the family; and a need for mothers to explain their parenting stance to people in other environments in order to prevent their children from not being disciplined or being overly disciplined.

Furthermore, they may have had to discuss this with their children. Having to conduct these conversations may have felt like over disclosing, while being necessary. Furthermore, there seems to be stigma attached to TRA in which children were viewed as vulnerable and

unsupported at times, which is not always accurate. Mothers appeared to want to change this view in order for these metaperceptions to not be integrated into their child's identity. It was viewed as undesirable for their children to internalise unprecedented expectations of failure in their lives.

Therefore, the mothers and their children worked through questions from outsiders, as well as establishing boundaries with regards to discipline. Boundaries were used to prevent outsiders from inappropriately disciplining transracially adopted children, as well as establishing family rules. It was hoped by mothers that their children would develop into successful adults through their guidance, support and parenting styles. It seemed important for mothers to be mindful of the impact of TRA on their children in order to address any issues that arose for their children as they parented them. This may suggest that the most beneficial parenting style for TRA parents to employ is structured, supportive and open to the discussion of issues, such as the authoritative parenting style (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

4.5. Future Families and Transracial Adoption

The structure of the transracially adoptive family influenced the way transracially adopted children and young adults thought about their future families. They appeared to consider both adoption and biological conception as viable options for forming a family. They seemed to seek to form a family of their own which would be able to relate to the family they grew up in. As younger children this potential family that they envisioned might be related to how they identified with their family members. In addition, this might be related to how they chose a partner, as most young adults aimed to seek out a partner who would understand them, their identity and their family background.

The mothers shared some of their discussions with their children regarding having their own families in the future. Lindy's discussion is found in the extract below:

> Thato thinks a lot about when she has babies one day. A lot! She is 7!.... I said to her my babes, it's fine, there are many options. If you want to give birth you can give birth, if you wanna adopt you can adopt, it doesn't matter. How a child comes to you // I mean, you know, you are in our family. A family is a family. So this morning she says to me; she wants Black children, but she wants a White child as well. ...if I marry a Black man will I have a White baby? (Laughter) I said I don't think that it's possible. So she says how would I be able to ...give birth to a White baby? I said, you know in some instances if you do marry a White man and his genes are stronger than yours – I'm thinking I'm having this conversation with a 7 year old – then it could be that the child is lighter skinned. ...So that is what I am gonna do. I am gonna marry a White, I am gonna have a light baby – listen to this – and I am gonna adopt two Black children. Like me with her and Daniel! So I just thought this is interesting. ...maybe looking at the fact that her older sister is White and then her and her brother are Black. And like you say she is trying to mimic what we have. – Lindy.

Lindy shared that her daughter regularly discussed her plans for having children; and wanting both Black and White children. After discussing the foetal development process, who she could marry and how the race of a child was determined, she decided that she would have an interracial family much like her own family. Lindy's discussion reveals the process of the transracially adopted child trying to understanding how they came into their family; and wanting to integrate this into how they would form a family in the future. Therefore, Thato desired both White and Black children after considering these factors in her context. The mothers were thoughtful about their manner of discussing this with their children.

In addition, from the mothers' perspective, children who had been transracially adopted seemed to consider adoption as an option for themselves. Jenna shared that:

> A lot of our children say that they are not going to have children of their own they are going to adopt... Wesley, that's one of our 16 year olds, had this huge thing with one of the other children at school and this child was saying 'no you mustn't adopt, adoption is this and this and Wesley said 'well I'm adopted' and she said 'no no you must have your own children and no no no no' and Wesley is like 'well what's the difference?'. – Jenna.

Therefore, within the environment where children had been exposed to several adoptions, such as at TLC, they began to view this as a viable option for themselves. Furthermore, they became quite challenging of views that did not support adoption due to their own experiences. Theresa also reported that *they have all the pros* when thinking about adoption, such as choosing the exact age and sex of the child you adopt.

> A lot of them say 'I think I'm just going to adopt' and some may say well // they've got all the pros like if you adopt you can adopt four of the same age if that's what you want or you can have two boys and two girls if you want it's not all like this guess work like if you have. – Theresa.

Furthermore, the mothers felt that their children had some fears regarding becoming biological parents. Paula shared that:

> I think it's a little bit of fear in the older ones about being a biological parent... they worry about their own biological background its sort of a scary thing for them. ...to consider then being a biological background for somebody else makes them not want to stand in that place. – Paula.

Therefore, not knowing their own biological background resulted in some fears around what genes they might unknowingly pass on to their children. In addition, the young adults at times might avoid finding a partner in order to not have to face these fears. Jenna shared that:

> When they choose a partner they are like oh well I'll just adopt I won't get married. – Jenna.

It appears that transracially adopted young adults and children might either choose to adopt or have biological children. They might select partners of similar or different races, who want biological children or who also want to adopt, which might have an additional impact on their life choices and future family structure. This suggests that future generations might continue to follow the trend of forming family structures that challenge the 'norm' of nuclear families; and the social constructions of the family.

Theme 5: Being a 'Ground Breaker': Social Change and Transracial Adoption

The discussions with participants were filled with progressive thinking; and supported ideologies of non-racialism and tolerance for others. This has been described as being a *ground breaker* or *front runner* in the data. Through interactions with others, those involved in TRA ignite questions in the minds of others surrounding social norms, race, notions of the family, and other strata of society. Their responses to those who held negative and positive perceptions of TRA had the ability to ignite a thought process in other individuals which would question or defend their perceptions. The manner in which these perceptions and metaperceptions were processed by those involved in TRA often reflected an attitude of self-assurance, not being affected by the negative views of others. This can be seen as *ground breaking* as they stick to their beliefs and break a new path or way of thinking. This is much like others who have fought against attitudes which were the 'norm' but not necessarily acceptable.

As Paula discussed, TRA mothers felt they needed to assist their children in facing different opinions about themselves, and developing in them an internal voice which rejected these norms and challenged others to think differently. The process of facing perceptions of TRA and challenging these was difficult at times. The participants discussed experiencing this as exhausting, invasive and rewarding. It appears that the perspective on how they would engage with this process and how they would carry out their lives amongst many perceptions and metaperceptions was individualised. As Paula mentioned:

> You have to let them make their way. You have to trust that you've loved them enough and offered them enough tools to make their way. They are front runners and it's hard for everybody who is a ground breaker and they will have to find a way // I think some will do it more successfully than others and some will resent their upbringing more than others, and you can't really do anything about that. – Paula.

Therefore, mothers, young adults and those in the family worked together to support each other in developing *tools* to cope with the metaperceptions they faced. As this process unfolded, the individuals developed their own perspective and made choices on how they

would be *ground breakers* and challenge the views of others. This could be direct through interactions, or indirect through observation of behaviour. The extracts below further reveal some of the nuances participants faced in their interactions with others, as well as their attempts to respond to them.

Timothy discussed his openness to questions about TRA and his attempts to inform people about TRA by sharing his story with them. He experienced objections to TRA based on race, language and cultural issues, which he found frustrating at times. He also experienced increased levels of support once people understood his experience in more detail; as they were thereby more able to take on an informed opinion of TRA. This process was frustrating at times; but generally rewarding, as he enjoyed using his experience to conscientise others. Furthermore, while he was willing to share his experience to inform others, as he did not allow others to make him feel negatively about himself. For example, he did not feel inferior due to not being able to speak an African language, and would not allow people to enforce on him who he should be.

> ...I find it irritating sometimes. There's times when it's a person who – not saying that I am judging a book by a cover but they actually [seem not to care] about what you are about to tell them. …The nice people obviously you are gonna wanna talk to them and give them your picture. It is people that are like that, you kind of just want to turn around and pull the finger basically. Because you don't really know me, so don't tell me how I should be because of who you want me to be. – Timothy.

Natalie discussed that her approach to handling questions about TRA was to be straight forward and honest. She discussed not tolerating ignorant objections to TRA or questions about her behaviour. Natalie presented a willingness to explore TRA with individuals who were willing to engage objectively; and who showed an interest in understanding her experience. She combined this with a firm attitude to stand up for what she viewed as right. However, Natalie did not tolerate negative comments without standing up for herself and informing others that they were in some ways misguided. Through this straightforward approach, Natalie informed people about a different understanding of TRA, thereby conscientising them.

> I am a very upfront person. ...If you go to a person and say this is what's up, this is my situation, I see where you're coming from; everything gets sorted out from there. I think that when some people keep quiet, it's almost like saying it's okay for you to think this way of me. – Natalie.

Pumi expressed a different perspective to Natalie. While she too disagreed with the negative responses to TRA and interracial relationships, she chose to take a point of view which worked towards mutual understanding to thereby decrease negative perceptions. She

acknowledged the influence of generational elements of racism and prejudice which were transmitted to children and not often questioned. Therefore, through mutual understanding she hoped to challenge long-standing misperceptions. Pumi discussed that:

> Because I am in a situation and because I know people react the way they do because they don't understand (.) I don't want to also react the way I do because I don't understand where they are coming from // And I don't understand why they are doing what they are doing. So I was very much like // let's try and understand each other, let's try to have a relationship then you can see what is happening in my life and then you can make an opinion from that, and I can see what is happening in your life, and I can make an opinion from that. ...They just think it's wrong because that's what they heard. ...Let's try to understand each other, and let's try and understand where each other comes from and the background, because it gives revelation to you, to who that person is and you can see why they are reacting the way they do. ...If they can see why they are reacting the way they do, and then it gives them a place to open up and say; oh! Then maybe I can accept this. Because if someone doesn't understand, you can throw them with lots of things, if they still don't want to understand…it has to be a little bit deeper for them to go; 'okay, aww'! And then I think that is how people influence other people, influence other people, influence other people – it kind of ripples off. – Pumi.

From Pumi's discussion it is clear that participants felt that change in their metaperceptions and experiences relied on them playing an active role in, not only changing perceptions of TRA; but in creating mutual understanding of perceptions which may lead to longer lasting change. These changes may carry over into others spheres of society.

Freire (2005) may consider this an effective from of conscientisation. From Freire's perspective, without education and knowledge, insight cannot be developed, and change cannot occur. Therefore, sharing knowledge through engagement would be viewed as an ideal method of conscientisation; and challenging of social norms which are in need of transformation.

Participants may be considered *ground breakers*, as they challenged the perceptions of others; and began a process of self-reflection in those they interact with. This occurred not only through direct interaction; but also through the responses within each individual when they observe those part of TRA. This may then lead to direct interactions and discussion of histories and adoption stories. The responses to TRA highlighted the social perceptions of interracial relationships, integration and transformation. However, this does not suggest that those involved in TRA are free from their own prejudices. They too are affected by the social milieu which surrounds them and informs their thinking. The extract below presents some of the ways in which mothers and their families felt they might have an impact on people's perceptions of TRA, both directly and indirectly.

Extract 2:

Researcher: So it seems like in a way even though it's difficult at times, your family seems to change perceptions of people indirectly? Like you create thoughts in their minds that challenges what they believe?

Lindy: I think it's possible because even if someone doesn't agree with it, or whatever you don't have to explain anything. But you don't know how you are affecting them. Unless if they might be particularly rude. I don't mind questions if they are sincere. Not like // where is his mother and all this stuff. But you never know.

Erika: I just think people who see you regularly, like I go to the same Pick 'n Pay all the time // they just see that this is a real family. It's not abnormal, we just go in there, buy cornflakes, you know.

Lindy: Yeah, and they also get used to it and they not... (interrupted)

Erika: I think it just normalises the situation. Which is great, cos then it's not intrusive for you and it's not intrusive for your kids anymore. They can kind of walk around like a normal kid which is nice.

Charlotte: It's true. I really think // you know // if you just relax and just be a family and not worry about everybody all the time, or if you go to the same places; and like you said you also, they get used to you and it effects how other people, how they act. If you walk into Pick 'n Pay staring and looking for people to look at you // it's going to be a different story

[Laughter]

Charlotte: I think we can definitely impact on reactions in the long term.

Lindy: I think a lot of it with the perceptions and the thing is also // ...maybe a little bit to ignorance and that // because you are so used to your situation and how you've grown up. That anything outside of that is strange to you. We went to ...baptisms for the babies. ...and obviously your children are the only Black people there. But we don't see that // ...people being ignorant about certain situations is //...she piped up and she actually said to some of the adults there; why are you speaking English to me? All of you are speaking Afrikaans, but when you speak to me you speak English. ...I think for me that was just nice because it's like things like this that people that get closer to you discover that breaks a little bit of that ignorance and the perceptions that they have.

Sandra: And also her challenging people, making them think.

Therefore, TRA families indirectly challenged the perceptions that people held about TRA; and perhaps about the role of race in daily South African life. As Durrheim et al. (2011) suggest, race informs many areas of our functioning; and the role of race needs to be understood within different contexts. For TRA mothers, the role of race in daily life was revealed through daily routine, such as shopping or attending social events. In these spaces aspects of racist ideology were revealed through interactions. People may not openly acknowledge their prejudices; but engaging with TRA might bring these to the fore and thus, into question. Alternatively, TRA families sought to continue with their routine without constantly dealing with these perceptions and metaperceptions. As Charlotte discussed, this would lead to an artificial lifestyle that was impacted by these metaperceptions. Rather, these individuals choose to live their lives free of the influences of the views of others; and to externalise these issues as societal rather than personal. Furthermore, they use negative

situations as positively as possible in order to create change in some way; and to allow them to lead a life which is satisfying for them.

Therefore, by undertaking alternative views of the race trouble in South Africa and the metaperceptions they experience, participants may be viewed as ground breakers. In addition, these attitudes may lead to the conscientisation of others though interaction with those part of TRA. By investigating the factors that underpin the race trouble surrounding TRA, it may be able to be understood and break down (Durrheim et al., 2011). This may lead to change in the manifestations of race trouble and the social constructions which inform metaperceptions of TRA.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 has put forward the results of the interpretation of the data obtained in the focus groups discussions. The data was interpreted using IPA; and discussed through five themes. These included motivations for TRA, constructions of TRA and the impact of race on these constructions, identity formation and its links to social norms, perceptions of the family, and the influence of changes in social norms on perceptions of TRA. Different considerations from the literature reviewed were incorporated into the discussion. *Chapter 5* expounds the conclusions, limitations and recommendations to be made from the study results.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter 5 aims to integrate literature and the findings of the research study in the form of conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the results. The main areas discussed include: race relations in South Africa, socially constructed views of the family, and challenging views of race relations and families through TRA. The limitations of the study and directions for future research are also presented.

5.1. Conclusions

This research study explored the metaperceptions of transracially adoptive mothers and young adults in the South Africa context. The data from the study was analysed using IPA; and can be summarised into three main areas of metaperceptions which mothers and young adults formed. These three areas are: the impact of race and race relations on perceptions and metaperceptions of TRA; socially constructed understandings of the family and transracially adoptive families; and challenging societal views of race relations and families through TRA. These three areas are interconnected and inform understandings of TRA in South Africa as a whole.

In addition, a comparison of the metaperceptions held by mothers and young adults involved in TRA revealed similarities between the two groups. Similar metaperceptions were discussed by both groups of participants. Furthermore, metaperceptions of each group supported the discussions presented by each other. Therefore, the connected nature of the metaperceptions of those involved in TRA was highlighted.

5.1.1. Race Relations in South Africa

Through this exploration, varied experiences were revealed which highlighted the complexity of race relations in South Africa. Metaperceptions of TRA held by participants were impacted by the differing debates around race, racism and the family. They may further suggest that current interracial interactions continue to be influenced by the history of race relations in the country. This includes historical happenings such as apartheid and post-apartheid events, which now inform the current perceptions held about race groups. It may be considered that this race trouble impacted on the experiences of participants and their subsequent metaperceptions. Furthermore, these metaperceptions influence how relationships were formed and how particular interactions were understood by participants.

The manner in which race trouble plays out in the South African context is complex and difficult to describe in set, concrete terms. This has resulted from increasing transformation and changes in the racial dynamic of privilege. In addition, class divisions continue to impact on South African social life and economic opportunities. Therefore, dissatisfaction with service delivery and management of the country is filled with denial of racism and counter-accusation, as racism is no longer purely Black versus White; but also Black versus Black. Thus, it is more directed to those in positions of privilege and power which are not defined by race. In addition, new racial stereotypes develop in order to understand the role of race in daily life (Durrheim et al., 2011).

The changes in South African life in terms of race, inequality and violence seem to have filtered down into displays of race trouble and opposition to TRA (Durrheim et al., 2011). Therefore, as those involved in TRA interact with others they become aware of the role of race in their lives. However, this does not mean that they are unaffected by issues of race. The impact of the social construction of race (Duncan et al., 2004; Rose et al., 1988) was evident in the metaperceptions and experiences of those part of TRA. Despite literature which illegitimises the racial divisions and differences that society creates, better understanding these divisions as gender, age and socialisation differences, racism and racial discrimination continue to impact on society (Duncan et al., 2004; Rose et al., 1988).

Within the study metaperceptions were developed through reactions to TRA and experiences with individuals in society who revealed either supportive or critical perspectives on TRA. These metaperceptions seemed to represent societal views of race relations on different levels; including intimate interracial relationships and interracial families. It was hypothesised that opposition to TRA revealed underlying ideologies of racism and discrimination; while support for TRA may propose anti-racism, tolerance or aversive racism. However, support for TRA may not necessarily represent the absence of racism, but perhaps an open-mindedness which supports freedom of choice with regards to family structure, child rearing and relationships.

The current presentation of race trouble in South Africa is multifaceted, it was clear that continued transformation in the country has led to new forms of racism and discontent amongst South African society. Discontent is related to continued inequality, poverty, discrimination and violence in South Africa. As transformation continues and the ranks of privilege begin to become increasingly multi-racial, it becomes difficult to blame class disparity on White supremacy. Therefore, new racial stereotypes and debates around social issues have begun to emerge (Durrheim et al., 2011). Within the study, it appears that this

current race trouble infiltrates perceptions of TRA and the way that it is understood by South African society. This may be due to new racial stereotypes which are constantly developing and which are applied to TRA. This creates a particular race trouble surrounding TRA which informed the metaperceptions of participants in specific ways. Race trouble informed metaperceptions of participants specifically in relation to considerations of social constructions of the family, identity, race, Blackness, Whiteness; class, status, culture and language. These areas may represent the current some of social issues facing South Africa.

5.1.2. Socially Constructed Views of the Family

Criticisms of TRA were validated through arguments involving a perceived loss of culture, language or other racialised characteristics; all of which can be understood as symbolic racism, subtle racism and overall race trouble. In addition, opposition to transracially adoptive families suggests notions that families cannot be interracial or formed through means that are not biological. The transracially adopted child was further objectified as a non-permanent member of the family and as a political object. These forms of resistance to the transracially adoptive family further represent objections to increased interracial contact, and furthermore, interracial contact which may lead to additional interracial families, children and intimate relationships.

It appears that transracially adopted young adults might choose to either adopt or have biological children. They might select partners of similar or different races, who want biological children or who also want to adopt, which might have an additional impact on their life choices and future family structure. This suggests that future generations might continue to follow the trend of forming family structures that challenge the 'norm' of nuclear families. It seems that the view of interracial families and families formed through circumstances other than birth, such as adoption or extended family care, as different may begin to be permanently changed and more widely accepted as alternative rather than different.

It has been shown that families have changed significantly in the past decade; and that nuclear families are becoming less common than in previous times (DSD, 2012). Metaperceptions around the family may be similarly reconstructed and formed more positively, as is beginning to occur. In addition, social constructions related to TRA may be similarly reconstructed. In contrast, views which are against transracially adoptive families based on objections related to racial and cultural differences may be increased. However, as mentioned, the genetic differences between racial groups are outweighed by their similarities (Rose et al., 1988), rendering this argument invalid and racially loaded. Thus, family

structures may continue to change, and future generations which come from TRA families may continue to become increasingly multiracial and multicultural.

5.1.3. Challenging Views of Race Relations and Families Through TRA

Being in a transracially adoptive family and being exposed to metaperceptions which provide feedback on one's family and personal identity seem to impact on the ideologies formed by individuals part of TRA. They seemed to have the ability to critically reflect on why people may respond to TRA in particular ways. In addition, they generally appeared to be able to tolerate this feedback without allowing it to negatively impact on how they perceived themselves. Rather, they were able to inform others of a different perspective on TRA which began the development of a different thought process about TRA and other stratum of society. Therefore, those involved in TRA may be considered 'ground breakers' as they conscientise individuals who they come into contact with. Through conscientisation the status quo around TRA, forms of interracial relationships, interracial interactions and social constructions of 'normal' may be challenged. In addition, through exploring and describing the race trouble evident in TRA, it may be broken down, better understood, thereby promoting the start of a process of change in the race relations within this context. Moreover, the changes in the race trouble within TRA may spill over into other areas of social life and create further positive change in race relations.

It is hypothesized that as positive change begins to occur, new racial stereotypes may be formed to understand this change; and a new form of race trouble may emerge. However, continued communication and understanding of such stereotypes may further break down future race trouble thereby creating continuous change and growth within race relations in South Africa. Through this process, the influence of apartheid and post-apartheid race relations may begin to permanently change and lead to a new era of race relations in South Africa. However, it is held in question whether or not social constructions race will ever lose their power to influence social life, particular in South Africa. Rather, improved understanding and metaperceptions of racial groups may emerge, which may allow for social norms to develop which better manage the challenges related to race relations.

5.1.4. Concluding Remarks

The study produced rich data which has contributed to improved insight into TRA in the South African context. The data enhanced understandings of the experience of being part of a transracially adoptive family, either as a mother or young adult; and the metaperceptions

they form through interactions with others. Furthermore, the study was able to produce a social commentary regarding the legitimacy of constructions of the family and race relations in South Africa. However, the research report is limited in its scope to explore all aspects of the data. Therefore, it is worthwhile to evaluate the limitations of the study and possible recommendations for future research in the area.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

The study generated large amounts of data which could not be explored in depth due to the scope of the research report. Therefore, this may be considered a limitation to the study as further critical analysis of the data may result in a richer understanding of TRA in the South Africa context. Furthermore, it may contribute to a richer understanding of current race relations in South Africa and how they influence the metaperceptions formed by mothers and young adults part of TRA.

The study may also have been limited by the sample size and demographics of participants. Larger numbers of focus groups with increased diversity may create a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of those involved in TRA in South Africa. Since the experiences of TRA are so unique, documenting as many different experiences as possible may contribute to a more holistic understanding of TRA and the metaperceptions that emerge. Moreover, wider demographic differences will allow for more complexity in understanding how TRA is perceived in different areas and contexts. This may also contribute to understandings of race, racism, families and other social constructions in South Africa.

The race, age and non-parental status of the researcher may have acted as a limitation to the focus group dynamics. Having a different race to young adult participants may have negatively impacted on their ability to identify with the researcher. Participants may have felt that the researcher could not fully understand their experience as Black individuals due to her being White. However, this may have been lessened through empathic responding, rapport, and a similar age between participants and the researcher. Within the mothers group, the researcher not being a mother may have impacted on their experience of the researcher understanding their situation. In addition, the younger age of the researcher may have added to this. This may have been lessened through empathic responding and rapport. The focus group context therefore assisted in overcoming these limitations and assisted participants in sharing through interacting with each other.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that future studies in the area consider using qualitative methodology, such as focus groups. This methodology allowed for rich data to emerge as participants shared with one another and thereby made each other feel comfortable. Focus groups may consider using facilitators with similar demographics to participants, i.e. a Black facilitator for young adults' groups, to allow for stronger identification with the facilitator to increase the possibility of obtaining rich data. Demographics such as race, age, gender, marital status and parenthood may be considered. It may be interesting to compare data obtained from focus groups conducted by researchers with different demographic characteristics.

The research suggests that there are many areas of research that may be explored in relation to TRA. Additional research is required to understand the reasons for particular responses to TRA in the South Africa context. These enquiries may explore understandings of families in South Africa, the continued presence of racism in South Africa and how this manifests itself, why racism continues to be highly prevalent and controversial in South Africa, cultural understandings of TRA, identity development in the South Africa context in relation to race, class, gender and family background, intimate interracial relationships, and attachment relationships in TRA. Therefore, research in the field of TRA may include various areas within the exploration of the family and racism in the South African context.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 presented the conclusions drawn from an integration of literature and the results of the analysis of the data. Three main themes were identified. These included race relations in South Africa, social constructions of the family in relation to TRA, and the manner in which TRA contributes to challenging views and social constructions of the family, race relations and other stratum of South African society. The discussion highlighted the similarity and connectedness of metaperceptions of the two participant groups. The limitations of the study and directions for future research were discussed.

The study allowed for an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of TRA from the transracially adoptive mothers' and transracially adopted young adults' perspectives. Through exploring participants' metaperceptions it was possible to investigate the perceptions of TRA in South Africa. The findings highlighted the role of race and class in interracial interactions as informing the metaperceptions that individuals hold of particular race groups, class

divisions and other social categorisations. It appeared that race trouble (Durrheim et al., 2011) influenced everyday interactions of South Africans; and informed the metaperceptions held by participants. The main areas highlighted by participants through their metaperceptions were race relations in South Africa, constructions of the family, and challenging social norms which are in the process of change.

The study contributed to a better understanding of TRA in South Africa. A specific contribution was the comparative nature of the metaperceptions of adoptive mothers and transracially adopted young adults. The comparison revealed that participants' metaperceptions were generally similar, or were supportive of each other's discussions. Aspects of being part of a transracially adoptive family were highlighted, such as bonding, managing outside interference, dealing with racism, accepting one's TRA and identity formation. Therefore, the study was able to create a social commentary of the social constructions of race relations, the family and other social categorisations in South Africa through unpacking elements of participants' metaperceptions and experiences. Further research in this area may allow for further understanding of the topic.

In addition, through examination of the findings context specific interventions and support programmes may be recommended. These interventions may have the possibility of being beneficial to transracially adoptive mothers and transracially adopted children. They may serve the purpose of assisting those part of TRA to develop coping mechanism pertinent to experiences in the TRA context. Interventions may address parenting skills for managing health boundaries in transracially adoptive families, identity development for transracially adoptive young adults, discussing identity with transracially adoptive young adults for transracially adoptive parents, facilitating identity development specifically concerning race, culture and language, bonding activities tailored to TRA, and coping skills for conflict resolution and managing feedback from others.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Sheet – Mothers

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

Dear Madam

Good day. My name is Cherilee Camara; I am a Masters in Community-based Counselling psychology student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently in the process of conducting research as part of the requirements for the completion of my degree. I would like to investigate Black young adults' perceptions of how they think they are viewed by others because they have been adopted as a child or infant by a mother/parents from a race different to their own. I will also be conducting separate focus groups with White mothers who have adopted Black children or infants to gain similar insight into this experience from their perspective. The main aim of the study is to draw a comparison of the experiences and views of White mothers who have transracially adopted Black children and Black young adults who have been transracially adopted by White mothers as children. This study is of particular interest and importance as it will contribute to the understanding of the experiences of White females who adopt transracially, and Black young adults who were adopted transracially, in a social environment which is in flux with regard to moving toward complete acceptance of transracial adoption and interracial relationships. It is hoped that this study will contribute to providing a better understanding of experiences of transracial adoption and provide insights into how individuals in transracial adoption can be supported. Your contribution would be invaluable and thus I would like to invite you to participate in my study and to play a role in this investigation.

Your participation would entail participating in a group discussion lasting approximately 1-2 hours. This will be arranged via email or phone at a time and location that is convenient to both the researcher and participants. With your permission the focus group will be recorded so that accuracy is ensured. The recording will then be transcribed and you would be allowed the opportunity to read the transcription to verify the accuracy as well as choose to have anything omitted if you may wish. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the recordings; they will be safely stored and then destroyed once the study has been examined. The results of the study will be written in a research report and may also be published in the form of a journal article. The focus group transcripts will be kept for a period of 2 years should publications arise from the research or for 5 years if no publications arise. Only I will

have access to your identity, and your identity will be kept confidential in the interview transcripts and in quotations appearing the research report. On request, I will provide you with a 1 page summary of the main results of the study.

Your participation would be entirely voluntary and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for taking part or not. During the group discussion you are not obligated to participate in all questions asked, and you may choose to not answer or contribute to certain discussions, none of which will be held against you. You are also permitted to withdraw from the study at any point with no negative consequences. It is not anticipated that any distress would arise from participating in the study but should this arise, Counselling can be received for free at Lifeline: (011) 728 1347, or accessed through The Family Life Centre (FAMSA): (011) 788 4784/5. Information on support groups can be accessed through www.adoption.org.

If you wish to participate or have any questions about the study please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ms. Cherilee Camara (Researcher) Prof. Tanya Graham (Research Supervisor)

Appendix B: Information Sheet – Young Adults

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

Good day. My name is Cherilee Camara; I am a Masters in Community-based Counselling psychology student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am currently in the process of conducting research as part of the requirements for the completion of my degree. I would like to investigate Black young adults' perceptions of how they think they are viewed by others because they have been adopted as a child or infant by a mother/parents from a race different to their own. I will also be conducting separate focus groups with White mothers who have adopted Black children or infants to gain similar insight into this experience from their perspective. The main aim of the study is to draw a comparison of the experiences and views of White mothers who have transracially adopted Black children and Black young adults who have been transracially adopted by White mothers as children. This study is of particular interest and importance as it will contribute to the understanding of the experiences of White females who adopt transracially, and Black young adults who were adopted transracially, in a social environment which is in flux with regard to moving toward complete acceptance of transracial adoption and interracial relationships. It is hoped that this study will contribute to providing a better understanding of experiences of transracial adoption and provide insights into how individuals in transracial adoption can be supported. Your contribution would be invaluable and thus I would like to invite you to participate in my study and to play a role in this investigation.

Your participation would entail participating in a group discussion lasting approximately 1-2 hours. This will be arranged via email or phone at a time and location that is convenient to both the researcher and participants. With your permission the focus group will be recorded so that accuracy is ensured. The recording will then be transcribed and you would be allowed the opportunity to read the transcription to verify the accuracy as well as choose to have anything omitted if you may wish. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the recordings; they will be safely stored and then destroyed once the study has been examined. The results of the study will be written in a research report and may also be published in the form of a journal article. The focus group transcripts will be kept for a period of 2 years should publications arise from the research or for 5 years if no publications arise. Only I will have access to your identity, and your identity will be kept confidential in the interview

transcripts and in quotations appearing the research report. On request, I will provide you with a 1 page summary of the main results of the study.

Your participation would be entirely voluntary and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for taking part or not. During the group discussion you are not obligated to participate in all questions asked, and you may choose to not answer or contribute to certain discussions, none of which will be held against you. You are also permitted to withdraw from the study at any point with no negative consequences. It is not anticipated that any distress would arise from participating in the study but should this arise, Counselling can be received for free at Lifeline: (011) 728 1347, or accessed through The Family Life Centre (FAMSA): (011) 788 4784/5. Information on support groups can be accessed through www.adoption.org.

If you wish to participate or have any questions about the study please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ms. Cherilee Camara (Researcher) Prof. Tanya Graham (Research Supervisor)

Appendix C: Participation and Recording Consent

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

I ……. hereby consent to participating in a focus group discussion conducted by Cherilee Camara for her comparative study if the metaperceptions of transracial adoption of adoptive mothers and adoptees in South Africa.
I understand that:

- Participation in this focus group is voluntary
- That I may choose to not contribute to any questions or part of the discussion that I would prefer not to
- I may withdraw from the study at any time
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential
- I understand that direct quotes may be used in the research report, but that I will not be identified by name

Signed…… Date……..

I ……. hereby consent to my participation in a focus group discussion led by Cherilee Camara for her comparative study of the metaperceptions of transracial adoption of adoptive mothers and adoptees in South Africa being recorded.
I understand that:

- The recordings and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organization, other than the researcher and her supervisor (once participants identity has been removed)
- All recordings will be safely stored, so that only the researcher and supervisor can access them
- All recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report

Signed…… Date……..

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire – Mothers

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax: (011) 717 4559

A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

Age: _____ **Marital Status:** _____

Race: _____ **Race of spouse/partner:** _____

Child's Name	Race	Age	Gender	Transracially Adopted, Fostered or Biological?	Age and Year in Which Child was Adopted
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Number of adopted children: _____ **Number of fostered children:** _____

Number of biological children: _____

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire – Young Adults

Psychology
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A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

Age: _____ **Marital Status:** _____

Race: _____ **Race of spouse/partner:** _____

Number of children (if any): _____

Number of children transracially adopted (if any): _____

Age at which you were adopted: _____ **Year in which you were adopted:** _____

Do you have any siblings? _____ **If yes, how old are they?**

_____

_____

_____

If yes, what race are your siblings?

_____

If yes, were any of your siblings transracially adopted?

_____

Appendix F: Focus Group Guideline Questions - Mothers

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
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A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

1. What circumstances led you to adopt transracially?
2. Were any of your personal beliefs or values a factor in influencing your choice to adopt transracially? Please explain.
3. How do you experience people's perceptions of you, as a White female, who has adopted transracially?
4. How do you experience people's views of your child/children because they have been transracially adopted by you?
5. Do you feel that others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view your family as different due to your TRA? If yes, in what ways?
6. What do you think have been peoples' reactions to your TRA, and do you think this varies according to race?
7. Do you feel supported in your TRA? Please elaborate on how you are or are not supported, and on what your support structures are.
8. There are perceptions that people should only interact with people similar to themselves. How do you think this affects the way you think people view you?
9. What do you think have been the reactions of your extended family to your TRA?
10. Do you think race plays a role in how others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view your TRA? If yes, please elaborate.
11. Were there any preferences you considered when adopting your child? For example, race, religion, age, culture, etc.?
12. What were your experiences of your child dating and deciding on the race of their partner? How do you think others viewed this?
13. Do you think that your general community (school, extended community, work) has supported your decision to adopt transracially? Please elaborate further. And why do you think this may have been the case?
14. What are your perceptions of how others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view TRA, especially in consideration with socio-cultural issues prevalent in the South African context? (What do they say in your absence?)
15. What are the **challenges** you may have faced, or expect to face raising a Black child, as a White mother?
    a. In terms of language and communication barriers?
    b. In terms of socialising them into your family culture and the culture of their race?

c. Managing and negotiating boundaries in regards to community interest?
   For example: If people ask you questions about your TRA or your child that you may feel uncomfortable answering, how do you deal with those situations?
d. In terms of your child seeking out their birth family?
e. Developing coping skills in dealing with racism and difference? E.g. Hair

Appendix G: Focus Group Guideline Questions – Young Adults

Psychology
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A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

1. What circumstances led your parents to adopt transracially?
2. How do you experience people's perceptions of you, as a young adult, who has been adopted transracially?
3. How do you experience people's views of your mother because she has transracially adopted you?
4. Do you feel that others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view your family as different due to your TRA? If yes, in what ways?
5. What do you think have been peoples' reactions to your TRA, and do you think this varies according to race?
6. Do you feel supported in your TRA? Please elaborate on how you are or are not supported, and on what your support structures are.
7. There are perceptions in the public that people should only interact with people of a similar race to themselves. How do you think this affects the way you think people view you?
8. What do you think have been the reactions of your extended family to your TRA?
9. Do you think race plays a role in how others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view your TRA? If yes, please elaborate.
10. Do you think that your general community (such as school, extended community, work) has supported your parents' decision to adopt transracially? Please elaborate further. And why do you think this may have been the case?
11. What were your experiences of school and choosing friends?
12. What were your experiences of dating and deciding the race of your partner? How do you think others viewed this?
13. What are your perceptions of how others (friends, work colleagues, general public, non-family members) view TRA, especially in consideration with socio-cultural issues prevalent in the South African context? (What do they say in your absence?)
14. What are the **challenges** you may have faced, or expect to face as a Black young adult raised by a White family?
    a. In terms of language and communication barriers?
    b. In terms of being socialised into your family culture and the culture of your race?
    c. Managing and negotiating boundaries in regards to community interest?

For example: If people ask you questions about your TRA that you may feel uncomfortable answering, how do you deal with those situations?

d. In terms of seeking out your birth family?
e. Developing coping skills in dealing with racism and difference? E.g. Hair

Appendix H: Vignette – Mothers

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Transracial adoption: Thoughts of a South African Adoptive Mom

A few times I have had people ask me whose daughter my two-year-old Megan is. When I respond that she is mine, and explain that she is adopted (as they look at me strangely), a few tell me very firmly, (sometimes aggressively) that there is no way that she could possibly be mine. Although this kind of ignorance is hurtful, I can handle it for myself, but my heart aches for Megan when she is old enough to hear and understand them. I think the deepest issue for me has been simply the aching that every mother has in her heart when her child is wounded and she cannot mend the wound herself.

I see this pre-language stage of Megan as our honeymoon time during which she will not be aware of the comments of others or their uninhibited staring. I truly believe that she is, and will be a happy and well-adjusted person, and I don't in any way see adoption as a negative word or concept, but I do know that she will have to face the reality of it and the rejection of it when she is ready. I believe that she will become a child, and eventually a woman who is not afraid to stand up and be different when it is the right thing to do. It will have a ripple effect on those who are touched by it, challenging stereotypes, prejudices and racism, and calling individuals and families to positive action in whatever area is right for them.

On a lighter note (and there are infinitely more wonderful moments than these few dark ones that unfortunately stick in the memory), I will mention some of my thoughts and our experiences as a family. Because we have chosen to adopt transracially, our adoption is 'public'. Strangers cannot help but notice, and often stare or, better than staring, ask questions. Although I appreciate peoples' honesty and would prefer questions to whispering behind our backs and possibly coming to incorrect assumptions about us and adoption, sometimes it can be tiring and draining to feel 'watched'. For example, when my daughter is misbehaving in public, throwing a tantrum, or crying, I feel that I am being watched and 'assessed' much more than with my two biological children.

http:aurettebowes.wordpress.com/2010/07/29/transracial-adoption-thoughts-of-a-south-african-adoptive-mom/: sourced on 20/11/12. Someone's Daughter Website.

Appendix I: Vignette – Young Adults

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A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa

An Everyday Adoption Story

I am your everyday, normal (as possible), average, well-adjusted woman. I am the third (and last) adopted child of a farming family. I have never searched for my birth parents, but have thought about it all of my life. I have always known, as long as I can remember, that I was adopted. I knew in my mind that my birth mother had to have made the hardest decision in anyone's life, the decision to give up a child. I can't remember how I found out that I was adopted, I've always known.

My adoptive parents were always there for me, although we never really discussed were the stories about our adoptions. My questions (to myself, or my friends...not to my parents) was always, who do I look like? Am I like one of my birth parents, or my extended birth family? Do I resemble "Weird Aunt Susan" or do I enjoy something like "peanut butter and cheese sandwiches" that only my father/grandfather/aunt likes? What is my medical background? Do I have brothers and sisters that I don't know about? Are they still out there? Do I have their personality or talents? Do they want me to contact them? I want to understand why I am the way I am.

I guess I have never wanted to hurt my mom and dad with questions, and I do think that it would crush my mom to tell her that I wanted to find my birth parents, even now that I am grown up. I'm not sure she would understand my curiosity, even now, despite us being close.
My sister on the other hand wants nothing to do with her birth family. She says that if they gave her away, then she wants nothing to do with them, except medical information, maybe.
My brother doesn't really care either way. He is curious, but not curious enough to go searching. He also blames most of his life's problems on our adoptive parents. He never quite warmed up to me, even though we were all just weeks old when Mom & Dad brought us home.

My feeling is that if you do adopt a child, then I feel that it is best to let them know that they are adopted as early as possible. But in the same breath, let them know how much you love them, and eventually (when they are old enough to understand), how much their birth parents must have loved them, to be able to give them to you.

www.adoption.com Sourced on 15 January 2013

Appendix J: Proposal Acceptance Letter

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development

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23 April 2013

Dear Ms Camara

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY-BASED COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have approved your proposal entitled *"A comparative study of the metaperceptions of transracially adoptive mothers and adoptees in South Africa"* and you have now been admitted to full candidature. I confirm that Dr Graham has been appointed you supervisor in the Department of Psychology.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year.

You are required to submit 2 bound copies and one unbound copy plus 1 CD in pdf (Adobe) format of your research report to the Faculty Office. The 2 bound copies go to the examiners and are retained by them and the unbound copy is retained by the Faculty Office as back up.

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report extension.

I should be glad if you keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports.

Yours sincerely

Julie Poyser
Postgraduate Division
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X3
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Appendix K: Ethical Clearance Letter

Psychology
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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/13/002 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	A Comparative Study of the Metaperceptions of Transracially Adoptive Mothers and Adoptees in South Africa.
INVESTIGATORS	Camara Cherilee
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	08/04/13
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 11 April 2013

CHAIRPERSON
(Professor Andrew Thatcher)

cc Supervisor:

Ms. T Graham
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2015

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES