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**AN EXPLORATION OF THE PRACTICE OF CROSS-RACIAL ADOPTION IN
SOUTH AFRICA: EAST LONDON**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Nyasha Kausi do hereby declare that this work, with the exception of quotations or references which have been attributed to their authors, is entirely my own original work and has not been submitted elsewhere.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Research Project to my creator, the Lord God Almighty.

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First and foremost, my deepest thanks go to God Almighty for His providence and guidance throughout my research endeavour. My major debt of gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. P. T. Tanga, for his inspiration, assistance and mentorship throughout this research. I would also like to give special thanks to all the staff members in the Department of Social Work who gave me their guidance during my study. My heartfelt thanks go to the CMR and Child Welfare South Africa in East London for allowing me to make use of their resources while I collected my data. I would like also to extend my thanks to all those who made it possible for this research to be a success through their valuable participation in interviews and discussions. Also, special regards go to Effort Nyoni and Yvonne Shylet Chivanga

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the practice of cross-racial adoption in South Africa using a case study of East London. The study was qualitative in nature and employed both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to collect data from six social workers, two managers, seven adoptive parents and five community members. These were most appropriate for eliciting relevant, valuable and rich information for analysis. The process of collecting data also made use of observations. Data was analysed qualitatively, using thematic analysis of the content of the data, which employed an interpretative approach, resulting in a presentation of data, which is textual rather than statistical.

The study found that the practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) in South Africa is a controversial, yet an increasing phenomenon in which most Black children are being adopted by White parents. In addition, race and culture were found to have a great impact on shaping the practice of CRA. The roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies were examined in the following contexts: determining the adoptability of children; recruiting and selection of prospective adoptive parents; the provision of necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child; helping with placement transitions and providing post-adoption services to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships. In addition, perceptions of issues such as cultural genocide, the well-being and the best interests of adopted children, racial identity, a colour-blind society, acculturation, racial consciousness and role modelling were also examined.

The study concluded that although the practice of CRA is an acceptable form of custody for children in need of care and protection, despite any legislation pertaining to it, it is still an area which requires more attention from scholars and researchers. It should be a matter of national importance from relevant officials and policy makers in order to overcome the legacy of racial segregation, which characterised the era of apartheid rule, in which race was of great significance. On the basis of the findings of the study, pertinent recommendations have been made to various stakeholders, including social workers, the Department of Social Development and policy makers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights of the Child
CMROL	Christelike Maatskaplike Raad Oos- Londen
CRA	Cross-Racial Adoption
CWSAEL	Child Welfare South Africa: East London
DSD	Department of Social Development
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/ Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
OVCs	Orphans and Vulnerable children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations.
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

There is a great deal of literature which offers a range of arguments, some of them acrimonious, concerning the practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) as an appropriate, expedient and ideal form of child custody in international, regional, national and local contexts. According to Nielsen and Hardeman (2012) in Johnson, Mickelson and Davila (2013:11), “the adoption of children of one race by parents of another has grown rapidly since the 20th century, but this adoption option is controversial”. In South Africa the practice of CRA still presents a social quandary, despite the government’s efforts towards achieving colour-blindness within child custody (Snyder, 2012). In addition, Moos and Mwaba (2007) point out that during the apartheid rule the practice of CRA was simply illicit as a result of the apartheid government’s internationally denounced racial ideology.

Nonetheless, owing to its legalisation in 1991, accompanied by an escalating number of children who are in “need of care and protection”, the practice of CRA in South Africa has increased drastically (The Presidency, 2009: xx; Snyder, 2012; Louw, 2009; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). According to Gerrand and Motlalepule (2013), racial prejudice and segregation still play an influential role within the practice of CRA owing to diverse incongruities in societal perceptions of the practice. In addition, racial prejudices affect the attitudes and actions of adoption professionals (social workers and managers) concerning how they facilitate the care of children in South Africa (Snyder, 2012; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006).

Freeman and Nkomo (2006) and Louw (2009) maintain that the practice of CRA is very perturbing across South Africa, with its high rate of children in need of care and protection within race-sensitive communities. Over the years, in South Africa various strategies, frameworks and intervention programmes, designed to respond positively to the child placement crisis, have been employed. These measures have included extended families, foster care placements, supported child-headed households, community carers, institutional care and same-race adoption (Gerrand and Motlalepule, 2013; Snyder, 2012; Jonhson et al., 2006; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). It is vital to note, however, that unlike adoption, these types of placements have not been an effective means of providing permanency in child care and protection (Gerrand and Motlalepule, 2013; Louw, 2009). Consequently, the nature and practice of child placement have shifted significantly from same-race placements towards CRA placements, as the latter are able to offer permanency in child custody (Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 2010; Butler-Sweet, 2011). This development accords with the attempt by the South African government in its striving to provide permanent and adequate care and protection to orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).

It is important to note that, in South Africa, a number of factors have contributed towards many children being stripped of parental care and protection. These include abandonment and neglect (Coetzee, 2012), together with the huge impact of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2012; Medical Research Council, 2012; Moos and Mwamba, 2007; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). To illustrate the enormity of the contribution made by HIV/AIDS to this phenomenon, UNAIDS (2012), reports that approximately 13,2 million children were logged as being orphaned by AIDS in 2010 and that 12,7 million

of these were from Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Bradshaw et al. (2002) in Freeman and Nkomo (2006:302), maintain that by the year 2015, approximately one third of the children under the age of 18 in South Africa are going to be orphaned. In addition, UNICEF (2011) reports that in 2011 approximately 3, 9 million South African children were orphaned. These alarming statistics signify a great “number of children in great need of care and protection”, placing a huge burden on communities to render parental obligations to these children (The Presidency, 2009: xx).

It is important to note that same-race child custody constitutes a vexing issue in South Africa, owing to the unavailability of willing same-race parents to adopt these Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) (Mokomane and Rochat, 2011; Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 2010). As a result, CRA has gained, and continues to gain, a great deal of impetus in South Africa as one of the most feasible and ideal forms of child placement, and often takes the form of adoption of Black children by White parents (Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 2010; Moos and Mwaba, 2007). The registrar of adoption at the Department of Social Development in Pretoria confirms that in 2008, about 3 279 children were adopted, of which 452 were CRAs (Department of Social Development, 2012). In addition, the national statistics concerning adoption in 2012 showed a substantial increase in the number of children who had been adopted across racial lines, with approximately 23% of the Black children being adopted by White couples, 19% by Coloured and 7% by Indian couples (Department of Social Development, 2012). These statistics indicate quite clearly that cross-racial adoption is a reality in South Africa.

According to Hall (2010) and Ferreira (2009) South Africa recognises the value of having “permanent alternative” child custody for children without proper parental care. This view lends considerable support to the efficacy and desirability of CRA, for the simple reason that, as opposed to other forms of child custody, which include foster care and institutional care, CRA feasibly offers permanent custody and long-term care of the cross-racial adoptees by the cross-racial adoptive family (Moos and Mwaba, 2007). In addition, the present-day statutory framework in South Africa supports the practice of CRA as opposed to foster care or residential care (The Presidency, 2008; Ferreira, 2009; Hall, 2010) and the South African Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005 complies strongly with global standards. This as it entails and articulates ethics allied to the care and protection of children, including those cared for by adoption services.

It is noteworthy that a close analysis of both global and regional commitments, as documented in the “United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990)” shows support for the practice of CRA. This is owing to the fact that both sets of commitments support adoption as a viable form of child custody, owing to its ability to provide permanency in child care and protection, from which the practice of CRA cannot be disqualified (Mokomane and Rochat, 2011; Hall, 2010). At the national level, the Bill of Rights Chapter 2, “Section 28:1(b) of the South African Constitution states that, every child has the right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate care when removed from the family environment”. In addition, the Child Care Amendment Act of 1991, the Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005 (amendment) and the Children’s Act No. 41 of 2007 all encouraged the practice of CRA in South Africa by

altering the clause which discouraged it (Snyder, 2012; Ferreira, 2009; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006).

The question that as race had been used as a criterion according to which people had been separated, discriminated against and stripped of human rights (Nayak, 2006), what then was the motivation for legalising the practice of CRA in South Africa is of great importance to this study. Consequently, this study sought to consider the quagmire of racial issues obtaining in South Africa in relation to a comprehensive investigation into the practice of CRA. At present, although there seems to be a dearth of research relating to the practice of CRA in South Africa, it is important to mention that those studies which have been conducted focused, to a very large extent, on the adoptees and the adoptive parents. Contrary, little research has focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the practice of CRA within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. In this study, which was conducted in East London, the researcher sought to compensate for the lack of research in this area which exists at present.

1.2 Motivation and rationale for the study

The motivation to conduct this study emanated from the experience and knowledge gained by the researcher during internship, a requirement for the Bachelor of Social Work Degree, in which she was concerned, specifically, with adoption work. During that time it became very evident that, although cross-racial adoption is becoming increasingly common, it attracts a great deal of controversy, as a result of the racial perceptions of the various communities in South Africa. It also became very clear to the researcher that there were mixed perceptions and attitudes concerning the practice of CRA among community members and adoption practitioners (social

workers and managers), which have discernible effects upon the practice in South Africa. It was as a result of these observations that the researcher sought to carry out a broader study through an exploration into the practice of CRA in the South African context, in greater detail. The practice of CRA has, for a long time, been viewed within the child welfare system as a contentious issue and one which is capable of causing much resentment and misunderstanding among the very adoption workers (social workers and managers) who should be assuming a key role in the provision of care and protection to vulnerable children. Consequently, the main research question which this research seeks to answer is how CRA is being practised in South Africa, with particular reference to the case of East London.

1.3 Problem statement

Although the practice of CRA became legal in 1991 in an effort towards the fostering of a colour-blind approach to child custody, its becoming legal has not been without causes for concern. There is also a great deal of empirical evidence to suggest that in South Africa, both intentional and unintentional racial integration, along with racial segregation, have often influenced and frequently shaped the way in which CRA is being practised. There are varying views and perceptions held by both White people and people of colour, specifically Black people, regarding the practice of CRA. Most culturally conservative black people tend to maintain that the practice is a form of cultural genocide, an indirect means employed by White people to undermine the Black community and its culture and traditions, which is not in accordance with the best interests of the children (Hollingsworth, 1999; Hall, 2010; Ferreira, 2009; Butler-Sweet, 2011). In addition, some Black people are of the opinion that the practice of cross-racial adoption has to be the last resort in the “care and protection of children”

(The Presidency, 2009: xx) for the simple reason that the primary family acts as the sole source of care, protection and socialisation for these vulnerable children.

Conversely, most White people maintain that the practice of CRA is the most viable alternative form of child custody for these “children in need of care and protection” (The Presidency, 2009: xx). This is so especially when same-race care is not available and that the practice is in line with the best interests of the children, as “every child has the right to parental care” and deserves a permanent home. Nevertheless, the remarkable persistence of such arguments surrounding the practice of CRA suggests that there are some core issues pertaining to this practice, which cannot simply be discarded into the dustbin of academic history (Snyder, 2012; Butler-Sweet, 2011). More so, the veritable quagmire of conflicting cultural and ideological perceptions and values has inevitably placed the practice of CRA in jeopardy- a situation that is exacerbated by the fact that nearly all of the knowledge of the subject acquired from research, so far, has come from studies, which have focused mainly on adoption in general. There has also been very little research, which focuses on in-depth studies of the practice of CRA within child care agencies in South Africa. As has already been noted, this lack of knowledge and information is the one, which this study sought to remedy by means of in-depth research conducted in East London in the Buffalo City municipal area.

1.4 Aim and objectives of the research

The main aim of this study was to investigate the practice of cross-racial adoption in South Africa, specifically in East London. The specific objectives included:

- To investigate the roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies in cross-racial adoption

- To examine the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption.
- To investigate the challenges facing agencies, social workers, managers and adoptive parents with regard to cross-racial adoption.

1.5 Research questions

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is formulated in the form of research questions. In this study, the primary research question was: How is the practice of cross-racial adoption being practised in South Africa, specifically in East London? The secondary questions for this study were:

- What are the roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies in cross-racial adoption?
- What are the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption?
- What are the challenges facing agencies, social workers, managers and adoptive parents regarding cross-racial adoption?

1.6 Significance of the study

Regardless of specific cultural beliefs and values, the welfare of children is of paramount importance for any country, as the future of any country is literally in the hands of its children. Thus, this study aims to provide valuable information for the child welfare system in South Africa, particularly where custody of children across racial lines is concerned. In equal measure, it aims to provide social workers, managers within the field of care and protection of children with a new understanding of the practice of CRA in South Africa. This owes to the fact that it attempts to contribute to a

broader body of knowledge concerning discourses of race in post-apartheid South Africa by providing an in-depth, critical analysis of some of the discourses which may arise when people talk about issues pertaining to race. Accordingly, using the topic of CRA to elicit discourses concerning 'race' has the potential to provide unique insights, in that doing so provides a window into how people may use constructs such as family, identity, culture to talk about 'race', in indirect ways, in contemporary South Africa.

The study may also provide insights into the perceptions of individuals who have reacted negatively towards the practice of CRA, for example, prospective adoptive parents and community members, which could eventually lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of CRA for South African society. This would also be of great significance in a broader body of knowledge concerning the discourses of "race" which developed during the apartheid era. Moreover, this study provides a great insight to people of South Africa in understanding the fundamental benefits and the part that CRA has to play in alleviating the plight of children who are in desperate need of care and protection. This is so because if this is not understood or appreciated by all of South Africa's people, the hope for a more colour-blind post-apartheid South Africa is likely to be a futile one and the trauma of the past is unlikely to be healed. In addition, this research hopes to provide a platform for further studies of CRA by many researchers and to assist in policy making within the Child Welfare system.

1.7 Delineation and scope of the study

This study investigated the practice of CRA. It focused on adoption social workers, adoption managers, adoptive parents and community members, both white and of

colour, in South Africa. For the researcher, these constituted ideal groups, which ensured valid results, particularly in view of the present lack of first-hand information concerning the practice of CRA. The case study was East London.

1.8 Definition of terms

The terms needing to be defined include cross-racial adoption, race, adoptive parent, challenge and perception. The main aim of clarifying these terms is to provide both the conceptual and the operational meanings of these terms for the purposes of this study.

1.8.1 Adoption

Adoption refers to a “traditional permanent placement for children in need of care and protection and has for many years been regarded as the most effective means of providing a permanent and stable family life for orphaned and vulnerable children” (Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 2013:6). As noted by Kahn (2006: 151), the term “adoption” refers to the “process whereby an adult takes full responsibility for a child who is not theirs by birth”. In addition, adopted children have exactly the same rights as all other children, and adoptive parents bear the same “rights and responsibilities” to the adopted child as they would to their child by birth.”

1.8.2 Cross-racial adoption (CRA)

According to Nielsen and Hardeman (2012), cross-racial adoption refers to the adoption of children by parents of a different race from that of the child. In this research, the term “cross- racial adoption” denotes the permanent custody, through court procedures, of a child of a different racial group by a parent or parents of another

racial group. For (Synder, 2012 and Butler-Sweet, 2011), cross-racial adoption in South Africa is always done in accordance to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 and/or No. 41 of 2007. In this case, the child or children being placed is, or are, of a different race from that of the parent being given care of the child, in terms of the Acts (Synder, 2012 and Butler-Sweet, 2011). The term "cross-racial adoption" also refers to "the joining of racially distinct parents and children together in family, through adoption" (Vonk, 2001 cited in Hall, 2010:1).

1.8.3 Adoptive parent

The term "adoptive parent" refers to "a person who is not a biological parent of a child, to whom the child is legally placed under his or her permanent care" (Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 2013:6). This also refers to a person or to persons who will be "responsible for the child in all ways: legally, financially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, as if the child had been born to them". For Ferreira (2009), the term refers to an adult or to adults, who provide a child, or children, with a permanent home through court processes (Ferreira, 2009). Although this term can be used to refer both to parents who are seeking to adopt, and to parents who have already adopted, in this study it is used to describe a parent or parents who have already adopted.

1.8.4 Race

The term "race" has diverse meanings and connotations, depending on the context in which it is used. However, according to Dalal (2013:10), race is a "term used to sort varieties of humankind. Accordingly, in this research the term "race" refers to groups

of people with similar physical characteristics, for example, people in South Africa who are designated or referred to as Blacks or Whites.

1.8.5 Challenge

A challenge refers to situations, which test one's abilities or resources in a demanding but stimulating undertaking, or a difficult situation, or an unpleasant experience (Cambridge Advanced Learner's dictionary, 2014). This study adopted this definition.

1.8.6 Perception

A simple definition of the term "perception" would refer to thoughts or opinions held by people about how things are or appear to be. According to Hall (2010), a perception can be either a positive or negative appraisal of something. This study makes use of this definition.

1.9 Chapter outlines

This study is made up of six chapters which are explained below:

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

This chapter outlines the basis of the study; it clarifies the basic terms and concepts; it provides the statement of the research problem, the background to the study, the research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, the delimitation and the significance of the research, the anticipated results, contributions to be made by the research and the specific objectives and concerns of each chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical and legislative frameworks

This chapter focuses on the theories which underpinned the study, which include the Critical Race theory (CRT) and the Crisis Theory (CT), and on the legislative frameworks governing the practice of CRA in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: The practice of cross-racial adoption

This chapter highlights how the practice of CRA is carried out and includes its process, the screening of adoptive parents, the roles performed by social workers, managers and adoption agencies and the perceptions of the social workers, adoption managers and community members. The challenges facing social workers, adoption managers and adoptive parents are also covered in this chapter, and the rates and trends regarding CRA in East London are highlighted.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research methodology

This chapter examines how the data was collected, interpreted, processed and analysed, giving a description of the research methodology, the research approach and the research design, together with sampling, the methods used to collect data, the trustworthiness of the research instrument and the ethical considerations relating to this research, which were respected. This chapter also presents the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: Findings and discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the findings concerning the practice of CRA in East London, in qualitative form only. The discussion is presented with reference to both the present literature and the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarises the results of the study, presents its conclusions and makes recommendations based on them. The chapter also offers suggestions for further research and considers the implications of the findings of the study for social work practice.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter endeavoured to provide an overall understanding of the research which was conducted. It is evident that the topic requires a great deal of research and investigation in South Africa, as the practice of cross-racial adoption is a rapidly rising phenomenon, as a result of the great escalation in the numbers of children in need of care and protection, despite the intense antagonism which it arouses in certain quarters. The next chapter highlights the theoretical and legislative frameworks of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the critical race theory and crisis theory which were used in this study to highlight the key concerns in the practice of CRA. The chapter also elaborates on the legislative framework guiding the practice of CRA in South Africa.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) has received relatively little research in either developing or developed countries. The limited amount of research conducted so far has led to the adoption of particular theories to explain the phenomenon which forms the focus of this study. This study was based, primarily, on the Critical Race Theory (CRT), and, to a lesser extent, on the Crisis Theory (CT). Accordingly, the analysis of the findings of this study have been interpreted and understood within the context of the premises of these two theories. It should be noted that both of these theories addressed themselves to different facets of the objectives of this study, and that they tend to complement each other in this respect, making it necessary to employ both theories in order to give this study its full resonance. As an example, the approach employed by the Critical Race Theory was adequate to explain the issue of race as it developed during the rule of the apartheid regime and which still has many implications for the way in which CRA is practised in South Africa today. However, it did not do complete justice to the other objectives of the study, making it necessary to integrate the Crisis Theory into the theoretical framework of the study, as it served to explain how past South Africa's racial pathologies have influenced the way people perceive the practice of CRA.

It is essential to note that the two theories will be discussed below in detail subsequently, but the section first focus on the Critical Race Theory (CRT) in terms of the rationale for its use, its background and its principles, which will eventually lead to an explanation of how the theory has been incorporated into the study. Where the Crisis Theory is concerned, the theory is explained in greater detail before venturing into its relevance to this study.

2.2.1 The Critical Race Theory

This section focuses on highlighting the vital components of the CRT, which comprise the rationale for choosing this theory, followed by a description of the theory itself. In addition, a discussion of the relevance of the CRT to this study also forms a part of this section.

2.2.1.1 Rationale for choosing the Critical Race Theory

The rationale for choosing this theory was that its basic tenets are in line with the racial concerns involved in the practice of CRA in South Africa. The Critical Race Theory is an activist's mechanism to promote the transformation and elimination of the relationship between race and racism (Delgado and Stefanic, 2001; Dixson et al., 2006). In addition, the CRT argues against the slow pace of racial reform in a racially-oriented society, which is a matter of concern where the South African adoption system is concerned. As opposed to the approaches taken by other academic disciplines, the CRT has an activist's perspective in that it endeavours to obtain a clear picture of the nature of the society's social fabric and to alter it for the best possible resolution, taking into consideration the issue of race and its implications for the society (Delgado and Stefanic, 2001; Dixson et al., 2006). For the researcher, all

of the components of the CRT cited are relevant to the South African context, making the theory particularly applicable in the case of this study.

2.2.1.2 Conceptualising the CRT

The CRT originally developed from the work of Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado in the mid-1970s, although they were later joined by a group of “lawyers, activists, and legal scholars” in the United States of America (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012 and Dixson et al, 2006). The theory was developed in response to the perceived need to develop “new theories and strategies” in order to battle the great deal of racism which was still prevalent within societies (Dixson et al., 2006). As was pointed out by Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 2) and Delgado and Stefancic (2012), at the core of the CRT is interdisciplinary scholarship and activism, focused on grasping an in-depth understanding of racial issues and altering the connection “among race, racism and power”.

For Dixson et al. (2006), the CRT is a combination of ideas derived from civil rights and ethnic studies discourses. Dixson et al. (2006) maintained that during the 1970s issues pertaining to civil rights tended to be ignored and there seemed to be a diminished function for civil rights on the part of lawyers, activists and scholars. The CRT activists’ were distressed by the delayed progress of racial transformation that was rampant with Americas’ societies (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: and Dixson et al., 2006). As a result, they argued for a paradigm shift towards racial tolerance or “colour-blind” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001: 7; Delgado and Stefancic, 2012: 8).

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012: 8-10), a number of tenets, which include, supports the CRT: (i) “Racial discrimination is embedded within societies and is therefore problematic to remove”; (ii) “Race and races are products of what people think, specifically when they have similar physical characteristics, which include, skin colour, physique and hair texture”; (iii) According to the CRT, because of being subjected to diverse forms of racial segregation in the past, racially Non-White societies are able to counteract the racial perceptions of White people in significant ways; (iv) The CRT is committed to eradicating racial segregation among all human races, making it vital for social workers working within the ambit of CRA to assume the role of non-racial activists and not to impair the efficacy of their work as a result of racist perceptions and prejudices.

2.2.1.3 Relationship of the theory to the study

This CRT’s relevance to this study is underlined by the fact that it addresses itself to the notion of race in the practice of cross-racial adoption. The theory is relevant to this study owing to fact that the practice of CRA in South Africa is believed to be mired in unresolved racial issues and prejudices emanating from the apartheid era. In the final years of the apartheid era it had become quite apparent that many more White people wished to adopt children than there were children available for adoption, and that there was a dramatically escalating number of Black children in need of care and protection, owing in no small part to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These circumstances prompted the South African government to take the unprecedented step of legalising child custody across racial boundaries. The perceptions engendered by institutionalised racism have become ingrained in the fabric of South African society, resulting in a difficult period of transition for the practice of CRA, as the perceptions of

the social workers and managers working within the ambit of the practice of CRA and the members of the various communities are inevitably affected.

For CRA to be truly effective as a solution to the social problems arising from the escalating number of children needing care and protection, there needs to be a transformation of the relationship between racial ideologies and the practice of CRA towards attaining colour-blindness. The effects of the influences of racial perceptions emanating from the apartheid era will be analysed in terms of how a vast number of South Africans, and specifically those from the Black communities, are failing to reformulate racial attitudes acquired as a result of their past experience of racial discrimination under the apartheid regime. The CRT is of great significance to this study, as it calls for change and reform in the attitudes of all people regarding racial issues and a will to achieve colour-blindness in South African society.

2.2.2 The crisis theory (CT)

This section highlights the vital concerns of the CT, explains the rationale for choosing the CT theory and gives a description of the theory itself. The relationship of the CT to this study is also covered in this section.

2.2.2.1 Justification for choosing the theory

The Crisis Theory provides a comprehensive view of the study, as it makes it possible to 'zoom in' on the practice of CRA in terms of the adoption managers and social workers' experiences, perceptions and challenges within the CRA system, following their exposure to the situational crisis which resulted from the racial rule of the apartheid era. In addition, the Crisis Theory explains dynamics such as the crisis

faced by childcare professionals in terms of racial fixations, their reactions and dilemmas concerning their roles within the practice of CRA. As will be explained below, these dynamics have a great bearing on this study. The theory also locates the practice of CRA within the wider perspective of society's mind-set, which facilitates the analysis of the role of adoption social workers and managers as well as the social quandary which they face regarding the practice of CRA.

2.2.2.2 Conceptualising Crisis Theory (CT)

The Crisis Theory takes the form of a theoretical standpoint, among whose proponent is Caplan. According to Caplan (1964), the CT focuses on the "emotional upset and disequilibrium and the breakdown in problem-solving or coping during the crisis state". For Caplan (1964: 39), the CT is supported by a number of tenets, which include:

- ❖ Individuals, families, groups or communities may be exposed to epochs of amplified internal and external worry, which disturb their state of balance.
- ❖ The influence of the menacing effect disrupts the one's state of homeostatic balance. The persistence of the crisis, with no prospect of being either resolved or avoided, can cause intense tension to build up.
- ❖ This causes disturbances that affect one's operation known as a "state of active crisis".
- ❖ The persistence of such a crisis may be perceived as a "stressful even and as a threat", either to an individual needs, or to his or her well-being, and as a pathology to "survival and growth".
- ❖ The individual perception "calls forth a characteristic emotional reaction which reflects the subjective meaning of the event for the individual". As an example, a perceived threat elicits a heightened level of anxiety.

- ❖ A crisis is also linked to the unsettled or incompletely fixed life battles. This also results in negative reactions to life pathology.
- ❖ The overall time between the beginning and the end of the crisis event varies due to the severity of the crisis, one's reaction to the crisis, "the nature and complexity of the tasks to be accomplished, and also on the situational support available".
- ❖ Each particular class of crisis seems to follow a specific pattern, which can be predicted and plotted out. In addition, "fixation and disequilibrium at a particular point may provide the clue as to where the person is stuck and what lies behind such an inability to do the crisis work and to master the situation". Caplan (1964) points out that if suitable support fails to be rendered at this stage, one's ability to cope well in the future will be thwarted.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the cognitive perspective of a crisis embedded in the CT signifies the way an individual reacts to a crisis event, specifically when the event suits well within one's ambit of reference concerning life (Taplin, 1974). Accordingly, Taplin (1974) noted that the opinion is that one's thoughts and expectations has to be considered very much as a computer designed to receive and process data and act in accordance to the same data. An example relevant to this study would be that of an adoption social worker who has been subjected to the emotional and physical cruelty of racial segregation, who is expected to play a positive role in the adoption of a child or children across racial lines. Thus, within the practice of CRA, the crisis for the social worker emanates from the conflict between past trauma and discrimination and feelings of humiliation and social alienation, resulting from past experiences, on one hand.

More so, this result from a new cognitive framework with its set of expectations concerning children of colour being adopted across racial lines, specifically into the very community whose members had, to a large degree, supported the racial segregation imposed by the apartheid regime, on the other. A clear understanding of such a crisis needs to be based on the recognition of the fact that a social worker's ability to function within the practice of CRA is, to a large extent, dependent upon past racial experiences. Within the cognitive ambit, past racial segregation is seen as being threatening, as it is incompatible with the social worker's perceptions and attitude concerning the practice of CRA. As Caplan (1964) points out, a reoccurrence of a crisis can also spark off unresolved matters from the past causing the intensification of the crisis (Caplan, 1964).

Considering the example, which has been given, if the social worker has not undergone therapy to overcome the trauma of past racial experiences, his or her involvement in the practice of CRA may evoke the pain resulting from unresolved experience of racism, which may be felt with excessive intensity. Thus, at the core of the social worker's crisis is the fact that the practice of CRA releases painful memories and feelings associated with racism. In the example given in this section, subject to how the social worker performs through the experience, the crisis can either repeat undesirable feelings or can develop a prospect to change perceptions regarding racial issues in a positive way, resulting in an improved practice of CRA in South Africa. The researcher maintains that it is important to know be aware of how a crisis is thought to be a peril and also which set of expectations concerning one's life have been disturbed and which negative memories have been induced by the crisis event. According to Caplan (1964), the way in which most people handle a predicament

depends on the following factors: their past crisis handling familiarity; the way in which the crisis is viewed or perceived as well as the quality of support and or hindrance which they receive from the people closest to them.

2.2.2.3 Relationship of the theory to the study

This theory's relevance to the study is underlined by the fact that it addresses itself to the impact which a crisis has upon one's psycho-social state of balance. The crisis theory posits that as a result of a crisis situation, one can either be in a steady or an unstable condition, functioning effectively or inefficiently within a given setting. The intensity of a crisis affects the individual's personal and or societal systems. In so doing, the individual's personality and reaction to the event, disturbs the supra-systems which confer the individual's identity: family, community and so on. In the practice of CRA this perspective brings into view the possible effects which past racial experiences can have on social workers, which can, in turn, affect the way in which they perform their roles within the field of CRA. The Crisis Theory also maintains that a state of equilibrium will eventually be attained, whether as a result of formal crisis therapy or of natural accommodation, with either positive or negative consequences for the individual.

It is therefore important to note that the resolution of one's crises have a considerable impact on the overall well-being of the societies. In the context of this study, if social workers do not receive therapy to help them to overcome the trauma experienced as a result of the enforced racism of the apartheid regime, their ability to facilitate CRA would almost certainly be compromised. In this case, should the debate concerning whether or not the practice of CRA is a more feasible alternative form of child custody

erupt, the impact would be felt not only by the practice of CRA itself, but also by the people most affected. These include; the cross-racial adoptive families and the children who are in dire need of care and protection. From an interpretation of the theory, the practice of CRA can be understood to cause a state of disequilibrium, particularly for many social workers, as unresolved memories and experiences from the apartheid era are inevitably evoked.

2.3 Legislative framework

If the often fiercely acrimonious and seemingly interminable controversy surrounding the practice of CRA is considered, some objectivity might be provided by closely scrutinising the legislative framework which pertains to South Africa's child care system. By definition, legislative framework implies a set of rules which govern an action (Gaber, 2010). This section provides an examination of some of the aspects of the legislative framework guiding the practice of adoption in South Africa. It seems hardly necessary to mention that an understanding of this legislation is imperative in this study, since it makes it possible to assess how the practice of CRA is being conducted in accordance with the provisions of the legislation and what needs to be done in order to foster successful cross-racial adoptions.

As Ferreira (2009) points out, the practice of CRA was not recognised by the South African legal system and was not permitted until the very end of the Apartheid era. The Child Care Amendment Act of 1991 was endorsed, which nullified the Population Registration Act of 1950 (Snyder, 2012). According to Snyder (2012), the Population Registration Act of 1950 segregated people and prohibited child custody across racial lines. By giving legal approval to the practice of CRA in South Africa, the South African law also spelled out the implications, which were articulated by Joubert (1993) in

(Snyder, 2012): (i) there is no explicit or absolute prohibition of cross-racial adoptions; (ii) cross-racial adoptions are legally possible. Accordingly, this implies that the practice of CRA is a legally acceptable practice and a necessity within the South African child welfare system. Echoing the words of Joubert (1993), Snyder (2012) noted that the concept of supply and demand is regulating the process of adoption in South Africa, resulting in a significant increase in the practice of CRA. According to Snyder (2012), this is owing to the prodigious numbers of children of colour waiting for adoption, with very few prospective parents of colour being willing to adopt. In order to support the feasibility and the desirability of the practice of CRA, the subsequent sections will examine some of the international, regional and national commitments concerning the rights of children, with particular reference to CRA.

2.3.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989)

It is both noteworthy and significant that the practice of CRA is supported by global commitments and documented in the “United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child” (UNCRC) (1989) (Georgeson and Payler, 2013:6). According Article 3 of the UNCRC (1989) (Georgeson and Payler, 2013:6), “the best interests of the child” (Freeman, 2007: 2) must be of priority when dealing with any child. This stipulation makes it imperative for child care workers to make choices concerning the children who are in their care with the best interests of the children constituting the most important criterion to be fulfilled and with the knowledge that every choice which they make has implications for the lives of those children (Freeman, 2007).

According to Louw (2009) and Freeman and Nkomo (2006), the South African welfare system is faced with a situation in which vast numbers of children of colour are in need

of care and protection with few same-race adoptive parents being available. In addition, Louw (2009) maintains that while the “best interests of the children” (Freeman, 2007: 2) would be served by securing permanent homes and families for them, there are few families of colour willing to take these children in. Accordingly, and bearing in mind the contents of Article 3 of the UNCRC of 1989, there is a strong case to be made for the desirability of CRA. In further support of this contention, Article 2 of the same convention calls for non-discriminatory practices towards children, regardless of race, the type of family from which they come, language, culture or any other criterion or classification of this sort. The values expressed in this stipulation are completely in accordance with the practice of CRA, in which children from various backgrounds are taken care of by parents whose racial classification is different from their own, providing conclusive proof that the practice of CRA in South Africa is supported by Articles 2 and 3 of the UNCRC of 1989.

2.3.2 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child” (ACRWC) of 1990

At the regional level the “African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child” (ACRWC) of 1990 plays a pivotal role in the practice of CRA in South Africa (Kaime, 2009; Gose, 2002:49). According to Njungwe (2009), the ACRWC (1990) was created in order to provide protection to children. It spells out the rights which African nations are required to extend to their children and it is the main instrument in the African human rights system for safeguarding and the promoting of the children’s rights (Njungwe, 2009). One of these rights is the right to parental care (Njungwe, 2009 and Kaime, 2009). Although CRA is not specifically cited in the ACRWC of 1990, the fact that CRA is fulfilling the right of children to parental care makes CRA an effective instrument by means of which the aims of the charter may be attained.

According to Gose (2002: 49), the “ACRWC contains Article 26, which is unique and which specifically deals with the history of apartheid in African states”. This Article of the ACRWC may be regarded as definitively prohibiting any form of discrimination imposed by types of rule in African states which may be identified with apartheid, especially where the care and protection of children are concerned (Gose, 2002: 49). Any practice which exhibits any element of discrimination would be in contravention of the provisions of the charter, such as Article 3, which expressly forbids any form of discrimination against children (Gose, 2002 and Njungwe, 2009). It is against this background that the ACRWC of 1990 can be said to be consistent with the practice of CRA, which breaks the barrier of racial discrimination within child custody. In addition, Article 4 of the same charter emphasises and insists upon the “best interests of the child” (Freeman, 2007: 2), which is in accordance with the practice of CRA.

2.3.3 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

In support of the practice of CRA at the national level, “Section 28 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) though not directly linked to the practice of CRA, supports the care of children across racial boundaries (Tyabaza, 2009:20). According to Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) sub-section 1, “every child has the right to family or parental care, or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment” (Tyabaza, 2009: 20). This section of the South African Constitution is of paramount importance in this study, as it helps to explain the importance of the practice of CRA when faced with the unavailability of same-race adoptive parents. If the provision made in the Constitution that every child is entitled to a family is accepted, no child available for adoption can be denied the right to be raised in a family, regardless of racial concerns or barriers.

2.3.4 The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)

For Patel (2005), as cited in Lombard (2008:155), “the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), provides support for the practice of CRA in South Africa”. The “White Paper” contains eleven principles, which are required to guide the social welfare delivery services to all South African citizens (Patel, 2005) in (Lombard, 2008:155). These principles include non-discrimination and Ubuntu (Streak and Poggenpoel, 2005:12). According to Streak and Poggenpoel (2005: 12), the principle of non-discrimination calls for “service delivery that promotes non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity and inclusion of all groups”. In-addition, the legal implications of CRA demand that discrimination against adoptive parents, on the grounds of their race or their racial backgrounds, cannot be accepted in its practice (Snyder, 2012).

Thus, the White Paper for Social Welfare radically treats tolerance of human race and appreciation of diversity as a must that has to be taken cognisance of within the practice of CRA. In addition, the principle of ‘Ubuntu’, better described as “developing and adhering to the caring for the wellbeing of one another” (Streak and Poggenpoel, 2005: 12) is consistent with the practice of CRA, in that adoptive parents take care of children across racial lines. According to Gerrand and Motlalepule (2013), the principle of Ubuntu denotes great care and value being accorded to children in South Africa. This provides ample evidence for the support implicit in the White Paper for the practice of CRA in South Africa.

2.3.5 White Paper on families in South Africa (2012)

The White Paper on Families was established in 2012 and it views the family as a key development imperative and seeks to mainstream family issues into government-wide, policy-making initiatives in order to foster positive family well-being and overall socio-

economic development in the country (Department of Social Development, 2012). The White Paper on Families has a number of objectives of which the following two are of great importance in this study:

- i) Enhance the socialising, caring, nurturing and supporting capabilities of families so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country;*
- ii) Improve the capacities of families and their members to establish social interactions which make a meaningful contribution towards a sense of community, social cohesion and national solidarity*
(Department of Social Development, 2012: 8)

Just like the Green Paper on families (2011), the White Paper on families is informed by a number of principles of which human rights, family diversity and community participation are deemed more importance in this study. According to the White paper on families (2011) cited in the (Department of Social Development, 2012) the human rights principle denotes that a foundation should be laid for children to be tolerant of views other than their own and to become active and responsible citizens in the future. In addition, non-discrimination, mutual obligation and respect for diversity have to be valued in a manner in which families are interacted with (Department of Social Development, 2012).

More-so, the principle of family diversity as noted in the White Paper recognizes that there are different types of families in South Africa which are products of various cultures and social contexts. Therefore, the need exists to recognise the diverse nature of South Africa's families in all initiatives that address their plight (Department of Social Development, 2012). With community participation, the White Paper posits that the family remains an integral part of South African society. This view is supported by the following statement:

..... *It is within the family environment that an individual's physical, emotional and psychological development occurs. It is from our family that we learn unconditional love, we understand right from wrong, and we gain empathy, respect and self-regulation. These qualities enable us to engage positively at school, at work and in society in general. The absence of a stable, nurturing family environment has a profoundly damaging impact on the individual, often leading to behaviour which is profoundly damaging to society (Centre for Social Justice, 2010:6).*

To this end, the White Paper purports that the government and other actors are obliged to promote the practice of CRA without any form of racial discrimination. This is so because the practice of CRA is deemed as a form of family formation since a family is deemed as a paramount entity within a society.

2.3.6 Green Paper on Families (2011)

The department of Social Development has published the green paper on families (Department of Social Development, 2011). According to the Department of Social Development (2011) the central role of this paper is to promote family life and strengthen families in South Africa. Accordingly, the government wants families to play a central role in the development of South Africa. Thus, the green paper acknowledges that many social pathologies in South Africa are as a result of two aspects namely; weak family systems or non-existent families (Department of Social Development, 2011). The green paper is informed by a number of principles of which human rights, family diversity and the promotion and strengthening of parenting forms part of such vital principles (Department of Social Development, 2011). In essence, the green paper seeks to place the family in national policy discourse in which race is amongst the most important factors that are deemed vital in shaping family life in South Africa. Also, the green paper upholds the fact that a family is still a dynamic unit of socialisation that has not remained static, rather, it is characterised by

changing patterns of socialisation and interaction (Department of Social Development, 2011).

Therefore, with the notion of the practice CRA, it is clearer that the green paper is a call to all South Africans to create a new dispensation that deliberately supports and strengthens families in the country by eliminating all conditions eroding the family. Thus, with the Green Paper on families in South Africa race should not jeopardise a family from adopting a child of different race, rather, when CRA happens that family has to be supported and strengthened. Thus, with the echoing of the Green Paper on families in South Africa, an form of discrimination of family formation in terms of racial variations is not tolerated.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided discussions of the theoretical and legislative frameworks associated with understanding of the practice of CRA. According to the CRT, race can act as a mechanism for dividing people. In addition, it can be said that as racial segregation had been enshrined in law and socially entrenched in South African society, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate. Nonetheless, according to the CRT, racism has to be eradicated if a safe and healthy society is to emerge, and this is particularly so for the South African child welfare system, specifically in the practice of CRA. On the other hand, the CT implies the need for a positive change of attitude among South Africans, which has particular relevance to accepting the practice of CRA, even if there are still wounds from the racially segregated past. This chapter also provided a synthesis of the global, international, regional and national legislative frameworks which support the practice of CRA, as a means of providing care and protection to the children in South Africa who need it most. The next chapter will focus on the literature covering the subject of the practice of CRA in depth.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRACTICE OF CROSS-RACIAL ADOPTION

3.1 Introduction

The practice of CRA is a controversial issue inviting many debates within the realm of scholarship pertaining to childcare. As a result, it is important to understand the realities associated with the practice in South Africa at present in order to have an in-depth understanding of the concerns, which need to be dealt with if CRA is to play a vital role in the alleviating of the plight of South Africa's most vulnerable children. To this end, the various rates and trends, which indicate the magnitude of the practice of CRA in South Africa, are examined. In addition, this chapter presents a detailed description of how CRA is being practised within the South African context. The roles of social workers, managers, adoption agencies within the ambit of CRA are discussed also. After exploring these aspects of the study, the chapter provides a detailed discussion of the perceptions of social workers, adoption managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of CRA as a form of child custody, in order to arrive at an overall view of how the practice is perceived. The final section of this chapter provides a detailed discussion of the challenges facing adoption social workers, managers, adoption agencies and adoptive parents, in the practice of CRA.

3.2 Conceptualizing CRA

This section provides definitions of key concepts and an overall understanding of the practice of CRA, in terms of how the practice is being conducted and the rates and trends pertaining to CRA in South Africa, specifically in the case of East London.

3.2.1 Understanding CRA

At present, barely a week passes without a presiding officer's approval of child placements across racial boundaries in South Africa. According to Ferreira (2009), cross-racial adoption is regarded as a process of taking a child of a different race from one's own as one's own and to assume the rights and duties of parent towards that child. Gishen (1996) defines the practice of CRA as that practice which involves any person(s) adopting a child whose race is different to their own. According to Gishen (1996), this includes white parents adopting a child of colour, parents of colour adopting a white child and racially mixed couples adopting a child whose race is not the same as either of theirs. CRA can also be defined as the legal and permanent placement, through court procedures, of a "child of one race by a parent or parents of another race" (Jacobson and Harderman, 2012:73). In South Africa, CRA often takes the form of adoption of Black children by White parents (Snyder, 2012; Trenka, Chinyere and Shin, 2006; Tuan, 2008). According to Banisky (2005), the practice of CRA can either be legal or de facto. Banisky (2005) defined the term "de facto CRA" as an instance of CRA which is informal and which is not recognised by the children's court of law, while legal CRA denotes adoption which is done through the procedures of the children's court. In this research, the focus is on the legal form of CRA.

According to Freeman and Nkomo (2006), the chief cause of the social phenomenon, which CRA has become in South Africa, is, in all probability, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. According to Freeman and Nkomo (2006), this has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of children being orphaned, which has, in turn, resulted in ever-increasing numbers of Black children ending up in CRA families. UNAIDS (2012) confirmed that South Africa has one of the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS cases

worldwide, with an “estimated 5.26 million people living with HIV/AIDS and an estimated 270 000 AIDS-related deaths in 2012”. Statistics South Africa (2013), cited in the Department of Health South Africa Main Report (2014:23), reported a continual increase in the prevalence of HIV-related cases, with an estimated 5,3 million people, mainly adults between the ages of 15 to 49 years, living with HIV in the country in the year 2013. Fig. 3.1 shows an estimated adult HIV prevalence in percentages in South Africa from 1983 to 2019.

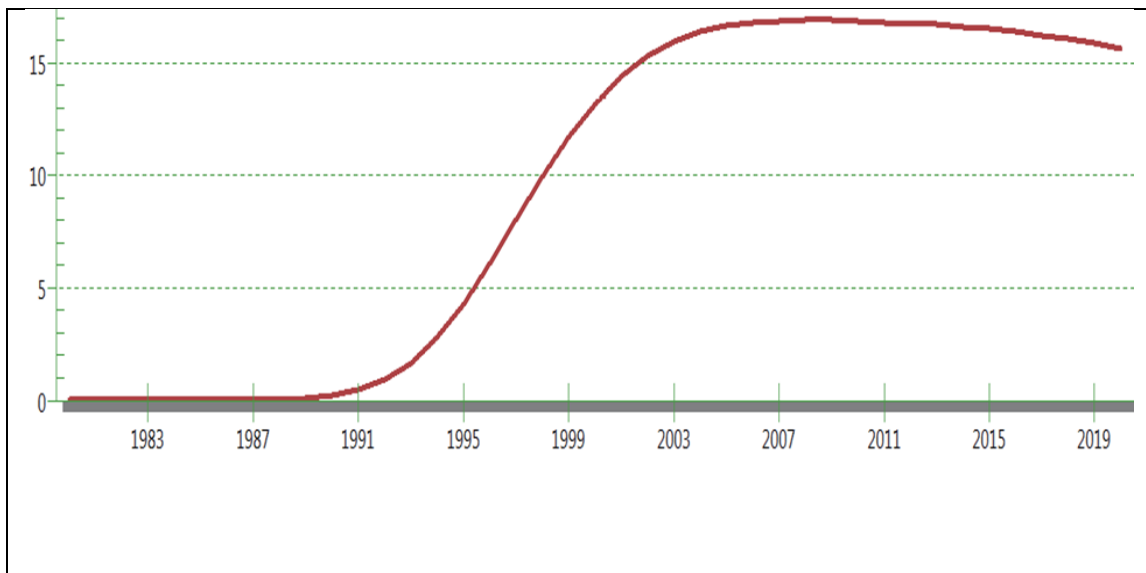


Fig. 3.1 Adults between the ages of 15 and 49 years living with HIV/AIDS in percentages in South Africa

(Source: UNAIDS, 2013) in (Department of Health: South Africa Report, 2014: 23).

In addition, Schroeder and Nichola (2006) maintain that the other factors influencing the rate of CRA in South Africa include child neglect, child abandonment and the voluntary giving up of children for adoption by their biological parents. In South Africa, the disparity between the racial demographics of the children needing to be adopted

and those seeking to adopt has led to the continued and, perhaps, increased practice of CRA (Snyder, 2012).

The practice of CRA is traceable back to the apartheid era (Ferreira 2009; Snyder, 2012). According to Ferreira (2009), the practice of CRA of that time can better be understood as a *de facto* practice, since it was technically an illegal practice, as has been explained by Banisky (2005). In addition, during the apartheid era, South African law had an incredible number of statutes pertaining to racial segregation. Nevertheless, owing to the increased “number of children in need of care and protection” (Children’s Act 38 of 2005: 5), the practice of CRA was deemed as the most ideal form of custody for these children and was legalised in 1991. Similarly, in post-apartheid years, the endorsement of the practice of CRA came as a result of the need to embrace diversity and to promote a more colour-blind South Africa (Ferreira 2009; Snyder, 2012). At present, South Africa’s child adoption system is becoming increasingly characterised by White parents adopting children of colour.

The most vocal critics of the practice of CRA, the members of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) maintain that CRA is “cultural genocide” and that only a black family is capable of preparing a child to live in a society in which racial prejudice must be confronted daily (Jonhson and Fine, 2013:19). While such concerns may be valid, there are equally valid counter-arguments. Snyder (2012) maintains that in South Africa, CRA arose out of a need to accommodate reality, a reality in which the unavailability of willing, same-race adoptive parents to offer custody to the needy children had resulted in an increase in the number of babies of colour available for adoption across racial boundaries. The increased prevalence of CRA in South Africa

is, in the researcher's view, the recognition and accommodation of the reality that there are many White people looking to offer permanent custody to needy children, and that the vast majority of these children are black.

3.3 Rates and trends of CRA in South Africa

For the sake of this research, an analysis of the statistical variables was required, as these give a clear picture of what is actually transpiring within the field of CRA in South Africa. In this study, the term "rate" specifically refers to numerically increasing or decreasing trends in CRA. The analysis starts from a general viewpoint, using generalised regional and national statistics, and systematically develops towards statistics specific to the practice of CRA in East London, South Africa. The intended effect is to locate the study within the national and regional settings and to show that the characteristics identified in East London are also prevalent elsewhere. It is imperative to note that the choice to merge trends and rates for literature review purposes is of great importance in this study. This was taken into consideration after the realisation that the literature which confirms trends is the same as that which supports the rates, and hence they should not be discussed separately. In this study, the first important point to note is that the practice of CRA is a growing phenomenon in the Republic of South Africa. Accordingly, a numerical examination of statistics will confirm this and will be provided in this section.

In South Africa there are many Black children available for adoption and desperately in need of permanent homes (Louw, 2009), with few Coloured and Indian children and a tiny minority of White children (Child Welfare South Africa report, 2012; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). Conversely, "the majority of adults waiting to adopt are White

followed by Coloureds, with very few Indians and Blacks” (National Adoption Coalition Conference Report, 2011: 2). In addition, it was reported that there were 14 803 legal cross-racial adoptions registered in South Africa between the 1st of April, 2009 and the 31st of March, 2012, of which sixty-eight (68%) were done by bi-sexual couples, twelve percent (12%) by homosexual couples and twenty percent (20%) by single parents (Department of Social Development, 2012). Also, according to the Department of Social Development (2012), of the approximately 3000 children who were in foster care in East London, 478 were adopted cross-racially. It is noteworthy that there was a general imbalance in the ratio of boys to girls who were adopted, and that the statistics favour girls at the expense of boys (Fondation, 2011) in Johnson and Fine, 2013). Moreover, over 80% of the cross-racially adopted children are said to have been below the age of fourteen (14) years (Department of Social Development, 2012). From this information it should be abundantly clear that cross-racial adoption is a reality.

Moreover, an attempt to explain the processes associated with this increase was made by Finlay (2006) in her research in Pretoria. She pointed out that adoption services in South Africa have to contend with myriad cultural and racial issues and connotations. In this regard she noted that cross-racial adoptions are largely the result of a lack of willing and capable adoptive parents of the same race as the children needing to be adopted, resulting in a great many of these children being adopted by adoptive parents across racial lines. Finlay (2006) quotes the websites of Child Welfare Johannesburg and Cotlands, which reported that they were not accepting any applications for the adoption of white children because they had none seeking adoption at the moment. She went on to maintain that it is often difficult to find adoptive parents for Black children, as Black children often stay longer in institutions

before parents are found to adopt them, compared with children of other races. This trend is attributed to the disproportionate variations between the races, in terms of population size and cultural practices.

The Demographic Statistics of South Africa (2009) recorded that as of 2009, the population ratio between blacks and whites was 1:10, which implicitly means there is a higher probability of Black children being in need of and available for adoption than White children. However, Maistry (2010) contradicts this assessment by maintaining that the empirical evidence shows that while the cross-racial prospective adoptive parents can choose to adopt Black children, in effect, the choice to adopt a White child is not an option. Accordingly, the majority of these prospective adoptive parents automatically assume that the only option available to them is to adopt a Black child, owing to the obvious reality in South Africa that most of the children available for adoption are Black.

Thiele (2005) has noted that there is a trend which has been established in connection with the age at which children are being adopted. This was confirmed by Maistry (2010), who pointed out that in the research which she carried out in Cambridge West, Southernwood and the Quigney in East London, it emerged that 86,2% of the children whom she investigated and who were in cross-racial adoptive families in 2009, had entered the care system while they were below the age of four years. According to Maistry (2010), the adoptive parents of these children indicated that they needed younger children whom they could model. She went on to say that adoptive families who adopt children above the age of ten years have a three times greater chance of encountering problems compared with families who adopt children at a very young age. Maistry (2010), found out that older children, above the age of twelve

years, adopted across racial lines, were likely to face more challenges than younger children, especially in integrating and adapting to the adoptive family's environment and its practices. Freeman and Nkomo (2006) maintain that childhood is a very critical stage in human life and that failure to instil cultural awareness at this stage is tantamount to what Finlay (2006), and Gerrand and Motlalepule (2013) have identified as cultural genocide.

It is vital to note that there is a dire shortage of Black adoptive parents in East London. This was expressed by the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mrs. Maria Ntuli (2009), in her address during an adoptive parents' conference in East London, when she indicated that there is a growing need for Black adoptive parents. Ntuli (2009) pointed out that in East London and the immediate surrounding areas the Department of Social Development had recorded 546 instances of adoption and that, of these, 11.4% were in same-race adoptive families, while the rest were in cross-racial adoptive families. She went on to point out that fewer Black families are responding to the challenge to provide long term parental and family care to children compared with families of other races (Ntuli, 2009). Ntuli (2009) further mention that this also places the Department in a situation in which it is confronted with the possibility of placing a child with a family whose race is other than that of the race of origin of the child. Maistry (2010), projects that this trend is likely to continue growing by at least 0.7% per annum. This highlights the fact that cross- racial adoptions are continually growing in number and that, in all probability, they will continue to do so over the years.

In the same light, the Presidential report, concerning the state of child and social welfare in South Africa (2009), indicated that the government is supporting a new programme of moral regeneration to encourage parents to take responsibility and to

provide care for their children. In addition, Broodryk (2006) maintains that there is a need to reweave the moral fibre of “Ubuntu”, which would allow extended families to care for the members of their families, especially children in South Africa. In this regard it can be noted that, at various levels of society, the scarcity of same-race and, specifically of Black adoptive parents, as opposed to cross-racial adoptive parents, is becoming a perturbing issue. Consequently, this research investigated the attitudes of children living in cross-racial adoptive families. It also sought to determine the perceptions of both adoptive parents and social workers of CRA.

3.4 The practice of CRA in the South African context

Internationally, regionally and in various national contexts, the practice of CRA has been at the centre of numerous debates and scholarly discourses regarding its suitability as an option for custody of “children in need of care and protection” (Children’s Act 38 of 2005: 5). Although the practice of CRA has been regulated since the early 1990s in South Africa, it is still a practice which is suffused with much controversy (Snyder, 2012; Hall, 2010; Ferreira, 2009). Its controversial nature is related primarily to the concerns of race and ideologies pertaining to racial identity, which in turn is a manifestation of the way in which South African society has been, and to an extent still is, racially fixated. Scholars and professional researchers have contributed to the study of CRA in South Africa, which makes it necessary to review these empirical contributions in order to obtain a fundamental understanding of the proposed study. Consequently, this study has attempted to take into account and to expand upon the relevant literature and theory pertaining to the practice of CRA in East London, South Africa.

As has been noted, the practice of CRA in South Africa is surrounded by a great deal of controversy, with a number of scholarly discourses expressing considerable antagonism towards the practice, despite its legalisation in South Africa in 1991 (Hall, 2010; Zack, 2008; South African Institute of Race Relations, 2009). Inevitably, the unending and uncontrollable opposition to CRA emanates from issues pertaining to South Africa's racial past. Moos and Mwaba (2007), Hall (2010) and Snyder (2012) have all pointed out that amongst the culprits deemed to ignite the perturbing debate concerning the practice of CRA in South Africa, the issue of race is largely to be blamed. Indeed, it is the racial ideology inherent in the apartheid system which is believed to have resulted in the creeping in of racially-based problems within the care system, and especially within the ambit of the practice of CRA in South Africa. It is important that attention be given to the practice of CRA in South Africa at this juncture, in order to examine in detail all the arguments pertaining to this practice.

In order to contextualise the practice of CRA in South Africa, it is essential to consider the localised social conditions which have resulted in the circumstances in which mainly Black children become available for adoption by White parents. In South Africa these conditions cannot be understood independently of pervasive racial discrepancies between Blacks and Whites, in terms of economic standing, availability of resources and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Freeman and Nkomo, 2006; Mbuyazi, 2008). Findings by UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2006) indicate that civil war, poverty and disease in Sub-Saharan Africa have led to an escalation in the numbers of orphaned children, which are anticipated to increase to 18,4 million by 2010 (Roby and Shaw, 2006). In South Africa AIDS is the leading cause of death, accounting for an estimated 30% of all deaths, and HIV prevalence is thought to be increasing with

an estimated 18.8% of adults between the ages of 15 and 49 years being HIV-positive (Schroeder and Nichola, 2006; Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). Wrobel and Neil (2009) and Schroeder and Nichola (2006) suggest that the death of young adults not only destroys human capital, but that it also deprives children of parental care, the knowledge obtained from their parents and the capacity to finance their education, curtailing the necessary transition from childhood to becoming economically productive.

Freeman and Nkomo (2006) maintain that norms in traditional South African society have resulted in the problem of orphaned children being dealt with by incorporating them into extended family systems, and indeed the vast majority of orphaned children in African counties are believed to be cared for within these systems without the need for formal adoption procedures. Freeman and Nkomo (2006) conducted research using a sample of South African adults from historically predominantly Black urban and rural areas in three provinces, which were noted for having high rates of HIV infection. It was found that about 90% of parents or parental figures with children in their care believed that another family member or relatives would take care of their children if they died and that they would prefer this under these circumstances (Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). However, the great number of Black orphans in Southern Africa has resulted in many extended family members, many of whom are already living below the poverty line, being unable to support additional children. This owes to the constraints imposed by already overstretched resources, particularly financial, although their social and emotional resources are similarly taxed, and the diminution of family systems resulting from modern migration, Westernisation and AIDS (Meintjes, Marera and Boule, 2009).

In South Africa there are also large numbers of babies who are abandoned every year, and although accurate national statistics concerning these figures are not available (Wall street journal, 2012; IOL News, 2013; Luhanga, 2008), the numbers are believed to be both high and increasing (Luhanga, 2008). This is also believed to be closely related to the growing economic stress placed on already poor populations of mothers who feel they will be incapable of providing for the needs of their infants (Mbuyazi, 2008). The Western Cape Provincial department of Social Development estimated that approximately 480 babies under the age of 3 years had been abandoned in the district in 2007, and that approximately 430 had been abandoned in the first six months of 2008 alone. The Johannesburg Child Welfare Service reported dealing with 926 cases of abandoned newborn babies in Gauteng in 2007 alone (Luhanga, 2008). The overwhelming majority of these abandoned infants are Black and relatively few people from Black populations apply to adopt the abandoned babies and children who find their way into the care of these institutions.

Conversely, few White babies are available for adoption and the waiting list of White parents wishing to adopt these babies is long (Louw, 2009; National Adoption Coalition Conference, 2011; The Christian Science Monitor, 2012). As a result, the number of Black infants available for adoption in South Africa is far in excess of the number of White infants. From a structural perspective, this fact would contribute towards a strong argument that CRA provides viable substitute custody for those Black children who are likely to grow up in circumstances of depleted resources in institutions needing to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of Black orphans. Not only are the demands made on government resources to support these children decreased, but the access of Black children to more stable upbringings and economic

advantage than they would otherwise be likely to have, is concurrently increased (Roby and Shaw, 2006).

Accordingly, South African Institute of Race Relations (2009) maintains that the legalisation of the practice of CRA in the post-apartheid human rights era in South Africa was, and still is, an attempt to attain colour-blindness within child custody. Viewed from this perspective, CRA is an attempt to make the quagmire of racial issues, perceptions and connotations disappear and to encourage all South Africans to embrace the notion that racial segregation is a thing of the past. However, for many in South Africa this seems to constitute a vain effort, owing to the persistent exposure of the South African population to the brutal scenarios of racial segregation of the apartheid era. According to Samuels (2009), instead of the attainment of a more colour-blind practice in CRA, there is what is known as colour-blind racism (Quiroz, 2007). To support this contention, evidence of the practising of colour-blind racism can be found among the social workers handling the process of CRA and also in the duration of the periods in which children are made to wait within the foster care system before they can be released for CRA. These delays are linked to attempts by the social workers to find same-race adopters, although this is a mammoth task owing to their general unavailability.

Given the omnipresence of colour-blind ideology throughout the practice of CRA, this means that cross-racial adoptive parents are likely to continue facing a colour-blind trajectory in taking care of their children. Although, existing research indicates that a great many instances of CRA are successful, some scholars also put forward that cross-racial adoptees are often vulnerable in issues, which concerns race and racial

segregation (Samuels, 2009). As has already been noted, the practice of CRA is at the centre of a considerable amount of debate in South Africa, with much of the criticism voicing apprehensions that Black children receiving custody in White families lose a positive Black identity (Vonk, 2001; Bradley and Hawkins-Leon, 2002; Frasch and Brooks, 2003; Roby and Shaw, 2006). According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (2009), critiques concerning race are often based on suppositions regarding the identity of Black children raised in Black families, yet studies of CRA hardly address the developmental struggles involved with the formation of identity, which Black children raised in Black homes experience.

In order to understand the social and legal processes associated with CRA, this section outlines the characteristics, requirements and procedures of CRA practice, from both a practical and a literature-centred standpoint. CRA is a highly specific form of help, which often raises obstinate questions (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2009). There are many critics who argue that while emphasis is often placed on saving children from upheavals in life, most prospective parents seek to adopt healthy babies and very few adopt those who are most in need (Freeman and Nkomo, 2006; Snyder, 2012; Moos and Mwaba, 2007). In addition, it needs to be said that although adoption is governed by the principle of providing care and protection for the best interests of the child, the needs of the children are often subsumed by the interests of the cross-racial adoptive parents. Accordingly, influential international children's organisations, including the United Nations Children's Organisation (UNICEF), urge that priority be given to support for children and improvement of child care measures and facilities in the children's countries of origin, in this case, South Africa.

The South African legislative framework of 1991 carries the responsibility to ensure that the practice of CRA is a protective measure, governed by the best interests and fundamental rights of the child (Chinyere and Shin 2006; Snyder, 2012). As familiar as it may seem, it is necessary to underline and ensure that the focus, in the process leading up to the implementation of CRA, centres on the child and not on the prospective parents. According to the ethics and principles pertaining to the guidelines for practice of International Social Service:

.....the best environment for a child's development: offering a child a substitute family should, other than in exceptional and justified cases, prevail over his/her placement or long-term residence in an institution (International Social Service 1999: 4).

Thus it follows that if CRA is seen as an adequate protective measure, should be accessed by children with life situations that warrants it, without any form of discrimination against their racial backgrounds. However, according to Snyder (2012) and Chinyere and Shin (2006), in actual fact this is not the reality in South Africa. According to Moos and Mwaba (2007), the practice of CRA is being governed by the best interests of the adoptive parents at the expense of the so-called best interests of the child. This occurs because, in most cases, adoptive parents are being allowed to choose children to adopt and, in most cases, healthy children are the most privileged ones, with sick and disabled children being left behind, waiting amid feelings of hopelessness.

It is of vital importance, at this juncture, to highlight the CRA process as a social and legal protective measure for children who are in "need of care and protection" (The Presidency, 2009: xx). The CRA process begins when a prospective parent or parents

first make contact with an adoption agency or an organisation, which facilitates adoptions. The mandatory requirements of the adoption process in South Africa include (a) An initial screening by Social Workers; (b) A minimum of two home visits by two social workers working with comprehensive interview guidelines and questionnaires; (c) A psychological assessment and report after consultation with adoptive parents.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 Section 231 (3) stipulates that "in the assessment of a prospective adoptive parent, an adoption social worker may take the cultural and community diversity of the adoptable child and the prospective adoptive parent or parents into consideration". According to Butler-Sweet (2011), the issue of community diversity encompasses the religious and linguistic background of the adopters. All of these points are made in an attempt to point out the basis, which is used as a screening mechanism for adopters in cases of cross- racial adoption. However in the South African context, with the great numbers of "children in need of care and protection" (The Presidency, 2009: xx), these considerations tend to be taken for granted in some cases and in others there is a lack of monitoring and supervision by agencies and organisations providing adoption services.

3.5 The role of social workers and agencies within the ambit of CRA

Social workers and the agencies or organisations for which they work constitute an essential component of the cross-racial adoption process from beginning to end. For this reason a literature review of the role of professional social workers is of much significance to this research. According to Thomas (2005), social workers are normally employed by organisations and agencies to render statutory adoption screening and

supervisory services and to ensure that the rights and best interests of the adopted child are safeguarded. According to Whitelaw et al. (2004), adoption social workers have both the authority vested in them by welfare organisations and power, resulting from their understanding and proficiency within the domain of CRA. Noted by Thomas (2005:118) is the fact that a “good working relationship with social workers is usually essential for success in any adoption work”. In support of this, Stone (1970:61) in Whitelaw et al. (2004) summarises the obligation of the social worker as follows:

the worker to whom the child is assigned serves as the nucleus...the medium for surveillance and for assessment of the on-going life situation...and is responsible for working with each of the individuals involved...also responsible for arranging supplementary services, and integrating them(Stone,1970:61)

According to Whitelaw et al. (2004), social workers together with cross-racial adoptive parents usually discuss with each other the precise expectations of each side of the partnership and the responsibilities, which each will execute, and often clarifies respective roles. Whitelaw et al. (2004:352) outlines the functions which social workers need to perform:

.. ability to work across boundaries with many other disciplines, to advocate for children and families at the level of social policy, to develop resources within the community,to implement their skills of case and group work,must be generalists in their skills but specialists in their knowledge of issues affecting families and children(Whitelaw et al., 2004:352)

Regardless of the category into which cross- racially adopted children may fall, they require the unconditional support and commitment of their adoptive parents. These children not only need to be educated about their birth culture, but they also require similar commitment from their adoptive parents to help them become successful

citizens of their adoptive culture as well. According to Whitelaw et al. (2004) and Davel (2008), the practice of CRA is a complex and emotionally demanding process which affects the entire adoptive family. It is essential that prospective cross-racial adopters understand and reflect upon this reality before proceeding with adoption formalities. According to Snyder (2012), if adoptive parents are completely educated concerning racial discrimination in all its forms, they are then better placed to advise and equip their children with the necessary tools with which to combat the prejudice and racism which they are almost certain to face at various times in their lives.

For Olsner and Lehmkuhl (2005), the practice of CRA can provide opportunities, but it may also entail risk. Consciousness of this ambivalence can contribute to the practice of CRA constituting a positive opportunity for the child, for his or her adoptive family and, in a broader sense, for the community and society (Olsner and Lehmkuhl, 2005). This assessment, along with all of the challenges associated with CRA, implies quite unequivocally that the role of social workers in CRA is crucial to its success. In addition, social workers need to create and foster an awareness of racial diversity, particularly in the atmosphere of racial differentiation which still lingers in South Africa. According to Snyder (2012), if social workers fail to engender consciousness and acceptance of the notion of diversity, there could be very serious implications for the practice of CRA against the racial background which caused so much hurt and anger for so many South Africans during the apartheid era.

It needs to be noted that social workers, managers, adoption agencies and organisations are accountable for the children whom they place in adoptive care and that they are required to monitor placements constantly, to ensure that suitable care is

being given to the children. According to a general guide to the practice of adoption compiled without specific reference to the practice of CRA by the South African National Council for Child Welfare (1972:39) in Whitelaw et al. (2004), the period of continued interaction between the adoption agency and the adoptive parents post-placement should not be shorter than three months. However, as Thiele (2005) and Snyder (2012) point out, the guide is not adhered to in South Africa.

In South Africa, social workers within their adoption agencies participate in the recruitment, selection, screening and training of prospective cross-racially adoptive parents. Adoptive parents tend to show various reactions in the initial contact with agencies and organisations. According to Dickerson and Allen (2007), some feel frustrated when they feel that they need to monitor what they say out of fear that a trivial comment may disrupt the process. It is the researcher's considered opinion that social workers and adoption agencies need to be taking the full spectrum of emotions surrounding practice of CRA into consideration and to encourage prospective parents to express their fears and concerns.

Another crucial role of social workers and adoption agencies should be that of facilitating the care of a child by parents who are able and willing to offer suitable care and provide protection to the child. If White parents are eager to adopt a child, they ought to be provided with the opportunity, rather than to have the child wait for a so-called "perfect race-match" adoption that in for instances will not occur. Thus, a White family looking to adopt have to be granted equal chance to adopt a Black child as a Black adoptive parent. Katherine Quarmby in 2005 wrote about the experience of her

being cross-racially adopted. Her adoption took place at a time when race was a dominant issue within child custody, but she pointed out that her adoptive parents had not been worried about the race quagmire (Quarmby, 2005).

Thus, if race is deemed to be the chief consideration for adoption other crucial areas, such as offering a stable family, can be ignored. There are people who are keen to take care of children and who value the need for every child to have a family. Love and support are colourless signs, which are universally understood and serve to prove that CRA cannot be overlooked when an individual or a family is prepared to take care of a child who is need of a permanent home or family. Any jeopardy in the placement of a child with a prepared and willing family lacks substance and is unacceptable to a child who has waited, for a long period of time to belong to a family.

Many cross-racial adoptive families encounter intense criticism and prejudice within their own societies. The most perplexing obstacle for a CRA family is to overcome society's negative perceptions concerning racially mixed families resulting from CRA. Inevitably, feelings in society towards the practice of CRA will range from positive to being strongly opposed. According to Dickerson and Allen (2007), those people who are in contradiction of CRA usually have racial linked reasons for their stance and are fond of their culture. In addition, some go beyond suggesting that CRA is not in the best interests of a child. Nevertheless, individuals or families who choose to adopt cross-racially should uphold cultural diversity so as to be able to raise well equipped, emotionally and psychologically children will have the capability to cope with racial prejudice.

According to Moos and Mwaba (2007), the willingness of cross-racial adoptive parents to uphold cultural diversity provides children with a sense of self-importance with their primary culture. The acceptance, on the part of the parents, of the cultural differences should preclude the children from desiring to be of the same race as their parents. Snyder (2012) maintains that it is the duty of social workers to make sure that these cross-racially adoptive parents are ready to take negative reactions from members of their own communities, or even from members of the child's race. Accordingly, cross-racial families have to be familiar with cultural diversity, and be prepared together with the child for any societal perceptions with regards to both racial and cultural variations.

3.6 Perceptions of social workers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of CRA.

How social workers and members of other concerned groups in post-apartheid South Africa view CRA is of crucial interest and importance to this study. Although there has been a limited amount of research into perceptions of CRA, some studies have attempted to quantify beliefs about and attitudes towards the phenomenon and to make inferences from these. In order to contextualise South Africans' perceptions of CRA, it is necessary to consider the localised social conditions which have resulted in the circumstances in which Black children become available for adoption by White parents. In South Africa these conditions cannot be understood independently of the ubiquitous racial disparities between Blacks and Whites in terms of economic standing, availability of resources and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Roby and Shaw, 2006).

Moos and Mwaba (2007) examined the opinions and attitudes concerning CRA which were held by a sample of mainly Black psychology students at a South African university. A scale, which took into account both the contentious issues of racial and ethnic identity and the socio-political context of a racially-segregated history, was developed for the study. They found that the vast majority of the sample approved of CRA and did not believe that it was emotionally harmful to the child. Not only did almost all of the participants indicate a belief that children of colour specifically, Black children adopted by White parents would not lose “their culture”, but most of them also understood that CRA might aid to uphold racial and cultural tolerance in South Africa. Moos and Mwaba (2007) suggested that their findings indicated the possibility that Black South Africans viewed CRA as evidence of White people’s rejection of racism and of changing race relations in the country (Moos and Mwaba, 2007).

The experience of apartheid in the past by South African communities has contributed towards the mixed feelings which are evident regarding CRA. Dubinsky (2007) maintains that cross-racial adoptees represent White people’s supposed nobility in “rescuing” the vulnerable and needy orphan, inadvertently portraying Whites as capable and Blacks as helpless. In addition, Dubinsky (2007) calls attention to the way in which such discourses allow White speakers to gloss over or ignore the racial disparities which exist in society, which contributed to the birth-parents of these children being unable to care for them. The dominant narrative opposing CRA suggested by Dubinsky (2007) is that of “kidnap”, where Black children adopted by Whites are construed as stolen and damaged, to their own detriment and to the detriment of the race group to which they supposedly belong.

Correspondingly, in the National Association of Black Social Worker's (NABSW) resolution of 1972, the concept of "cultural genocide" was introduced to describe CRA of Black children by White parents as a means of cultural oppression which is racist, in that it effectively removes power from Black groups by disconnecting Black people from one another and from "Black culture" (Jonhson and Fine, 2013:20 and Ferreira, 2009). Interesting to note is the historic NABSW resolution of 1972 for orphaned children, which states that adoptable Black children cease to be neutral individuals and become valuable political bodies which can be 'kept' by Blacks to strengthen their causes as a social group, or 'lost' to White culture, inadvertently strengthening the dominance of White populations (Hall, 2010). However, Corcos (2009) prefers to see the adoption of a child across racial lines in the light of partnerships rather than of conflicts of race. This implies a direct contradiction of the assertion of Dubinsky and the NABSW resolution of 1972. According to Corcos (2009), adoption across racial lines symbolises unity rather than the subjugation of one race by the other,, which establishes a contrary position to the one argued by Dubinsky (2007). For the researcher an argument of this sort regarding the practice of CRA has great significance within the South African context.

On the other hand, in an article which discussed the opinions of society regarding the practice of CRA, although not directly alluding to the perceptions of social workers in South Africa, Naomi Pabst (2009), a professor at Yale University and a woman who had been cross-racially adopted, disputed the notion that Black children should be adopted only by Black parents, as she thought this to be irrational. She maintained that families consist of other essential things than culture. Pabst (2009) challenged all the opponents of the practice of CRA by arguing that all people needed to challenge

themselves to open up their minds to the idea and the concept that human beings live in a diverse world, and that adoptive families should not be hindered from adopting children of any race. According to Pabst, (2009) the term family denotes to a group of persons who has the same aims, beliefs, and naturally live under one roof. If this definition of a family is accepted and adopted, then race should not be a factor to be considered when forming a family through the practice of CRA in post-apartheid South Africa. Clearly, it is vital to analyse the themes emerging from the discussion of the various perceptions of the practice of CRA in South Africa, in order to gain a better sense of the ideologies underlying them, particularly in the present post-apartheid milieu.

3.7 The challenges facing agencies, social workers and adoptive parents regarding the practice of CRA

As a legal endeavour which is faced with social antagonism, the practice of CRA constitutes a mammoth and problematic task, particularly within the realm of the social work profession and within social agencies. For both Hart and Luckock (2004) and Cowan (2004), the most common challenge facing social workers and welfare agencies regarding the practice of CRA is the failure by social workers to disengage themselves and their operations from their reminiscences of the apartheid rule. Snyder (2012) maintains that, irrespective of the fact that social workers are regarded as concierges in the CRA process, numerous of them have attitudes which indicate and express discrimination against specific prospective adoptive parents, usually those of different race from their own. Concurring with this assessment, Moos and Mwaba (2007) noted that these attitudes are most prevalent among those social workers who have been subjected to the humiliating and degrading experiences

endured during the apartheid era and who still cling to unresolved experiences of racism. These attitudes inevitably have adverse consequences for the way in which these social workers carry out their duties within the realm of CRA.

Although the fact that CRA is a problematic issue needs to be accepted and faced, consistency and uniformity are both fundamental requirements to its smooth and effective practice. Wrobel and Neil (2009) maintain that there is a lack of consistency and uniformity in the interpretation and application of the legislation pertaining to CRA. They go on to say that such inconsistency and lack of uniformity is indicative of insufficient knowledge and experience on the part of adoption social workers, and inertia on the part of the individual adoption workers or institutions concerned. Hall (2010) maintains that there are scanty magistrates who are who comprehend the process of CRA, and that as a result, a succession of seemingly endless adjournments haunts the practice.

Human resources constitute the vital driving force needed for the attainment and accomplishment of the desired end results in the practice of CRA, but severe shortages and associated burdens are huge impediments to the effective and efficient practice of CRA which face social workers and agencies in South Africa (Freeman and Nkomo, 2006). Hall (2010) concurs with this view by maintaining that there are not enough adoption social workers and that those who are there are being over-worked, resulting in the practice of CRA and its processes becoming severely flawed. In a similar vein, Snyder (2012) maintains that the South African cross-racial adoption process has many defects, as adoption social workers are rushing through cross-racial adoption cases to get through their caseloads. To this, Hall (2010) adds that

cross-racial adoption reports are often made falsely, implying that children are being put in placements on incorrect information. Because of this understaffing, the practice of CRA in South Africa has become notorious among both social workers and agencies as a long, agonising and convoluted practice.

Another limitation facing social workers and agencies regarding the practice of CRA is the preference, among many cross-racial adoptive parents, to adopt infants or young and female children at the expense of older and or male children (Fondation, 2011) in Johnson and Fine, 2013:19). According to these authors, most prospective cross-racial adoptive parents prefer to adopt young children and females in particular, because they believe that these children are not as challenging to raise as male children and older children (Compare, 2002; Suki, 2003). Freeman and Nkomo (2006) concur with this view, maintaining that the younger the child, the greater are the chances that cross-racial adoptive parents will be able to prevent him or her from indulging in delinquency.

According to Freeman and Nkomo (2006) and Thiele (2005), the controversy surrounding placing older children with cross-racial adoptive families stems from two primary schools of thought. Thiele (2005) explains that theorists such as John Bowlby in Howe(1998) asserts that poor quality care and an emotionally unstable environment in the first year of life have lasting negative effects on development and personality, while others, such as Clarke and Clarke (year)cited in Howe (1998:72), claim that full developmental recovery is possible if children can be placed in stable and nurturing families. This controversy has called for a series of outcome studies to assess the nature and quality of the development of children who are adopted as older children

and the findings imply that there are additional factors which must be taken into consideration when an older child is adopted.

According to Howe (1998), research also indicates that over and above the heightened risk of behavioural disturbances in all adopted children, children who are placed later in life appear to have an increased chance of problems related to mental health and behavioural and psychiatric problems. These studies suggest that children adopted as older children may have greater challenges to face in terms of emotional, social and behavioural adjustment than children who have been adopted as babies. According to Thiele (2005), this situation is greatly aggravated by the racial issues which are still prevalent within the South African society. As a result, social workers and agencies are faced with the dilemma of who to approach regarding the adoption of older children across racial lines.

3.8 Conclusion

The fact that there has been little analysis of the practice of CRA in South Africa, specifically in East London, provides the justification for this study. However, the subject is not a completely new one. The literature which exists tend to suggest that although the practice of CRA is a controversial issue indeed, it has been introduced as a way of addressing the child custody crisis for children who are desperately in need of care and protection. Issues of race, religious beliefs, or cultural differences have been found to be of great significance within the practice of CRA. All children deserve a loving home and should not be deprived of their rights to parental care, shelter, love and affection owing to racial issues. With the help provided by a thorough examination of the Critical Race Theory and the Crisis Theory, the practice of CRA need not

continue to be seen as socially controversial simply because of South Africa's racially segregated past .

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an outline of the methodology applied for the purpose of collecting the data required to understand the practice of CRA. The chapter describes and justifies the qualitative research design and gives relevant details concerning the research population, sampling, the collection and analysis of the data and finally, it covers the ethical considerations which were applied while the study was being conducted and the measures which were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the results.

4.2 Methodology

The term research methodology refers to “a way of obtaining, organising and analysing data” (Polit and Hungler, 2004: 233). Holloway (2005:293) defines methodology as “a framework of theories and principles on which methods and procedures are based”. In this study the term research methodology refers to the manner in which the research was conducted in an attempt to attain the solution to the research problem through the research questions. Research methodology also refers to the strategy used to conduct and pursue the study of the practice of cross-racial adoption in East London. According to Creswell (2007), research methodology comprises three components, namely: (i) the research design, (ii) the methods of collecting data and (iii) the analysis of the data. In this research the requirements of each of the three components have been fulfilled.

4.3 Research paradigm or approach

This study made use of a qualitative research paradigm in the form of an interpretive study. The research paradigm or approach refers to a viewpoint on research possessed by a number of researchers, which is backed up by a set of collective norms, ideas, beliefs and practices (Volpe, 2012; Smith and Larkin, 2009). In simple terms, it is an approach to thinking about and doing research. According to Volpe (2012) and Smith and Larkin (2009), interpretive research attempts to describe what it sees in rich detail and presents its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language. Interpretative research incorporates the qualitative paradigm, and includes the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the specific paradigm.

According to Wiid and Diggins (2009); Denzil and Lincoln (2011) and Flick (2014), the ontological nature of qualitative research is subjective concerning the reality of the social world in order to understand that reality as a process of discovering meanings according to the significance which individuals attach to them. For Creswell (2007), the epistemological relationship of qualitative research emphasises a subjective role in the research because of the interaction of the researcher with the subjects being studied. In addition, qualitative research is also dialectical and interpretive in nature, a process which involves an exchange and an interaction between the researcher and the subjects, which is discovered and interpreted by means of a qualitative method. This study made use of the interpretative research paradigm in order to investigate the practice of CRA in South Africa, with particular reference to CRA in East London.

4.4 Research design

Wiid and Diggins (2009: 54) define a research design as a “framework or a plan for the research proposal, which provides guidance in the course of the collecting and analysing of data”. For Creswell (2007), research design may be defined as a procedure or strategy which the researcher employs or adapts as an approach to the conducting of the research. According to Wiid and Diggins (2009: 54), “there are three types of research designs which can be used to collect primary data and create data structures and information, namely exploratory, descriptive and causal research designs”. As has been noted by Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2000) and Creswell (2007), the choice of which research design to use is determined by the research objectives, the information requirements and the degree of uncertainty inherent in the research problem. This study made use of an exploratory qualitative research design. Creswell (2007: 36) has listed the following characteristics as being inherent in a qualitative research design:

- Qualitative research occurs in a natural setting where human behaviour and events occur.
- Qualitative research is based on the assumption that theories or hypotheses are not established beforehand.
- The researcher is the primary instrument in the collection of data rather than an inanimate mechanism.
- The data which emerges from a qualitative study is descriptive, in that it is expressed in words rather than in numbers.
- The focus of qualitative research is on the perceptions and experiences of the participants and the way in which they make sense of their lives. As a result, it attempts to understand not one but several realities. It focuses both

on the process which is occurring and on the product or the outcome. The core interest is to understand how things occur.

- Use is made of ideographic interpretations: attention is paid and interpretations of data are made according to the particulars of a case, rather than generalisations.
- The qualitative research process is an emergent design with negotiated outcomes.
- The qualitative research tradition relies on making use of tacit knowledge because often the nuances of multiple realities can best be appreciated in this way.

For Wiid and Diggins (2009), whichever research design is used, it should be such that it allows the researcher to identify the truth of the matter in question without the conducting of the research being compromised by interruptions or other types of interference. For this research, the exploratory research design was chosen owing to its ability to be more effective than other types of design in its attempt to achieve the research objectives and to answer questions relating to the practice of cross-racial adoption.

4.5 Understanding qualitative research

According Wiid and Diggins (2009: 85) define qualitative research as "...the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that cannot be meaningfully quantified and summarised in the form of numbers". In addition, Boeije (2010:11) maintain that "the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meanings which people give to them". Hair et al. (2000:

216) add that “qualitative research is used in exploratory designs to gain preliminary insights into problems and opportunities concerning decisions to be made regarding the research”. According to Creswell (2007); De Vos (2005); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) and De Vos, Fouche and Delpont (2005), qualitative research is a method of investigation used in a variety of academic disciplines, which focuses on explaining three components of a specific phenomenon. First, it seeks to establish why a particular subject is like it is, secondly, it examines what it is and finally it focuses on how it has to be like that. Qualitative research techniques seek to give descriptive explanations behind particular occurrences or phenomena pertaining to a particular subject (Wiid and Diggines, 2009). As a result, qualitative research does not seek to predict but rather to analyse what the current activity may imply in relationship to identified variables.

4.5.1 Justification for using a qualitative research method for this study

A qualitative research method was imperative and significant for this research in that it permitted the research to go beyond elaborating on the specific components of the practice of CRA. Wiid and Diggines (2009) assert that qualitative methods of research provide evidence about the person’s side of an issue, which includes the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. In the case of this study, qualitative research provided clarification to explanations of the roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies in the practice of CRA and its associated challenges. Making use of a qualitative method also provided an opportunity to obtain complex textual descriptions of how people perceive the practice of CRA. In addition, qualitative research allowed the researcher the flexibility to probe for the initial responses of participants. Qualitative research methods also permit the

emergence of intangible factors, such as social norms, ethnicity, and race, all of which are vital dynamics in this research.

4.6 Research domain

East London was chosen as a research domain for this case study area. The organisations selected, CMR and Child Welfare, both were located in Southernwood. East London was chosen because according to the Buffalo City IDP (2008) and the Buffalo Municipality report (2013), a high rate of children being adopted across racial lines has been reported in East London. According to the statistics of adoption, East London has the highest rate of CRA (Child Welfare report, 2013).

East London is a city located on the south-east coast of South Africa, in the Eastern Cape Province. The city is situated on the coast of the Indian Ocean and is the country's only river port. East London is comprised of a number of locations and suburbs, one of which is Southernwood, in which the two welfare organisations selected for this study, are situated. Modern day attractions include: the East London Museum, which houses the coelacanth, a prehistoric fish which had been thought to be extinct for millions of years until the specimen which was discovered by fishermen in 1938 and identified as a most unusual and possibly extremely significant catch by Miss Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, the curator of the East London Museum at the time. East London also has numerous memorial statues, including the monument to Steve Biko.

In 2000 East London became part of the Municipality of Buffalo City (Room, 2006). Enormous investment in recent years by corporations such as Daimler Chrysler has resulted in the harbour being developed to include a new car terminal (Moos, 2010).

East London is estimated to have a population of 250,000, with over 750,000 in the metropolitan area (Buffalo City Municipality IDP, 2013). The population distribution in the Buffalo City Municipality shows that 60% of the population resides in East London (Statistics South Africa, 2010). The 2014 review of the Buffalo City Municipality's IDP indicated that approximately 64% of BCM's population can be categorised as either children between the ages of 0 and 14 years (26%) or youth between the ages of 15 and 34 years (38%). Forty-one percent of the population of Buffalo City is 19 years of age and younger. 52% is between 20 and 59 years of age and 7% is aged between 60 and 80+ years (Statistics SA, 2010). Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/ AIDS), child abandonment and child neglect are all significant factors for concern in East London, resulting in many children being in need of care and protection. This state of affairs inevitably favours the practice of cross-racial adoption.

4.7 Population, Sample and Sampling strategy

This section explains the population, sample and sampling strategy used in the study.

4.7.1 Population

According to Saunders et al. (2007), population is a full set of cases from which the sample is then taken. In this study the population consisted of all the six (6) social workers, two managers (two) managers, seven (7) adoptive parents and five (5) community members and organisations (CMR and Child Welfare South Africa) involved with CRA in East London.

4.7.2 Sampling frame

According to Creswell (2009: 146), a sampling frame refers to a list of all the people who are in the population. Sampling also refers to drawing a sample or a subset from a population, which comprises the full set. The usual goal in sampling is to produce a representative sample: a sample which is similar to the population in all characteristics, except that it includes fewer people because it is a sample rather than the complete population (Creswell, 2007). The sampling frame for this study comprised all of the adoption social workers, both male and female, of 25 years of age or more from all race groups, adoption managers, cross-racial adoptive parents, community members and adoption organisations in East London.

4.7.3 Unit of analysis (sample size)

Strydom (2005) defines a sample as those components of the population reflected in the study. Kerlinger (2005) maintains that a sample implies taking any portion of a population as being representative of that population. Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, the population was limited to adoption social workers, adoption managers, cross-racial adoptive parents, community members and adoption organisations. The study made use of a sample consisting of only 20 participants and the choice of the sample size was based mainly on the need for the accuracy required by the researcher and the required variation in the sample (Babbie, 2007).

4.7.4 Sampling strategy

Sampling in the research was done using purposive non-random sampling. According to De Vos (2005), purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher and a sample is composed of elements which contain the most

characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population. In this study the variables which represented the desired traits and characteristics were chosen purposively and from those a non-random selection was effected. The sample was divided into three categories, namely: a) adoption social workers and adoption managers from child welfare organisations including CMR EL and Child Welfare South Africa, East London; b) cross- racial adoptive parents chosen on the bases of them having at least two years or more of experience with cross racial adoption and who were willing to participate and c) community members who were selected based on their close vicinity to the cross racial adoptive family in other words the neighbours. The composition of the listed samples was made up of six (6) adoption social workers, two (2) adoption managers, seven (7) cross-racial adoptive parents and five (5) community members.

4.14.5 Instruments and methods used for collecting data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), data refers to information obtained in the course of a study. Babbie (2007) maintains that the collection of data in any research study denotes a systematic manner of gathering information. Creswell (2007) explains that methods for collecting data can generally be grouped into two broad classes: qualitative and quantitative, and that each of these has a number of tools or techniques for gathering data. This assessment is shared by Fox and Bayat (2007), who maintain that when one embarks upon a research project, it is essential to use whatever methodology is most suitable for the specific needs of the research, without getting bogged down trying to decide whether the perspective of the research is qualitative or quantitative.

4.14.6 Research Instruments

The term “research instrument” refers to a tool used in the gathering of data for research purposes. Babbie (2007) explains that a research instrument is a tool which is used to collect the data needed to resolve the research problem under investigation. This study made use of two instruments to collect data. These were interviews and focus group discussions to generate data from social workers and managers working in the field of adoption, adoptive parents and community members. The instruments were administered by the researcher to the participants in their familiar environments, such their homes and their work places. In addition, this research made use of two major categories of data, namely primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was gathered exclusively from interviews, focus group discussions and observations, while secondary sources of data consisted mainly of data from records kept by child welfare organisations, CMR, the Department of Social Development, and other related documentary analysis. These are explained in detail in the following subsections.

4.14.6.1 In-depth interviews

Owing to the exploratory nature of this study, in-depth interviews (see appendixes A, B and C) were regarded as the most suitable tool for gathering data. As has been pointed out by both Cohen (2006) and Babbie (2007), a great deal of use is made of in-depth interviews in qualitative research in order to gain insight into the knowledge, opinions, likes and dislikes, attitudes and perceptions of the participants. According to Wiid and Diggins (2009), the term “in-depth interview” refers to an informal process of probing participants, through a series of semi-structured questions, about a subject in a face-to-face setting. In this study in-depth interviews were used in the form of

conversations for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the practice of CRA (Babbie, 2007). In-depth interviews also provide an opportunity to gather information about subjective human aspects of an issue, such as the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions and emotions of individuals concerning the practice of CRA, in this instance (Babbie, 2007). It should be mentioned that the participants were selected purposively and that the interviews were conducted with a great deal of respect for work shopping techniques and good communication skills. The interviews were also recorded to enable the transcriptions to be used for the purpose of analysing data. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the interviews were not longer than between thirty minutes and one hour, in order to prevent fatigue (Wiid and Diggines, 2009).

4.14.6.2 Focus group discussions

This study made use of a focus group discussion guide of semi-structured (see Appendix D), fairly open-ended discussion questions concerning issues pertaining to the practice of CRA. Semi-structured, as opposed to unstructured questions, were used in order to provide the desired direction in the discussions and to ensure that the group had addressed all of the particular areas of interest sufficiently. According to Strydom et al. (2011), a focus group refers to a small group of people (8- 12), brought together and guided by a moderator through an unstructured or a semi-structured discussion about a particular topic. In this study the focus group discussions comprised ten participants, two managers, two social workers, four adoptive parents and two community members of various races. The decision to employ a mixed-race focus group was based on the idea that the participants might feel obliged to discuss issues pertaining to race and racism very differently in a setting of this sort from the

way in which they might feel that they are able to do in same-race groups (Hair et al, 2000). It was also felt that important discourses may fail to arise if the discussions were limited to same-race groups only. In addition, a mixed-race focus group was conducted in order to get the participants' ideas, views, feelings, perceptions and new ideas about the practice of CRA, which might have been obscured during in-depth interviews (King, 2012; Hair et al, 2000; Byrne, 2004).

Focus group discussions were also suitable for this research because these allowed participants to articulate and justify their thoughts in relation to one other. It has been pointed out by Tonkiss (2004) that social and cultural processes, which influence people's talk and shape their opinions in everyday, natural social settings, are more likely to be revealed in a group interaction. This was a vital concern for this study because the research focused on issues of race and how they affected the practice of CRA. It is essential to note that, throughout the focus group discussions which were conducted for this research; two types of 'structuring' or 'directing' tools to focus the conversation on the practice of CRA were used. However, this direction was used subtly, to enable participants to generate their own conversation, questions for one other and to express their ideas in relation to the practice of CRA. This also permitted observations of the dynamics of participants' interactions with one other (Byrne, 2004). The focus group discussions were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants, thereby capturing all of the information, which made it possible to prepare transcriptions, which would be used when the data was analysed.

4.14.6.3 Observations

Both the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews made use of the tool of directly observing the behaviour of the participants. The use of observations had the

advantage of allowing essential primary data concerning the practice of CRA to be gathered by focusing on the participants' characteristics, attitudes, interactions, unconscious and nonverbal behaviour, facial expressions and gestures.

4.14.6.4 Secondary data

Secondary data is vital in any social science research as it helps to provide a baseline to compare what had transpired during the conducting of the research with what has been recorded and reported concerning the phenomenon being studied. Secondary data in this study made use of documentary analysis of articles, books and both published and unpublished theses. The secondary data for this research started with a search for articles and books from a number of authors (e.g. Moos and Mwaba, 2007; Synder, 2012 and Freeman and Nkomo, 2006) which examined the rates and trends, the roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies, and the perceptions, challenges and theories regarding the practice of CRA. Other articles and books, which discussed and criticised the works listed above, were also sought out in order to obtain the broadest possible range of data related to the practice of CRA.

4.14.7 Research procedures

Permission to conduct this study under the auspices of the Department of Social Work was obtained from the University of Fort Hare through the ethics committee. An explanatory letter was drafted for the Directors of both Child Welfare and CMR, in which the research endeavour was explained and permission to have access to adoption social workers, managers and adoptive parents was requested. Another letter requesting permission to interview them was sent to community members. After making these requests, the researcher planned both the in-depth interviews and the

focus group discussions for times which were suitable for the participants and which allowed for them to be organised into a mixed-race focus group.

In addition, the participants selected received information sheets explaining the nature of the research and they were given time to read through these before signing informed consent forms, the details of which are discussed in the section covering the ethical considerations which were respected in this research study. Tape-recordings of both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions were made, both of which lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. After the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews were complete, they were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were analysed using the methods for analysing data discussed below.

4.15 Analysis of data

The analysis of data provides a systematic means to solve a problem (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Davis and Meyer, 2009). In an attempt to answer the research questions of this study, a pragmatic approach was adopted for the analysis of data, which made use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) Content Thematic Discourse Analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) maintain that a content thematic analysis attempts to capture important themes or clusters of coherent meanings from a set of data which can be related back to the research questions. This procedure is pertinent to this research, which is concerned with identifying latent themes or discourses in discussions of the practice of CRA in East London and illustrating how these relate to racial ideology, as was explained in the previous chapter. This study followed the eight steps for the analysis of data laid down by Tesch and cited in Creswell (2009), which are detailed below:

- ❖ All of the transcripts were read carefully whilst jotting down the ideas which came to mind while reading the transcripts.
- ❖ Each and every interview transcript in the pile was read, asking questions about its content and writing the thoughts which emerged in the margin. Creswell (2009) emphasises that it is important not to think of the substance of the information, but rather of the underlying meaning.
- ❖ This task was performed on all of the transcripts whilst making a list of the topics which were discussed. Similar topics were grouped together and then placed in columns designated as "major topics", "unique topics" and "left-overs".
- ❖ Once it had been tabulated in this way, the data was re-examined, this time abbreviating each topic with a code and writing it next to the appropriate segments of the texts. A preliminary organising scheme was employed to see whether new categories and codes emerged.
- ❖ The most appropriate descriptive wording for each topic was found and these were made into categories. The aim was to reduce the total list of categories by grouping topics which showed interrelationships together.
- ❖ A final decision concerning the abbreviation for each category was made and the participants were coded as S1 to S16 for the social workers, M1 and M2 for the managers, P1 to P7 for the adoptive parents and C1 to C5 for the community members, in order to generate a number of themes. These themes constituted the major findings in the study and were given separate headings in the section covering the findings of this study. According to Smith (1995), researchers need to find meaning in the interviews with the participants and to employ an interpretative approach when analysing the transcriptions.

- ❖ From this point the data material belonging to each category was assembled and a preliminary analysis was performed.
- ❖ Finally, the results of this research were reported.
(Tesch (1991) cited by Creswell (2009)).

It should be mentioned that it was crucial to document the process of analysis thoroughly, to make it possible to track the logic of the analysis.

4.16 Adequacy and trustworthiness

The adequacy of data refers to the total amount of data obtained and whether or not saturation has occurred (Hollloway, 2005). On the other hand, “trustworthiness refers to establishing the validity and reliability of the qualitative research” (Streubert and Carpenter, 2003:364). In this study Guba's model of confirming the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, as it had been adopted by Krefting (1991), was of great value. Accordingly, the following four criteria were used to ensure trustworthiness: “truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality” (Guba, 1985:112).

4.16.6 Truth-value

Truth-value is employed as a criterion to determine whether the researcher has managed to establish confidence, specifically in the truth of the findings where the subjects or informants are concerned, and also in relation to the context in which the study was carried out (Guba cited in Krefting, 1991: 215). In addition, truth-value establishes how self-assured the researcher is with the truth of the findings obtained by the research design in relation to both the informants and the setting in which the research was conducted. In qualitative research the truth-value is often assessed in

terms of the detection of human experiences as they are expressed by the informants. Consequently, the researcher's duty is to represent the compound realities revealed by the informants as comprehensively as possible. In social science research it has been maintained that a qualitative study is said to be credible when it epitomises such precise descriptions and/or interpretations of human experience that people who share those experiences would be able to identify closely with the descriptions.

Accordingly, the truth-value is normally established through the strategy of ascertaining the credibility of the results. In order to achieve this in this study, various interviewing techniques were used during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, as has been mentioned earlier in this chapter. In this study prolonged engagement with the participants helped to identify their responses as they agreed or disagreed with the points raised during the interviews and the focus group discussions. In addition, care was taken to ensure that the truth-value of the study was not compromised by friendship or relationships with the study participants.

4.16.7 Applicability

The term applicability denotes “the extent to which the findings of a study can be useful to supplementary contexts, settings or with other groups” (Krefting, 1991: 216). In addition, this is the capacity to generalise the findings to a larger population. Accordingly, applicability is ascertained in terms of transferability. In Guba's model, cited in Krefting (1991), it is asserted that transferability is much more the obligation of the person attempting to transfer the findings to another situation or to another population than that of the original researcher. In the case of this study, the original

researcher has presented an adequate amount of descriptive data to make a comparison by other researchers possible.

4.16.8 Consistency

The consistency of the data is determined by whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were to be replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context and is the third criterion of trustworthiness (Krefting, 1991:216). According to Krefting (1991:216), consistency is defined in terms of the dependability of the findings. To fulfil the requirements of this criterion the researcher took care to describe the exact methods employed in the gathering, the analysis and the interpretation of the data. The detailed description, in this study, of the methods used to gather data provides essential information specifically to determine exactly how repeatable and how distinctive it is.

4.16.9 Neutrality

Neutrality is the last of the criteria to establish trustworthiness employed in this study. According to Krefting (1991:216), neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings of the study constitute solely a function of the participants and the conditions of the research study and not of other preferences, enthusiasms and perspectives. Guba, cited in Krefting (1991:216), shifted the emphasis concerning neutrality in qualitative research from the researcher to the study itself, maintaining that rather than focus on the neutrality of the researcher, the neutrality of the data obtained from the study should be given more consideration. It is the researcher's contention that the neutrality of the findings of this study should be self-evident if due attention is given to the manner in which they were achieved.

4.17 Ethical considerations

According to Strydom (2002), ethical guidelines act as standards to be maintained in research and also as the basis on which the researcher ought to assess his or her own conduct. Graham, Lewis and Nicholas (2006) maintain that ethics constitute an important aspect of any social science research. Strydom (2002) describes ethics as a set of moral principles, suggested by individuals or groups, which are widely accepted and which provide rules and articulate behavioural expectations concerning the conduct of researchers towards experimental subjects and respondents. In compliance with the ethical conducting of research, the researcher respected and observed a number of ethical considerations, which are listed below.

4.17.6 Obtaining permission

First and foremost, the researcher sought and obtained permission, in the form of an ethical clearance letter from the University of Fort Hare, to conduct the research for this study, before making an appeal to the relevant authorities from both the selected welfare organisations.

4.17.7 Informed consent

The most vital principle for ethical acceptability in research of this sort is informed consent (Graham et al., 2006). For Dickerson and Allen (2007), obtaining an informed consent simply means that all the information pertaining to the study, such as its procedures, benefits and the risks which it may entail, will be rendered to their legal representatives. Consequently, the study participants for this research needed to be informed of the nature and purpose of the study and its potential dangers and benefits, and to consent to participate without coercion. All of the participants were given a

consent form to sign and were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and that their choosing whether or not to participate would not affect their professional progress in any way.

In addition, the informed consent procedure made the participants aware of their mutual obligation to one another not to divulge any personal information which emerged during the group discussions to anyone else at any time after the interview. It also aimed to ensure that the participants understood that the interviews would be tape-recorded, and that all recordings and transcripts would be kept in a secure location in the researcher's home, and that only the researcher and her supervisor would have access to them. It also made it clear that the recordings would be destroyed once the researcher had qualified, that no details identifying the participants would be present in the transcript or the research report, and that any direct quotes from these texts would not include identifying details.

4.17.8 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation entails that no subject, under any circumstance, will be forced to participate in the research, and this was observed in this study. Participation was confirmed either by written or proven oral consent and this was put into effect only after a full disclosure, concerning the details of the research and all the possible implications for the participants had been made. In addition, the researcher ensured that the participants were free from coercion and deception by being open with them concerning the aims and intentions of the research. Accordingly, the participants were made aware that if they felt that they wanted to withdraw from participating at any point of the study they could do so without any fear penalties or possible retribution.

4.17.9 Avoidance of harm

The researcher also observed the principle of non-malicious conduct, which ensured that no harm was done to the respondents in any way. The identities of the participants were protected and not revealed to the public, in order to safeguard both their dignity and their physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

4.17.10 Confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher guaranteed confidentiality with a proviso concerning the limitations of confidentiality, in that while no identities would be revealed, the findings from the data would be published and/or disclosed in her reports to her supervisor. Strydom (2005) maintains that the principles of confidentiality and anonymity denote the handling of information concerning participants in a confidential manner. This entails a great obligation on the part of the researcher to guard carefully all the information which he or she is given in confidence by the participants. The researcher assured the participants that the information which they shared would not be disclosed to anyone, for any reasons whatsoever. Strategies to maintain confidentiality eliminate the risk of harm and embarrassment to those participating in the study. The researcher's promise to protect and respect the rights of the research participants was made as a measure of her commitment to professional research ethics (Bless and Smith, 2000).

Finally, the researcher provided an e-mail address at which the participants could contact her to request a one-page feedback form, once the research had been completed, and they were also informed that a formal research report would be made available to them, should they wish to have access to it. In addition, the researcher ensured that participants knew that they would be directly quoted in the report and that

no identifying details would accompany these quotes or any other part of the report, as she had pledged that she would uphold the confidentiality of the participants throughout the report.

4.17.11 Feedback of results

Providing feedback of the results of the research findings was made a priority in this study, in response to requests made by the participants. It was also ensured that feedback was given to both academic and non-academic participants, to demonstrate the value which the researcher attached to their commitment to participating in the study and also to show that the representation of the findings had been fair and that the information given by the participants had not been suppressed or misrepresented. As a matter of priority, the researcher made the findings public through the legal channels, to allow future groups, who may wish to undertake similar research, a base from which to start.

4.17.12 Avoidance of plagiarism

The University of Fort Hare's research policy, which requires researchers to avoid plagiarism, was adhered to by citing the authors of all the reference material which was used for the study. The researcher ensured that the data which was collected was used solely for academic purposes, to avoid jeopardising the reputations of any of the authors cited or that of the university, in any way.

4.18 Limitations of the study

This section provides the major limitations for both the primary and secondary data obtained during the research.

4.18.6 Race

In an attempt to gauge the extent to which the researcher may have influenced the data which was collected, the results which were reported and the effects of the research, one reservation manifested itself upon reflection. Race may still be considered a contentious, awkward and even a conflict-inducing social issue. As such, the presence of the researcher, as a person of colour in what may have been perceived as a position of authority as the focus group facilitator, may have had some influence on the extent to which the White participants, in particular, felt comfortable, or even able, to share their perspectives regarding the practice of CRA, freely.

4.18.7 Subjective bias

It is inherent in the nature of the analysis that the results will be, to a large extent, dependent upon the researcher's subjective interpretation of them. Accordingly, an attempt was made to identify those personal aspects which may be likely to bias her analysis, for example, acknowledging the fact that the researcher is Black and conducting a study of CRA, in which the issue of race constitutes a social and an ideological quagmire, was of vital importance. Inevitably, this realisation invoked a reflexive desire either to counter-argue or to dismiss the possible relevance of that particular line of discourse, which meant that a great deal of self-reflection was required in order to look beyond the researcher's personal situation and to identify the social phenomena and political considerations and perceptions underlying that discourse. In addition, the presence of a research supervisor to review this analysis should provide a reliable and trustworthy degree of objectivity, which would reduce the possibility of bias on the part of the researcher and direct the analysis in a manner which is appropriate to the aims of the research.

4.18.8 Sources of information

As has already been noted, there is not a great deal of published literature concerning the practice of CRA, particularly with reference to its practice, specifically, in East London. However, there was use of the literature which focused on the practice of CRA in other parts of South Africa, in order to compensate for this lack.

4.18.9 Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to the degree to which information is kept within professional bounds, in order to protect the identity, safety and reputation of the participants (Bell: 1993: 95). Confidentiality can be absolute or relative. Bell (1993: 95) maintains that it is hard to achieve absolute confidentiality in research, owing to the fact that research typically involves supervisors and/or coordinators. Accordingly, confidentiality in this research was relative and, for the purposes of protecting the identities of the participants, pseudonyms were used in those instances when it was necessary to quote a respondent.

4.18.10 Generalisation of findings

The potential for the generalisation of the results is limited to the specific area of study, namely East London. However, the recognition of these discourses may still be considered a significant contribution to research within the social sciences and to those who are interested in the field of study.

4.19 Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt was made to show and justify the work and the procedures followed in terms of the practical aspects of this study. The chapter highlighted, in

detail, the qualitative approach and design adopted in the research, the purposive sampling employed, the population, the sampling frame, the unit of analysis, the sampling technique, the methods used to collect the data, the analysis of the data, the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations which were respected while it was being conducted. The next chapter presents the results of the findings and provides a concurrent discussion of these results in relation to the practice of CRA in East London.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is based solely on presenting the qualitative findings of the research study concerning the practice of cross-racial adoption in East London. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section contains the results of the interviews presented in the form of the themes which emerged during the analysis of the data. These are described and interpreted in qualitative terms, in accordance with the feelings and experiences expressed and described by the participants. The data presented was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions from six social workers, seven cross-racial adoptive parents, two adoption managers and five community members, describing the practice of CRA in East London, and the role of social workers and their welfare organisations. It also presents the findings concerning the perceptions of the social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of CRA. The chapter also presents the challenges to social workers, managers, welfare agencies and adoptive parents by CRA and the relevant strategies which are being employed in order to mitigate these challenges. The last section provides a discussion of the themes and sub-themes that emerged..

5.2 Demographic data

Demographic data refers to data representing modelled socio-economic characteristics of the research population, and constitutes an essential aspect of any social science research. Demographic data includes diverse characteristics of which the following were of particular significance to this study: age, gender, race, the cross-

racial status of adoptees and experience in years in cross-racial adoption. These demographic characteristics were deemed to be of great importance in this study, as they are all significant factors in the practice of CRA. Table 5.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Code	Age	Gender	Race	Cross Racial Adoptee	Cross Racial Adoptive Parent	Experience With Cross Racial Adoption In Years
S1	45	Male	Black	Yes	No	15
S2	33	Male	Coloured	No	No	6
S3	27	Female	White	No	No	3
S4	33	Female	Black	Yes	No	7
S5	36	Female	White	No	No	5
S6	34	Male	Black	No	No	5
P1	35	Female	Indian	No	Yes	3
P2	38	Female	White	No	Yes	7
P3	42	Male	White	No	Yes	18
P4	41	Female	White	No	Yes	20
P5	34	Female	Coloured	No	Yes	5
P6	44	Female	White	No	Yes	3

P7	38	Male	White	No	Yes	9
M1	51	Female	Coloured	No	No	24
M2	54	Female	White	No	No	21
C1	55	Male	Black	No	No	8
C2	43	Female	Black	Yes	No	10
C3	44	Female	White	No	No	6
C4	38	Male	Black	No	No	5
C5	41	Female	White	No	No	9

As indicated in Table 5.1, there were three (3) cross-racial adoptees among the participants interviewed for this study. All the three cross-racial adoptees were Black by race. Table 5.1 also shows that five out of seven of the interviewed cross-racial adoptive parents interviewed were White, with one Coloured and one Indian adoptive parent. The findings of the study indicated that the practice of CRA is most prevalent among Whites, and this is underlined by the fact that there is a scarcity of Black adoptive parents who are willing to offer custody to vulnerable children, as has already been noted (Freeman and Nkomo, 2007; Snyder, 2012). According to table 5.1, the seven cross-racial adoptive parents had broken the racial barrier by providing love and protection to vulnerable and homeless children, which many people seem to find either difficult or undesirable. In addition, it is indicated that the participants' exposure to the practice of CRA ranged from three years to twenty-four years.

5.2.1 Age

The ages of the participants ranged from twenty-seven to fifty-five years. According to Table 5.1, the age group between the ages of thirty-three and forty-four formed the largest component of the participants in this study. This group is followed by the one comprising of participants who were forty-five years old and older. It is also shown that the age group comprising participants below the age of thirty-three years constituted the smallest number of participants in the study.

5.2.2 Gender

The participants who were interviewed comprised seven males and thirteen females.. The findings of the research indicated that most female participants, unlike their male counterparts, showed a great deal of antagonism towards the practice of CRA, which seemed to suggest that most females may be more easily disturbed by a crisis situation. This indicated a link with the Crisis Theory, which was covered in Chapter Two, with the emphasis which it places on the disequilibrium following an emotional upset and the possible subsequent breakdown in problem-solving or coping following a crisis situation.

5.2.3 Race

Table 5.1 shows that there were six Black, ten White, one Indian and three Coloured participants in the study. All of these racial groups were included in order to generate rich information regarding perceptions pertaining to the practice of CRA.

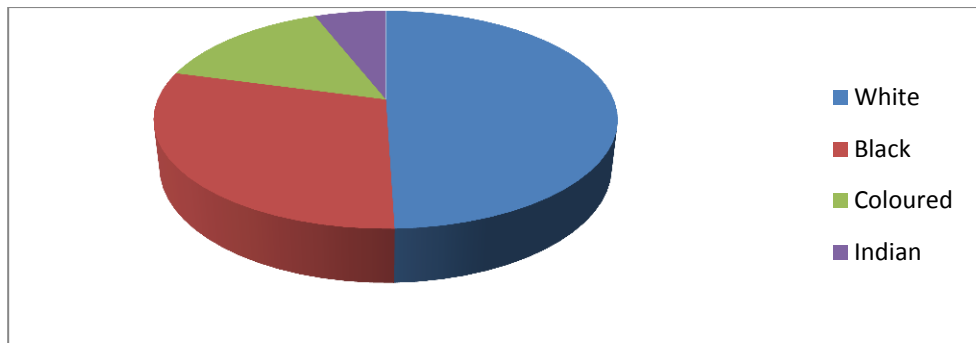


Fig 5.1: Racial composition of the participants

The study found that most of the Black participants interviewed did not approve of the practice occurring in the aftermath of, what they termed, the racist rule of the apartheid regime, to which most of the South African population had been subjected. This finding indicated that unresolved racism is still ingrained in the fabric of South African society and that it is extremely difficult to eradicate. This finding bore a close relationship to the central tenets of the Critical Race theory.

5.3 The practice of cross-racial adoption in East London

The main aim of this study was to investigate the practice of CRA in East London. The interviews and discussions managed to bring to the fore a number of themes concerning the practice of CRA. Among the themes which emerged were the screening of adoptive parents, information and guidance concerning cross-racial adoption, rates and trends related to the annual growth in the practice of CRA and variations in the practice of CRA to be found among the various different races.

5.3.1 The process of cross-racial adoption

The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with twenty participants in East London. They were asked to comment on the process of CRA and fifteen of

the participants, who were social workers, managers and cross-racial adoptive parents appeared to have comprehensive knowledge of the process of CRA, which was not the case among the remaining five participants, who were community members, and who seemed to lack knowledge concerning the practice. The fifteen participants, identified as knowledgeable, mentioned that the process of CRA is long and tiresome and that it calls for a great deal of patience. The findings indicated that the process begins when the prospective cross-racial adoptive parent or parents first make contact with an adoption agencies facilitating adoption, which are represented in this study by Child Welfare and CMR. Ten of the participants interviewed indicated that the process of CRA is extremely challenging and that it also triggers emotional disequilibrium for all of the people involved. One adoption social worker said:

hey its only because we need to facilitate that children in need secure a home unlike to leave them and they will end up begging in streets..... ish hhhh this process of cross-racial adoption is a job on its own. It's tiresome and it's very challenging to us as social workers, to the managers, worse to the adoptive parents(Interrupted)(S4)

One of the adoptive parents said:

My husband and I thought of adopting and then we approached child welfare organisation. We were so nervous because of us being White and wanting to adopt a Black child, since that was the only option that was available. (P2)

The study also found that with regard to the process of CRA, there is no uniformity in the manner in which prospective adoptive parents are being treated, and that, as a result, they have diverse experiences to report. Four of the adoptive parents interviewed indicated that they were treated with courtesy and respect and viewed as genuine prospective parents. One adoptive parent said:

My wife and I went to an adoption agency because we wanted to adopt, you know. It was a bit traumatic for both of us because we wanted to do it but we were really scared, worried that we wouldn't pull it off. It wasn't an easy decision, for we were White and the available child was Black, as we have read from the paper, but, to our surprise, we were treated with respect, with no racial disparity and told that being possible candidates seemed to create a positive first impression and implied that adoption was in fact a possibility (P3)

By contrast, the study also found that there were many unanticipated emotional responses in store for prospective cross-racial adoptive parents in the initial contact with any adoption agency in East London, specifically as a result of racial issues. Two of the adoptive parents interviewed indicated that in their experience of the process of CRA, they felt that the response from the adoption agency or organisation which they approached was unprofessional, humiliating and apathetic. One adoptive parent said:

..... when we left the adoption agency we were more troubled and even more scared than we were before you know, we were told that we must wait until there was thorough evidence that there were no same-race adoptive parents to adopt. You see, we even blamed ourselves for not being able to have our own children. (P7)

5.3.2 Screening of adoptive parents

A request to comment on how prospective adoptive parents are being screened within the practice of CRA was made to all six of the social workers, the two managers and the seven adoptive parents, through in-depth interviews. All of these participants indicated that the adoption screening process included a number of procedures, which include: completing an application form, undergoing a series of individual and joint interviews, a full medical examination, an HIV/Aids test to ascertain their current health status, a home visit and a follow-up of all of the references given by the prospective parent or parents by an adoption social worker, psychometric testing or

therapeutic support services, an assessment of the infertility of the adoptive parent or parents and a history of the extended family's involvement. All of the participants interviewed indicated that there are a number of vital documents involved in the screening process. One of the social workers interviewed provided the list of these required documents:

- ❖ *Completed application form signed by both parties.*
- ❖ *Medical form covering the infertility and the general health of the prospective adoptive parent or parents.*
- ❖ *Proof of HIV test and the results for both prospective adoptive parents.*
- ❖ *Certified copies of ID documents of both prospective adoptive parents and a copy of the marriage certificate if applicable.*
- ❖ *Proof of income for both prospective adoptive parents.*
- ❖ *Photographs of the prospective adoptive parent or parents to use for matching purposes,*
- ❖ *Police clearance certificates for both prospective adoptive parents.*
- ❖ *References. (S 3)*

The study found that whenever prospective adoptive parents are screened this is done with reference to the guidelines indicated in the Children's Act. One social worker said:

The Children's Act No. 38 (2005), (2) states that a prospective adoptive parent must be (a) fit and proper to be entrusted with full parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child; (b) willing and able to undertake, exercise and maintain those responsibilities and rights; (c) over the age of 18 years; and (d) properly assessed by an adoption social worker for compliance with paragraphs (a) and (b).(3) In the assessment of a prospective adoptive parent, an adoption social worker may take the cultural and community diversity of the adoptable child and the prospective adoptive parent into consideration (S1).

Nevertheless, the findings indicated that all of the adoptive parents interviewed expressed apprehension regarding the inconsistencies in the screening process in the adoption agencies. Three of the interviewed adoptive parents indicated that they had undergone psychological and medical assessments and the other four indicated that they had simply completed psychographic questionnaires in order to finalise the

adoption process, which is illustrated in the response from one of the adoptive parents below:

.....because I was only given what they call ummmm... questionnaire, psychographic questionnaire to answer and after three days I was called to prepare for the arrival of the child and I am not so sure whether that was all ... (Interrupted) (P5).

5.3.3 Information and guidance regarding CRA

In this section, the interviewed participants were asked to comment on how much information and guidance they had regarding the practice of CRA. The study found that of all the participants who were interviewed, only four, who were community members, displayed a lack of information regarding CRA. All six of the social workers and both of the managers interviewed indicated that they always have had workshops and on-the-job training to provide guidance in all forms of adoption, including CRA.

One social worker said:

..... we don't relax because this child welfare is not something to tamper with... like here at CMR we have a number of on-the-job training programmes in which we as adoption social workers keep up-to-date with all the information with regards to all forms of adoption, worse, adoption across racial boundaries because this is the most challenging of all (S6)

In addition, six of the cross-racial adoptive parents interviewed indicated that they had received adoption training, covering pre-adoption, adoption itself and post-adoption.

When questioned about this, one of the adoptive parents said:

I don't have any doubt that these social workers are well trained to offer such services. For me, I was ish hhhh... too nervous to embark on this life choice, you know, because ish hhhh, some children might be very problematic, but I am well equipped to handle any challenge I was afraid of, you see. My child is now twenty years old. I adopted him when he was eight months old but you see, I can't complain. because you see I have all the information and guidance (Interrupted) (P4)

Another adoptive parent said:

From the onset of the adoption process I received and am still receiving information and guidanceTraining is also offered to me on how to handle diverse challenges in adoption and this makes it easy for me to handle my child. (P2)

The study also found that there are some disparities in the information and guidance given to the interviewed participants regarding the practice of CRA. One of the adoptive parents participating in the study felt that she had not been thoroughly prepared to face the reality of CRA. She complained that the information and guidance she received seemed to be inadequate and that she was still looking forward to becoming completely equipped, through adoption training:

.... Ummmm I was only given, what can I say, adoption guidance, only before the process proceeds and thereafter, even up to now, I still have questions to ask Only the social worker is coming to my house to check the child..... but I wish to be trained as well.... (P5)

5.3.4 Rates and trends concerning CRA

In this section the interviewed participants were asked to comment on the rates and trends concerning CRA. Ten participants, comprising six social workers, two managers and two community members, maintained that the practice of cross-racial adoption is an increasing phenomenon, which is most prevalent among Whites who adopt Black children. One of the managers confirmed this by saying:

According to the records kept by this organisation, CMR as of March 2012 to October 2013, out of the forty-eight cases of adoption registered, ninety-five percent of the children have been adopted across racial lines. (M1)

In support of this, one of the social workers interviewed said:

The number of children we are placing in cross-racial adoption care is increasing..... while our organisation, Child Welfare East London, does not have a policy of separating cross-racial adoption care files from general adoption, on average, eight in every ten cases of children in need of adoption, the child is likely to be adopted with a parent of a different race. (S4)

Commenting on the trends of CRA, all of the social workers interviewed indicated that this is a practice which is most common amongst Whites, who adopt children of colour, especially Black children. One adoption social worker from CMR in East London said:

Across South Africa it's far more common these days for White families to adopt a child of colour, especially Black children. This is due merely to the dynamics that generally there are far more black or mixed race babies and children up for adoption than Whites and that there are more Whites to adopt than Blacks. (S1)

A social worker from Child Welfare said:

..... what we have as an organisation on adoption files shows that Whites are at the apex of the adoption pyramid..... the other thing is that Black children are adopted more than Coloureds. at the moment we do not have any Indian or White adopted children in our records. (S3)

5.3.5 Variations in CRA across different races

Earlier, Table 5.1 indicated that the issue of CRA pertains mainly to White adoptive parents taking the responsibility of providing care and protection to Black children. It also indicated that about seventy-four percent of White, fourteen percent Coloured and twelve percent of Indian adoptive parents adopted Black children in East London. These indicates the variations in CRA found in the study across different races. Fig. 5.2 further illustrates these findings.

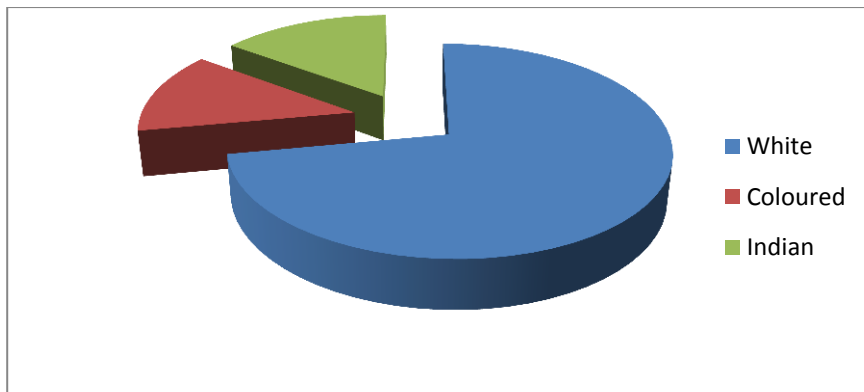


Fig. 5.2 Variations in cross-racial adoption across different races

5.4 The role of social workers, managers and adoption agencies within the ambit of cross-racial adoption

In this section the participants interviewed were asked to comment on the role of social workers, managers and adoption agencies within the ambit of cross-racial adoption. They made mention of various roles such as, determining the adoptability of the child or children, recruiting and selecting prospective adoptive parents, providing necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child, helping with placement transitions and providing post-adoption services to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships.

5.4.1 Determining the adoptability of the child or children

All of the participants interviewed indicated that adoption social workers, managers and adoption agencies played an essential role in determining the adoptability of the child or children who are available for adoption. One social worker explained that social workers performed this role by assessing the developmental, social, cognitive and cultural needs of the children in order to match the child with an appropriate adoptive parent or parents. As is stated in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 section 15

(230) (3), a child is adoptable if (a) the child is an orphan and has no guardian or care giver who is willing to adopt the child; (b) the whereabouts of the child's parent or guardian cannot be established; (c) the child has been abandoned; (d) the child's parent or guardian has abused or deliberately neglected the child, or has allowed the child to be abused or deliberately neglected; or (e) the child is in need of a permanent alternative placement. In the study all of the adoption social workers and managers interviewed reported that they had performed this role and that they had adhered to this guideline in the Children's Act when determining the adoptability of a child. One of the social workers said "When we decide on the adoptability of the child we make referral to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 15 (230) (3) (a) – (e)."

5.4.2 Recruitment and selection of adoptive parents

The study found that social workers and social welfare agencies played a crucial role in the recruitment and selection of prospective adoptive parents in the practice of cross-racial adoption. One social worker said:

..... recruitment and selection of prospective adoptive parents contains the following components, although the process may vary from agency to agency: Enquiry - Information - Applications - Education Assessment - Consideration of Applications by Adoptions Committee - Committee Decision - Approval/Non-Approval/Deferral - Waiting Pool - Linking of Family and Child – Placement (S3).

Another social worker said:

In the process of adoption, the care of a child is entrusted to a person other than the natural parent. Therefore applicants are selected according to their capacity to maximise life opportunities for a child or children, to be open about adoptive status and accepting of the role of the natural family. (S1)

Three social workers explained that, when recruiting and selecting adoptive parents, it is important to note that infertility is not a prerequisite for adoption, as active

investigation and treatment of infertility and adoption assessment are not compatible. Moreover, one of the social workers explained that the home environment is another crucial consideration which requires special attention whenever a prospective parent is being screened. In this regard one of the social workers said:

..... all of the interviewed participants who qualify to be adoptive parents do have suitable home environments, conducive for the total well-being of the child and none of them report to stay in shacks. (S4)

In agreement with this assessment, one of the adoption managers said:

.... it's our role as adoption managers to see that during the screening process adoption social workers make it a priority that the prospective adoptive parent has a conducive home environment that will not perpetuate any further harm to the adopted child..... We always make sure that we must not give someone who resides in 'amagalini' (shack) to adopt a child. We will be risking the child.... (Interrupted). (S4)

Accordingly, all six of the adoption social workers and both of the managers interviewed maintained that a good home environment contributes greatly towards the overall wellbeing of a child and will always be an important consideration among the factors which are assessed when determining the suitability of a prospective adoptive parent.

5.4.3 Providing information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child

The findings of the study revealed that social workers and adoption managers, under the auspices of their organisations, played an important role in providing essential information and counselling to biological parents before consenting to the adoption of a child. One of the adoption managers said:

..... social workers, adoption managers and adoption agencies do not push adoption. Rather, they do help the birth parent to make the choice that is best for them. in most cases, especially in the case of the adoption of children across racial lines, most biological parents took time to consent to the adoption process. This calls for the involvement of social workers and managers, in some instances, in counselling the biological parents so as to be able to release the child into the custody of another family, deemed fit..... (M2)

Another social worker said:

Adoption managers and adoption social workers, with the help of the Children's Court, also take the relinquishment of parental rights from the birth parents, which permanently terminates their rights and this also calls for high degree of counseling birth parents, in assisting them to consent with such a new epoch in their lives. (S4)

Three of the social workers interviewed mentioned that the practice of CRA is often an emotional quagmire, not only for the birth parents, but for the adoptive parents as well.

In this regard, one of the social workers had this to say:

.... adoption managers and adoption social workers within the ambit of their adoption agencies provide both education and counseling for cross-racial adoptive parents. Such kind of support is often helpful, as families need help with the anxiety that the CRA can provoke. (S2)

5.4.4 Provide help with regards to placement transitions

In this section all six of the adoption social workers interviewed indicated that adoption social workers, with the help of their managers, did play an important role in helping the cross- racially adopted child, the birth parent and the adoptive parents with placement transitions. As one of the social workers pointed out, the practice of CRA can be very traumatic for all of the people involved and, as a result, help during the period of transition aid is of great importance. The same social worker went on to say:

..... children need to be helped in a transition from their birth families into a new home family environment totally different from theirs, especially

when the child is old enough.placements transition is also more essential in helping the birth parent(s) to resolve the loss of having a child out of their custody, since this is a traumatic moment in one's life, hence there is need for a social workers' help. The transition placement aid is more needed by the adoptive parents, since they will be entering into a new life epoch, worse by having different blood enter into their family system.... (S5).

5.4.5 Post-adoption services to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships

In this section, one of the adoption social workers explained that social workers, adoption managers and adoption agencies placed great importance on ensuring that post-adoption services were rendered. As has been noted in this study, the practice of CRA involves a mammoth task and one which can bring a great deal of stress to all parties concerned, which makes the role of social workers a crucial one. The study found that social workers from both the selected agencies in East London rendered the post-adoption services to cross- racial adoptive parents.

5.5 Perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of CRA

One of the objectives of this study was to examine the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of CRA. In this section the participants interviewed were asked to comment on the practice as an alternative form of child placement for those children who are in need of care and protection. The findings of this part of the study indicated that there were mixed perceptions regarding the practice of CRA among the participants from the various racial groups in East London. Themes concerning these perceptions of CRA, which emerged included: cultural genocide, enhancing the well-being of the child, a perfidious act against the best interests of the child, distorting racial identity, breaking

the barriers of racial segregation, enhancing a more colour-blind South Africa, the necessity for acculturation, enhancement of racial consciousness, and distorting the notion of role modelling.

5.5.1 Cultural genocide

The study found that three Black social workers and all of the Black community members interviewed perceived the practice of cross-racial adoption as a social taboo which needs to be abolished at all costs. According to these participants, the practice of CRA leads to loss of cultural ties, resulting in cultural genocide. In this vein, one of the community members said:

.... children adopted across racial lines face a dilemma on whether to follow their own culture for instance, or to adopt the new cultural values which they become exposed to since these two different cultures are, unfortunately, incompatible. Hence it leads to a struggle on the part of the child in order to strike a balance between them. (C3).

Another participant had this to say:

I don't think this practice is proper let's say a black boy-child is now a cross-racial adoptee, what about initiation - going to the mountains? I mean that's a big thing. I know these days boys are sometimes saying they don't want it, but then they go back later and say no, they do want it. You know things like that, it's very hard for a White family to organise. Personally, I wouldn't be comfortable if my son or my grandson is to be adopted across racial lines. There is nothing we can do to stop the practice of CRA, but this is a kind of "kidnap" and an embarrassment to the Black society. (C2)

Nonetheless, the study found out that there were mixed feelings regarding the practice of CRA. All of the White, Coloured and Indian participants interviewed were not much concerned about the issue of culture within the ambit of providing care and protection to the child, but tended to be more concerned with attaining a more colour-blind society. Moreover, these participants were concerned only with making sure that those

children who were in need of care and protection got permanent homes and were able to live in a family environment. One of the participants said:

Ummmmm I don't know, but isn't having children losing their culture worth it to them, actually having, you know, like cross-racial adoptive parents who care for them. Yahhh, I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, because what culture do these children get when they become street kids and we keep on arguing about the practice of cross-racial adoption because of the culture mentality? Yah, that's what I just think. (S3)

Two of the other participants expressed their feelings as follows:

I don't think people must penalise the practice of cross-racial adoption because of this so-called culture. If a parent of a different race adopts a child that's older, obviously he or she comes with his or her culture, which is not even more important here than the wellbeing of that child and I do not think, culturally, the practice of CRA has got much impact on the child. (C4)

... this practice represents White people's supposed goodness in rescuing the vulnerable and needy orphans.....Ok fine.... for instance I'm living with him but it doesn't mean I should take away his choices you know. He has a right, like every child, to choose which culture he wants to follow and I wouldn't take that away from him.... (Interrupted) (S5)

5.5.2 Enhancing the well-being of the child

It was significant that five of the participants interviewed; two Black social workers and three Black community members, perceived the practice of CRA to be inadvisable and not in the best interests of the child, despite the fact that the practice is formally encouraged by policy enshrined in the Children's Act 38 of 2005, which provides the legal basis for the practice. However, fifteen of the participants seemed to have different perceptions from those of the five whose views are articulated above. These participants maintained that the adoption of children across racial lines is a necessity if

the wellbeing of the child is to be considered an important criterion. The sentiments of two of these participants are recorded below:

Although the practice of CRA can be treated with much antagonism and as an undesirable form of child custody, in some instances it is necessary for the wellbeing of a child..... (Interrupted) (S3)

It is the goal of child welfare organisations to ensure that the wellbeing of the child and in an indirect way, the social life including racial and cultural beliefs of the child be secondary to the wellbeing of the child. Thus, with this in mind the practice of CRA can be applauded. (M2)

5.5.3 A perfidious act against the best interests of the child

As has already been noted, five Black participants; two Black social workers and three black community members maintained that the practice of cross-racial adoption is a very problematic practice which is not in the best interests of the child, and that the adopted child can be seriously disadvantaged as a result of it. The study found that, for these five Black participants the practice of CRA needs to be avoided at all costs, even if its avoidance results in the children having to remain in institutional care until a “perfect” racial match can be found. All of the White participants interviewed disagreed with this perception. The study found that all of these participants were of the opinion that allowing a child to have a family, regardless of racial boundaries, seemed to favour the child’s best interests, as opposed to making the child wait in an orphanage home because a family of his or her own race is not available. One of these participants said:

While child adoption within the child’s own cultural and religious context has substantial advantages and should be used when possible, no child should be denied the opportunity to grow up in a family environment purely because of the non-availability of a family of similar background. Denying the child the opportunity to have a family is contrary to the best interests of the child than what people perceive to be the case with the practice of CRA. (S3)

Another participant said:

Children must not linger for prolonged periods in foster care or in children's homes with the endless hope of finding same-race adoptive parents, yet we all know that this is also a job on its own, yet there are cross-racial parents willing and available to adopt these children. My Black society is not willing and ready to take care of the orphans. Personally, I think the practice of cross-racial adoption should be promoted because I see no harm with it. (S1)

Although the findings of the study indicate that a great many Black people may perceive the practice of CRA to be bad and not only not in the best interests of the cross-racially adopted child, but also not in the best interests of society as a whole, one Black participant, together with all the white, Indian and Coloured participants interviewed, supported the practice. The study found that fifteen out of the twenty participants interviewed had perceptions beyond the rigid codes and taboos of traditional society, espousing a more colour-blind society in which custody of needy children needs to be the responsibility of everyone, regardless of skin colour, race or ethnicity.

5.5.4 Racial Identity

Another important finding of this research pertains to the issue of the racial identity of children adopted across racial lines. The study found that five of the participants interviewed: three social workers and two community members alluded to the view that the practice of CRA subjected children to the norms and ways of a different race, which often caused them to lose their sense of identity. These participants held the opinion that a child would find it difficult to integrate the challenging demands of two dissimilar cultures which he or she would be expected to undertake. Two of these participants expressed their views in the manner which is recorded below:

Some of the children adopted across racial lines get confused. since their lives are caught between two different worlds and to linger on a

dilemma of the culture they belong to, hence leading to loss of their identity. (C2)

Ummmmm, it's hard to give a comment to this as professional somebody who facilitates such a practice, but I honestly don't think that if you grow up with people who are different from you, you will be the same as a person who grew up amongst his people. I don't think you grow up knowing who and what you are if you grow up in a different racial family background. Rather, this is a threat to one's identity. (S4)

Nonetheless, the study findings established that despite the incongruities in the perceptions of the practice of CRA which were noted among the twenty participants interviewed, fifteen of them were found to have a positive view of the practice of CRA. These fifteen participants perceived the practice of CRA to be a panacea for most children in need of care and protection, particularly in terms of socio-economic benefits, as opposed to their being impoverished as street urchins. One participant said:

.....yah, personally I believe that the issue of black identity being threatened is not of much significant value given a situation that most of the children would have be rescued from further abuse and street begging and absorbed into a proper family. (S1)

Although this finding focuses on promoting the idea that having parents is more expedient than placing much value on the Black identity of any particular child, there is a possible ideological assumption to be detected. This response reflects a dismissal of the importance of one's identity for society in general, which correlates with Collier's (2005) observation that Black social norms were constructed negatively by Whites. A comment of this sort, made by well-meaning Whites, could be perceived as being inherently patronising and chauvinistic, placing little value on black culture as being important to Black people or as constituting a distinct culture in South Africa.

Alternatively, this view could be seen as expressing a progressive school of thought, placing the needs of children above the petty racial debates of adults.

5.5.5 Racial segregation

The findings of the study revealed that ten of the participants interviewed: one social worker, one adoption manager, seven adoptive parents and one community member, perceived the practice of CRA to symbolise a *cure* for what is termed “racial segregation”. Two of these participants expressed their feelings in the manner recorded in the paragraphs below:

...it doesn't matter what your beliefs are, if you hold a new-born baby in your arms, love him and look after him, you only have to see the baby, not the colour of his skin. Also, the fastest way to heal our thoughts from the ugliness of racial discrimination would be for every family to adopt a child of a different race. Remember, love is love and race doesn't make that love stronger or weaker..... (Interrupted) (C5)

..... the truth is that the narrow mind-set of segregating people according to race must change. Many White South African couples who are financially fortunate have recognised the need to look after the vulnerable children, regardless of race because these people they see beyond racial boundaries. These people see adopting a child as a way of rescuing him or her out of a bad life situation and putting him or her into a caring and loving home where he or she can enjoy safety and protection. One's race should not be a hindrance when one decides to adopt since what matters is the child's life and safety. (S1)

5.5.6 Acculturation

It is worth mentioning that this perception aroused a great deal of emotion during the focus group discussions. Eleven of the twenty participants interviewed: one social worker, two managers, seven adoptive parents and one community member, agreed that the practice of CRA could only enhance the prospects of the emergence of a

colour-blind South Africa with racial integration, because these adoptions signify an amalgamation of diverse races. Two of these participants expressed the opinions recorded below:

*.....the practice of CRA provides opportunities for the adopted children to learn different cultures that are more vital for their social interaction considering their everyday involvement within the ambit of globalisation.
(P4)*

*The practice of CRA is an opportunity to embrace the South African cultures and celebrate diversity and this has to spill over to all who see it.
(M1)*

Nonetheless, the remaining nine participants seem to have an antagonistic perception regarding the practice of CRA and their views diverged greatly from those expressed by the other eleven participants. These nine participants were of the opinion that a child adopting more than one culture would lead to behavioural problems for that child.

One participant said:

..... before this practice, children use to behave well but now look at what is happening..... Most children are at the verge of crossing parental rules every day...Children are imitating wrong things. Personally I don't approve this so-called acculturation brought by this practice. To me this is totally wrong.... (Interrupted) (C2).

5.5.7 Racial consciousness

The issue of racial consciousness provoked a tense debate during the focus group discussions when the participants were asked to give their perceptions of the practice of CRA. Three Black participants, one social worker and two community members, voiced the opinion that most children who are adopted at a tender age may be of a particular race externally, which is often identified in terms of their skin colour, yet their internal conscious experiences are not those of that particular race. On the other hand, all of the White adoptive parents interviewed disagreed strongly with this idea,

praising the practice of CRA as a way of promoting a race free or colour-blind society, as opposed to the so-called racial consciousness which characterised South Africa's sad and traumatic past. This group of participants felt that rescuing children from their desperate situations was of far greater importance than racial identity. Seventeen of the participants interviewed: seven adoptive parents, five social workers, two managers and three community members, recognised the fact that, as a result of the practice of CRA, many children in East London had benefited a great deal in terms of financial and social support, regardless of the so-called threat to racial consciousness, which includes one's way of dressing, religious orientation, language, physical characteristics, history, culture and traditions.

5.5.8 Role modelling

In this section two community members voiced the opinion that most of the cross-racially adopted children's ideation concerning role models seemed to be influenced by the practice of CRA. These participants argued that most children adopted across racial boundaries become confused as a result of having caregivers of different races and may end up lacking a proper definition of right and wrong. However, three of the interviewed participants, two social workers and one manager, disagreed with this perception. These three participants maintained that children adopted across racial lines seem to appreciate and to want to emulate their adoptive parents and, in many cases, show these feelings towards their adoptive parents even more strongly than they do towards their own biological parents. One of the participants said:

..... and when I was counselling her, I remember her saying that she just sees her cross-racial adoptive mom as a role model and as her own mother and whatever the adoptive mom says she takes it as coming from her own biological mom. She went on to say that her adoptive parent's character is better than that of her own biological mom. (S3)

This section has tried to explain some of the perceptions of CRA which emerged from the field work which was conducted by the researcher in East London. The findings revealed varied perceptions among the participants from the racial groups who were interviewed. The discrepancies noted in the findings can be attributed, to a large extent, to differences in the degree of exposure to the implications of the racially-fixated rule of the apartheid regime among the members of the various racial groups. The following section will focus on the challenges facing social workers, cross-racial adoptive parents and agencies in the practice of cross-racial adoption.

5.6 Challenges facing social workers, managers, cross-racial adoptive parents and adoption agencies in the practice of CRA

One of the objectives of this study was to investigate the challenges facing social workers, managers, cross-racial adoptive parents and adoption agencies in the practice of CRA. When the social workers, managers and cross-racial adoptive parents were asked to comment on this objective, they covered topics such as living with racial prejudice, discrimination and inappropriate comments, difficulties in answering questions from people, racial awareness, behavioural challenges, shortages of human resources, the perceived preference among cross-racial adoptive parents for adopting females and infants or young children at the expense of males and older children, and the legacy of apartheid. This section also reports on the strategies which are being employed to redress the problems encountered and the extent to which these strategies are proving to be effective as a means of addressing these challenges.

5.6.1 Racial prejudice, discrimination and inappropriate comments

The researcher established from eleven of the twenty participants interviewed: all seven adoptive parents, both managers and two social workers, that they felt that they were faced with a great challenge living with discrimination and prejudice, and with the inappropriate comments made by those who do not favour the practice. These participants felt that discrimination and prejudices of this sort included any preconceived judgments and unreasonable attitudes on the part of those who oppose the practice. The same participants maintained that the expressions of discrimination and prejudices were both conscious and unconscious. The comments of two social workers are recorded below:

It's very difficult.... we face discrimination and prejudices mostly from the community members, other colleagues and even from other family members. It's unfortunate that the majority of the people here in East London still hold to the notion of race as a means of categorising people and, with this, the practice in question will remain a problematic issue and also us as social workers, even to the managers and eishhhh worse to the adoptive parents.....(Interrupted). (S3).

Ummmmm, it's hard to be involved in practices such as this because of racial aspects. I was approached by this other couple and they told me that what I am doing is socially undesirable and they even mention that I am a thief who is stealing Black children and selling them to the White people. (S1)

As can be deduced from these comments, the findings of the study indicate that a great many South Africans are yet to overcome the effects of racial prejudice and discrimination, and that this unfortunate reality constitutes an ominous challenge for all those involved with the practice of CRA.

5.6.2 Answering questions from people

The study found that all of the adoptive parents, all of the social workers and both of the managers admitted that, at times, they found it difficult to provide convincing

responses to most of the questions posed to them by those who oppose the practice of CRA. These participants explained that most of these questions are centred on issues such as the culture, identity, racial consciousness and socialisation of the adopted children. They all felt that questions of this sort are very difficult to answer, especially when they are asked by someone with pre-conceived ideas, and even harder when asked by someone who is antagonistic towards the practice.

5.6.3 Racial awareness

The findings of the study indicated that most of the participants interviewed felt that instilling racial awareness in the adopted children constituted a very great challenge. Racial consciousness is the ability of the child to have full awareness and understanding of his or her own race in relation to that of others around him or her, be they the cross-racial adoptive family or the wider community. The study also found that racial awareness can introduce serious complications, particularly when the adopted child reaches the adolescent stage. It was noted that this is a critical stage at which most children begin to explore and question various aspects of themselves and their identities and that race can become a serious concern when the child begins to question the incongruities between his or her own external appearance and those of the adoptive family. The study found that most of the participants interviewed, and particularly the cross-racial adoptive parents, were of the opinion that instilling racial awareness becomes a difficult task, especially when the adopted child becomes a victim of inappropriate comments made by members of the community.

5.6.4 Behavioural challenges

In the research study two social workers maintained that if CRA is practised without a great deal of care, understanding, compassion and effort, it is likely that cross-racially

adopted children may develop behavioural problems. These two participants explained that most of the children in their adoption caseloads had behavioural problems in varying degrees of severity and that this constituted a big challenge, not only for the adoptive parents, but also for social workers, adoption managers and adoption agencies. According to these two participants, the nature of these behavioural problems varied from verbal to physical attacks on members of the adoptive family and peers, moody and sullen behaviour, stealing money, drug abuse, attempts to run away and truancy. One of these participants said:

Almost twice a week I have to sit down with adopted children, both boys and girls, but mainly boys at adolescent stage because they are experimenting with drugs, stealing, some are already sexually active, you know it is hectic (Interrupted). (S4)

However, ten of the participants, two social workers, one manager and all seven of the adoptive parents argued against the assertion that the behavioural problems of children could be attributed solely to the fact that they are cross-racial adoptees. During the focus group discussion one participant said:

....yes, I don't dismiss the fact that children misbehave and that this is one of the challenges that social workers, managers and us adoptive parents are faced with, but what I do not buy here is the fact that behavioural problems are associated with a child being a cross-racial adoptee..... From what I know, most children when they reach a certain stage in life, whether adopted or not, they can indulge in socially undesirable behaviours.....(Interrupted).(P5)

5.6.5 Shortages of human resources

Shortages of human resources constituted another challenge in the opinions of all six of the social workers interviewed. These participants felt that the shortages of human resources were a great impediment to the effective and efficient practice of CRA in

East London, adding that owing to understaffing, the practice of CRA becomes more problematic, although it demands a great deal of attention. One of the participants said:

.....as a result of understaffing, the process of CRA is plagued with many faults We are all human beings and we all have a maximum capacity of functioning, yet this is in contradiction with the demands of CRA..... (S3)

5.6.6 Preference exhibited by the cross- racial adoptive parents to adopt females and infants or young children at the expense of males and older children

All of the social workers interviewed expressed the opinion that another problem, which they, their managers and their agencies faced, was the preference on the part of cross-racial adoptive parents for adopting females and infants or young children, at the expense of males and older children. These participants explained that most prospective cross-racial adoptive parents prefers to adopt female and young children because they viewed the adoption of a male or an older child as a way of bringing greater challenges to the lives of the adoptive family as a whole. One of the participants said:

.....there is a huge hiccup that I have noticed with this kind of adoption. Most of, not all of, the adoptive parents are reluctant to absorb old blood within their families and worse, they hesitate to adopt a boy child. This becomes a challenge to us as adoption social workers because we have to embark on the great job of even launching awareness campaigns, in case we can get willing adoptive parents to adopt the unwanted category of children. (Interrupted) (S3)

Another participant said:

....although the preference to adopt female and or younger children by cross-racial adoptive parents can be a good thing for them, this is still a

perfidious scenario in which social workers and agencies are faced with the dilemma of who to approach when it comes to the adoption of male and older children across racial lines.

5.6.7 The legacy of apartheid

The study found that the biggest challenge facing social workers, adoption agencies and cross-racial adoptive parents is related to the legacy of the apartheid regime. It emerged from the research that, as a result of the apartheid rule, the vast majority of the population in South Africa is not yet ready to accept practices such as CRA. Although, it was found that CRA is now an everyday activity, many people still do not welcome the practice. This makes intransigence and intolerance on the part of a vast slice of the population, a great obstacle to the successful practising of CRA and its great potential to help to unshackle all South Africans from the bigotry and prejudices of the past.

5.7 Discussion of findings

This section provides a discussion of findings that were gathered based on the legislative, theoretical and literature review applied in order to provide answers to the questions of this research study namely: what are the roles of social workers, managers and adoption agencies in cross-racial adoption; what are the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption; and lastly, what are the challenges facing agencies, social workers, managers and adoptive parents with regard to cross-racial adoption as shown in the following sub-sections.

5.7.1 Discussion of findings on the how the practice of cross-racial adoption is being practice in South Africa: East London.

Race is sometimes nothing more than a means of categorising people according to the differences and similarities in their biological, cultural and physical traits deemed by the society to be of social significance and these include variations in the colour of skin, eyes or hair. According to Banisky (2005), Ferreira (2009), Butler-Sweet (2011) and Snyder (2012), although a racial group is defined by and in terms of cultural, biological or physical traits, of particular significance is how these racial groupings have been used historically and socially. The history of the world has many instances in which one race is singled out and treated differently and unfairly by another.

In the case of South Africa, two distinct racial categories were imposed and enshrined in law by the apartheid regime: White people and people of Colour, comprising Black, Coloured and Indian people. The categorising of people in this way has a huge influence on the opinions and the social experiences of people on either side of the divide (Ferreira, 2009). It can be said that categorising people according to race is a social process, and that race is a socially constructed ideology designed to separate humankind. As was borne out, to some extent, by the findings of this study, in most racially conscious societies the practice of CRA is a social taboo, a threat to racial consciousness, a cultural degradation and an act which cannot be permitted. However, for some colour-blind societies, CRA is a practice which is mainly applauded for rescuing children who are in need of care and protection. It was against this background that the study aimed to examine the practice of CRA in South Africa, specifically in East London. As has already been noted, very little research has been done concerning the realities of the practice of CRA within the South African context,

and it has also been stressed that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is a significant dynamic in this context, which is borne out by USAID (2004) in Roby and Shaw (2006), which explains that the pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa has led to an escalation in orphaned children, with numbers projected to rise to 18.4 million by 2010. In addition, the abandonment of children has also been cited as another reason for many children being adopted by parents of a different race. This finding is consistent with the view of Luhanga (2008) and Mbuyazi (2008), who maintain that South Africa has a very great number of Black babies being abandoned every year and that these numbers are understood to be increasing. It follows that the number of Black children becoming available for adoption in South Africa far outweighs the number of potential Black parents who are willing to adopt, resulting in most Black children finding their way into White families through the process of CRA.

Investigating the rates and trends pertaining to CRA in East London revealed that the practice of cross-racial adoption is an increasing phenomenon within child welfare services and that it is expected to rise in East London. The records kept by Child Welfare South Africa and CMR support the contention of Snyder (2012), who explained that the practice of CRA is an increasing phenomenon in East London and that there are very few same-race parents who are willing to provide care and protection to these children, and that this is particularly the case where Black adoptive parents are concerned. This finding supports the view that the practice of CRA amounts, to a very large extent, to White adoptive parents taking the responsibility of providing care and protection to Black children (Roby and Shaw, 2006; Snyder, 2012). A qualitative analysis was conducted through in-depth-interviews and focus group discussions in order to solicit the participants' views, opinions and attitudes regarding

the practice of CRA. Within the sample chosen, the participants expressed various viewpoints and attitudes concerning processes pertaining to the practice of cross-racial adoption and the practice itself, implying that there is not a great deal of consistency in terms of how the practice of CRA is being conducted in East London, or any uniformity in how it is perceived.

5.7.2 Discussion of findings on the theoretical framework of the study

As has been explained in earlier chapters, this study was guided by two theories: the Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the Crisis Theory (CT). The Critical Race Theory contains an activist dimension in its endeavour to determine a society's social and historical implications, with a view to seek changes which will counteract racism and racial segregation in the social fabric of that society (Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado (mid-1970s) in Dixson et al. (2006) and Ortiz and Jani, (2010). If the Critical Race Theory is accepted in this particular context, then all issues pertaining to race and racial segregation in the South African child welfare system need to be investigated and appropriate action needs to be taken to ensure that no form of racism or racial segregation, no matter how insidious, is tolerated, particularly regarding the practice of CRA. Race cannot be allowed to hinder children from securing permanent homes, in view of the fact that there are vast numbers of children who are orphaned and vulnerable, with very few same-race adoptive parents being willing to take responsibility for them (Moos and Mwaba, 2007). CRT entails the concept of a single voice articulating the various discourses concerning the histories and experiences of oppression, in order to change the minds of people regarding racial discrimination within societies (Ortiz and Jani, 2010).

It is clear from the findings that the adopting of children across racial lines in South Africa is being compromised by unresolved racial perceptions and prejudices emanating from the apartheid era, in which race and racial segregation were dominant and legally enforced issues. It was found in the study that, irrespective of the effort made by the South African government in creating colour-blind child custody through legalising the practice of CRA, perceptions pertaining to racial segregation and its perceived appropriateness still linger on both sides of the colour line. It is also very sad to discern that some practitioners within the field of adoption oppose the practice of CRA, instead of championing racial transformation towards a more colour-blind society in which every child who is need of care and protection is entitled to parents, regardless of race. This conclusion is consistent with the CRT in its assessment that racial segregation is difficult to eradicate within the social fabric of a society, which is certainly true in the case of South Africa (Ortiz and Jani, 2010).

In addition, it is important to mention that the Crisis Theory, on the other hand, offered a more comprehensive view of the study, as it provided a 'zoom in' on the practice of CRA. This allowed a close view in terms of peoples' experiences, perceptions and challenges within the CRA system, following their exposure to a situational crisis in the case form of the apartheid era, in which race was used as a means of separating people from one another by force. The Crisis Theory also helps to explain the dynamics of the crises encountered by adoption professionals, fixations of thoughts, a state of disequilibrium regarding racial issues, reactions to racial issues and their dilemmas resulting from their involvement in the practice of CRA, which is the focus of a great deal of disapproval in society (Caplan, 1964). By interpreting the theory in relation to the research findings, the practice of CRA can be understood to cause a

state of disequilibrium in many people by evoking unresolved memories of the racism which existed during the rule of the apartheid regime. Accordingly, it was noted from the findings that most of the participants who still clung to their negative past memories of racial segregation under apartheid and whose mind-set became fixed as a result of the crisis created, find it difficult to appreciate the benefits of the practice of CRA.

It is worth, mentioning that most of the people who disapproved of the practice of CRA did so as a result of the conflict between memories of the racial discrimination of the past and feelings of humiliation and social alienation. This disapproval can also be understood to be as a result of a new cognitive framework with its set of expectations and implied attitudes towards children of colour being raised by parents of a different race, on the other. From this perspective it can be said that an understanding of the way in which adoption social workers and managers facilitate the practice of CRA and the way in which it is perceived by communities depends, to a very large extent, upon past racial experiences and the ability of the people concerned to resolve them, in order to move on. In terms of the CT, an unresolved crisis from the past will be perceived and experienced as a threatening event which, if not properly resolved, will continue to create disequilibrium, which has a great bearing on the way in which people perceive and conduct the practice of CRA. In South Africa, the practice is, in effect, the manifestation of a crisis event linked to the past crisis of racial segregation, which has very serious implications for how people perceive and facilitate it, and it remains at the centre of intense debates regarding whether or not it constitutes a feasible and appropriate form of alternative child custody.

5.7.3 Discussion of findings on the roles of social workers, managers and social welfare agencies within the practice of CRA

One of the objectives of this study was to investigate the roles of social workers, managers and social welfare agencies within the practice of CRA. These include determining the adoptability of a child or children, recruiting and selecting prospective adoptive parents, providing necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child, helping with placement transitions and providing post-adoption services to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships. All of these procedures are carried out in compliance with the provisions of the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, section 15 (230) (3) (a) – (e) in order to determine the adoptability of a child. These provisions help to match a child's developmental, social, cognitive and cultural needs with an appropriate adoptive parent and also to eliminate the possible adverse consequences of a CRA.

The study found that, great importance is placed on the comprehensive screening of prospective adoptive parents before releasing a child into their custody, as it is the duty and obligation of social workers, adoption managers and the adoption agencies to ensure that the best parents are selected for the children who are available for adoption, in order to provide them with a permanent home. These standards are maintained in order to comply with the Bill of Rights, Section 28 (1) (b) of the South African Constitution, which states that "every child has the right to family care or parental care or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment." Section 28 (1) (b), of the Bill of Rights states that, "a child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child." Accordingly, this criterion takes precedence over the interests of the prospective

adoptive parents during the screening process. In addition, a guide to the practice of adoption (1972), although not directly addressing the practice of CRA in East London, gives the following guidelines:

When applicants have been accepted as prospective adopters they should be given an indication of the length of the investigation and how soon they may expect a result. Applicants should also be informed that the investigation will consist of several interviews with the couple seen individually and together, and that there will be more than one home visit. (A Guide to Adoption Practice, 1972)

However, this study found that no screening process followed either by CWSA, EL or CMR followed this guideline. This finding pointed to inconsistencies in the CRA screening processes by the adoption agencies, which have resulted in many prospective adoptive parents querying the accuracy or the relevance of the cross-racial adoption screening process and whether they had been appropriately prepared. Covert segregation was also detected within the practice of CRA, as the study found that some of the adoptive parents interviewed were made to wait for long periods of time until it had been concluded that there were no same-race parents available to adopt the available child or children of colour. This illustrates the huge influence which the issue of race exerts on processes pertaining to child care adoption, regardless of the very undesirable situations in which these children are living. This finding in the domain of Child Welfare concerns the issue of racial segregation, which the CRT seeks to eliminate in order to foster racial tolerance and diversity.

Providing necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child was deemed a very important role for adoption social workers, managers and adoption agencies. However, the study found that in the South African context, with the great numbers of children in need of care and protection, this role tends to be neglected or overlooked in some cases. The study

also found that in cases of child neglect, abandonment and abuse, most adoption practitioners tend to focus only on the child and the adoptive parent or parents and to neglect the biological parent or parents. According to accepted principles of social work practice, the recognition of a client's innate dignity, worth, equality, basic rights, and needs, regardless of the client's individual qualities arising from heredity, environment, behaviour, or any other source is a key standard to be upheld. This does not imply a need to express approval of a client's behaviour, attitudes, or standards, but it does assert quite unequivocally that adoption practitioners need to treat clients with the utmost courtesy and consideration, particularly when dealing with CRA placements. The findings did indicate that, in some situations, some social workers had failed to uphold this essential principle within the ambit of CRA.

The study found that most of the cross-racial adoptive parents interviewed reported that they had received training pertaining to cross-racial adoption from the adoption agencies in East London which were chosen for this research. However, the findings indicated that these adoption agencies did not have a set programme, because some cross-racial adoptive parents received training before adopting, while others received it after adopting. It was established, though, that with CRA training is mandatory and does need to be completed as a prerequisite for adoption, owing to the challenges which are associated with the practice of CRA. The study found that participants who had attended cross-racial adoption training had various stories to tell, with some indicating that the cross-racial adoption training had been most valuable and that they had been grateful for the opportunity to meet and share their views with other parents who were in a similar situation. On the other hand, some participants maintained that the training had not been helpful and that there had been no further guidance,

particularly regarding all of the challenges, which come with the practice of CRA. Some of the adoptive parents felt that they had not been properly prepared to face the reality of CRA and its associated challenges. This finding pointed to the need to provide information and guidance pertaining to the practice of CRA, continuously, to cross-racial adoptive parents.

As has already been noted, the adoptability of a child or children is determined with reference to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 15 (230) (3), which states that a child is adoptable if (a) the child is an orphan and has no guardian or care give who is willing to adopt the child; (b) the whereabouts of the child's parent or guardian cannot be established; (c) the child has been abandoned; (d) the child's parent or guardian has abused or deliberately neglected the child, or has allowed the child to be abused or deliberately neglected; or (e) the child is in need of a permanent alternative placement. The study found most of the relevant participants interviewed reported that they adhered to this guideline in the Children's Act when determining the adoptability of a child or children, and that they did so within the context of acting in the best interests of the child, as is laid down in the Children's Act.

In addition, it was acknowledged that social workers played an important role in providing essential information and counselling to biological parents before consenting to the adoption of a child. The study found that social workers and agencies did not try to coerce parents to offer children for adoption, but rather that they encouraged the birth parents to make the choice which is best for them. Social workers played an important role in helping cross-racially adopted children, birth parents and adoptive parents with placement transitions. As the study found, the practice of CRA can be

very traumatic, and as a result, aid during transition aid is of great importance. Moreover, it was found that social workers, managers and welfare agencies played an important role by ensuring that post-adoption services are rendered. By doing so, they help to minimise the possibility of a break-down in an adoption. As it has already been acknowledged, CRA involves an enormous task for all the parties concerned, which makes a great deal of involvement by professional social workers essential. The study found that social workers from both of the agencies in East London did render the post-adoption services to cross-racial adoptive parents.

5.7.4 Discussion of findings on the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members

This study examined the perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members in East London regarding the practice of CRA and determined that there were varying perceptions among the participants from the various racial groups interviewed, with most Black social workers and Black community members perceiving the practice of cross-racial adoption as a social taboo which needs to be abolished at all costs. However, of interest here are the ways in which both Black and White people appear to contest or to ignore various arguments pertaining to the practice of CRA and to position themselves, as individuals, as representatives of particular races and as members of other social groups in the current post-apartheid milieu (Roby and Shaw, 2006).

Women were found to disapprove of the practice more than men did, and participants who had experienced cross-racial custody were found to be more willing to adopt

cross-racially themselves. The vast majority of those who opposed the practice of CRA perceived it as a weapon which is being used to destroy the African cultural ties of Black people, considering it to be a form of cultural genocide. It is believed by these people that children adopted across racial lines will face a dilemma regarding whether to follow their own culture or to adopt the new cultural values to which they have become exposed. For these people, the two different cultures are deemed to be incompatible, which would create great difficulties for a child who tried to strike a balance between them.

However, as this perception was found to be predominant among Black participants, it seemed feasible that it could be the result of the Black participants having a far greater exposure and adherence to Black culture compared to the Whites participants. The findings of the study seemed to suggest that the lack of a proper framework for cultural involvement could support the assertion of Dubinsky (2007), who maintains that cross-racial child custody always becomes a theoretical weapon for enhancing the socio-political positioning of Whites. By contrast, not only did all the White participants express a disbelief that Black children adopted across racial lines would lose their culture, but most of them also believed that the practice of CRA helps to promote racial harmony and cultural tolerance, as South Africa is a melting pot of many different cultures. Moreover, it was also maintained that it is good for a Black child to have a family, even when that means being raised by White parents in a "White" culture, rather than that child having no family at all, simply because of the belief of some people that the child needs to be raised in his or her "Black" culture. To date, it seems that little or no research has been done concerning the efforts of those people, who vociferously condemn CRA for reasons of race or culture, to provide care

and protection to these children whom they feel need to be raised in a “Black” culture. These findings support discourses in the literature pertaining to CRA, which suggest that the benefits of family outweigh those of ‘same-race’ enculturation when the two cannot coincide (Roby and Shaw, 2006).

It is also significant to note that the study found that many of the participants perceived the practice of CRA not to be in the best interests of the child, although the practice is formally encouraged by policy enshrined in the Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005, which provides the basis for this practice (Snyder, 2012). It should be mentioned that a number of the Black participants were of the opinion that although the practice of CRA is regarded as rescuing homeless children and providing them with a family environment, it is nevertheless detrimental to these children. Within the context of the study it was clear that most of the Black participants did not approve of the practice of CRA as a result of having experienced the racism inherent in South Africa’s political past, where race was a prominent criterion for categorising and separating humankind (Ortiz and Jani, 2010). These findings point to the fact that undigested racial segregation is still ingrained within the fabric and systems of South African society, particularly in the processes pertaining to the adoption of children across racial boundaries. This also supports the assertion of the CRT that race is a social construction which permeates all aspects of life and which is difficult to eradicate (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, cited in Ortiz and Jani, 2010).

Most of the black participants felt that the practice of cross-racial adoption is a very problematic practice which is not in the best interests of the child and that the adopted child can be seriously disadvantaged as a result. This view seems to have been

borrowed from the perception, promoted in particular by the National Association of Black Social Workers in the USA, which argues that White parents are incapable of socialising Black children. Although this view has its adherents in South Africa, there are others who feel very differently who support the practice of CRA. There are some people in East London whose concerns are different from the needs of traditional cultures, who espouse a more colour-blind society in which child custody becomes the responsibility of everyone, regardless of skin colour, race or ethnicity, which is the *raison d'être* of the CRT. Most of the White participants view the adoption of children across racial lines as enhancing the wellbeing of these children, and feel that the racial and cultural beliefs of the culture from which the children come should be regarded as of secondary importance compared with the wellbeing of the children. This belief indicates a great paradigm shift towards the enhancement of racial diversity among these participants, which concurs perfectly with the values expressed by the CRT.

Most of those who were antagonistic towards the practice of CRA based their arguments on their perception of the best interests of the child, in terms of psychosocial development, and the adjustment of cross-racially adopted children regarding developmental aspects such as self-esteem, self-concept, educational attainment, peer relationships and behaviour problems. In general, their main argument was that cross-racially adopted children will be apt to embrace Eurocentric cultural beliefs, which are deemed to lack the strengths which are believed to characterise Black culture. In addition, these arguments are being applied to the perceived “best interests” of Black children who are orphaned and vulnerable. The rationale is believed to have been borrowed from the arguments opposing and

criticising the practice of CRA, put forward in 1972 by the American National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), which maintain that Black children should be in the custody of Black parents only, as is borne out by the quotation below:

Black children belong physically and psychologically and culturally in Black families in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future.....Black children in White homes are cut off from the healthy development of themselves as Black people (Hollingsworth, 1999: p2)

Although lacking in empirical support, the NABSW (1972) argument is grounded on the following assumptions: that there is Black culture which is distinctly different from that of Whites; that Black children adopted across racial boundaries cannot develop a healthy identity without enculturation into White culture; and that only Black families can socialise black children into their culture (Hollingsworth, 1999).

It was also established that most of the disapproval of the practice of CRA voiced by most of the Black participants was based on the premise that CRA threatens the racial identity of the adopted children. This is in line with the view of Hollingsworth (1999), who argued that a child finds it difficult to integrate the challenging demands of the two dissimilar cultures which he or she is expected to undertake. This statement highlights a personal perception of the view of the vast black population regarding the difference between themselves and people from other races. Accordingly, the difference is perceived not only in terms of outward physical differences, but it is transformed to act as a mechanism to determine the differences between the people whom one values and who belong to one's group and those who are less valued and regarded as being outside the margins of the group.

In the context of such a social construction of race and the perceived value race has upon ones' identity, the essential question arises concerning whether the practice of cross-racial adoption is even a worthwhile option, given the existence of such divergent feelings between the South African racial groups. If these arguments are to be accepted and accommodated, the safety of the child, in terms of his or her interaction with the wider community of people from a different race, at the same time as trying to secure his or her racial identity, becomes a concern. From the findings of the study, this is a concern involving two components, namely, how the child's racial group has groomed him or her to perceive people from the race of the adoptive family and also, how people from this race perceive people from the child's race, the ultimate concern being the question of what type of treatment the child is likely to receive owing to such an interplay of racial factors.

As has been noted, the study found many incongruities in the views of the practice of CRA among the participants interviewed. Although a great deal of opposition to the practice of CRA was expressed, there were positive comments made by other participants who perceive the practice as a panacea for most children who are in need of care and protection, particularly in terms of socio-economic benefits, without which they might otherwise have been condemned to the lot of impoverished street urchins. These challenges question the *supremacy* of 'race' as a determinant of identity and suggest that ethno-racial identity is not a unitary fixed ending point (Frasch and Brooks, 2003).

One should not assume that a strong Black-focused identity is the desired goal or most positive outcome, or that Black identity is a single trait. (Frasch and Brooks, 2003:4)

A general trend within the practice of CRA is to submit that White parents can help their Black children to achieve a positive and healthy Black identity. Much of the evidence from the findings concurs with Roby and Shaw (2006), who maintain that the practice of CRA is a viable means of providing homes for orphaned and vulnerable children.

Although this finding focuses on promoting the idea that having parents is more important to a child than having to place a great deal of value on the Black identity of that child, there is a possible ideological component to be detected, namely, the dismissal of the importance of one's identity for society in general. This correlates to the observation by Collier (2005) who viewed the black social norms as having created negatively by whites. This might suggest that Black culture is of little significance to most Whites, but it may also be indicative of a wish to transcend the old boundaries of traditional societies and their beliefs, in order to attain a modern, racially harmonious society.

Very significant for the findings was the fact that all the participants who had been cross-racial adoptees supported the practice of CRA and refused to accord any importance to issues pertaining to racial segregation when discussing the care of children who are in need of care and protection. This accords with the CRT as a paradigm shift towards the enhancement of diversity in child care and the creation of a colour-blind society in which race is of no significance in decisions pertaining to human life (Ortiz and Jani, 2010). If the notion of a colour-blind society can be embraced by all the people of the post-apartheid South Africa, the practice of CRA will be a panacea for social workers, managers, adoptive parents and the community at

large. This hope was shared by all of the White cross-racial adoptive parents interviewed, who were not concerned with issues of race and preferred to regard themselves as being race free and colour-blind.

The finding that the practice of CRA is most prevalent amongst Whites and is supported by the assertion of Moos and Mwaba (2007) that there is a scarcity of Black adoptive parents who are willing to offer custody to vulnerable children, which was noted in Chapter One and mentioned by most of the social workers interviewed. Moreover, the research study found that most cross-racial adoptive parents are in support of the notion of a colour-blind South African society, which means that cross-racial adoptive parents have broken the barrier which prevents most people from giving love and protection to vulnerable and homeless children of other races. The findings of the study make it abundantly clear that there are people who view the practice of CRA as a symbolic *cure* of the racial segregation which has scarred and scourged South Africa's past. In this the findings showed that the narrow mind-set, which causes people to support racial segregation, can be changed, which is made evident by the fact that within the practice of CRA many White South African couples have recognised the need to look after vulnerable children, regardless of race.

This in turn demonstrates that although some people are extremely antagonistic towards the practice of CRA, there are some who are of the opinion that the whole point of adopting a child is to take him or her out of a bad situation and put him or her into a caring and loving home, where he or she can enjoy safety and protection. Whatever may motivate them, feelings of this sort contribute more positively towards the welfare of children than those expressed by those who oppose the practice of

CRA, as they are in line with both international and national legislative frameworks such as the UNCRC (1989) and the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 and No. 41 of 2007, which stipulate the right of every child to parental care and protection. Accordingly, it is of the utmost importance to insist that one's race should not be a hindrance when one decides to adopt, as the first priority is, and always must be, the best interests of the child.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the practice of CRA can play a vital role in the evolution of a colour-blind South Africa and in racial integration, because it is a practice which, by definition, involves an amalgamation of diverse races. In this it is perfectly in accord with the CRT, which seeks to eliminate all forms of racial segregation from the fabric of society. In addition, the practice of CRA provides opportunities for children to learn about different cultures, which will stand them in good stead to cope in a world which is becoming increasingly globalised. In addition, it was found that the practice of CRA offers an opportunity to embrace all of the South African cultures and to celebrate diversity, which must inevitably affect anyone becoming exposed to this phenomenon. The practice of CRA has also been praised for rescuing homeless children and it is incontestable that many children in East London have benefited a great deal from it in terms of financial and social support, regardless of the so-called threat to their racial consciousness.

As has been noted, the practice of CRA has been blamed for having negative effects on cross-racially adopted children's ideation of a role model. This assessment accords with the ideas of Corcos (2009), who maintains that children become confused as a result of receiving care from different caregivers of different races and may end up

lacking a proper definition of right and wrong. However, it was noted that some of the participants interviewed, notably the adoptive parents, seemed opposed to this perception, maintaining that cross-racial adoptees are more likely to adopt the idea of a role model than other children. These perceptual differences may be ascribed to differences in exposure to the impact of the apartheid rule among the members of the various racial groups in terms of the wider South African context.

5.7.5 Discussion of findings on the challenges facing social workers, managers, cross-racial adoptive parents and agencies.

The study also explicitly examined the challenges facing social workers, managers, cross-racial adoptive parents and agencies regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption, and found that these groups of people face great challenges in an environment which is still, to a large extent, dominated by discrimination and prejudice. Discrimination and prejudice inevitably often emanate from other members of families and communities, and are nearly always the result of preconceived judgments and unreasonable attitudes, whether expressed consciously or unconsciously.

The study found, seemingly conclusively, that the majority of the people in East London still hold to the notion of race as a means of categorising people, meaning that racial prejudice and discrimination are unfortunately alive and well, especially within the practice of CRA. Accordingly, the impact of racial prejudice and discrimination constitutes an ominous challenge facing all those involved within the practice of CRA, as mentioned earlier. Moreover, it is clear from the findings of the study that racial perceptions continue to imprison the minds of the vast majority of the South African

population, which can be attributed to the legacy of the racist rule of the apartheid era. This finding supports the view of the Critical Race Theory that racism is difficult to cure in any society.

It also emerged in the findings that it was believed that children burdened with behavioural problems could result from the practice of CRA, if necessary interventions were not applied. However, this view was disputed, particularly by most of the White participants, who viewed the adopted children's misbehaviour not as a result of CRA but rather owing to other factors such as those associated with the various phases of human development (Freud, 1968). Most of the participants interviewed mentioned that another challenge which they faced regarding the practice of CRA came in the form of inappropriate comments from people who are antagonistic towards the practice of CRA. The study also found that shortages of human resources constituted a huge impediment to the effective and efficient practice of CRA for social workers and agencies in East London. It hardly needs to be emphasised that human resources are vital for the successful accomplishment of the goals associated with the practice of CRA. The participants explained that owing to problems of understaffing the practice of CRA became more problematic, in view of the fact that it requires a great amount of attention. In the opinion of the participants tasked with performing duties related to adoption, as a result of understaffing the processing of CRA applications became badly flawed, causing the practice to be viewed by social workers and adoption agencies as necessitating a long, agonising and convoluted process.

The adoption personnel interviewed explained that another serious problem for CRA came in the form of the preference, by cross-racial adoptive parents, for adopting

females and infants or young children at the expense of males and older children. The study found that most prospective cross-racial adoptive parents preferred to adopt female and young children because they viewed the adoption of a male or an older child as likely to bring problems for the adoptive family as a whole. Although adopting females or younger children by cross-racial adoptive parents may suit the agenda of the adoptive parents, their preference causes social workers and agencies to be faced with the dilemma of whom to approach to adopt the males and the older children across racial lines. The study found that yet another challenge facing social workers, adoption agencies and cross-racial adoptive parents comes from the historical effects of the apartheid regime. It emerged very clearly during the research that as a result of apartheid rule, the vast majority of the population in South Africa is not yet ready to accept practices such as CRA. Although CRA now occurs every day, many people do not welcome this practice, and this has serious implications for the future of both CRA and post-apartheid South Africa.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings, discussion and analysis of the practice of CRA in East London. The researcher has also strived to evaluate the relevance and authenticity of the findings and to clarify them when it was found to be necessary. Nonetheless, it was established that the practice of CRA is surrounded by a great deal of controversy. Moreover, it was noted that most of the Black participants seemed to be more antagonistic towards the practice of CRA than participants from other race groups. On the other hand, the support of the practice by the White, and to a lesser extent, the Coloured and Indian participants was broader in the study. However, such perceptual discrepancies can be ascribed to a number of factors, namely age, gender,

being a cross-racial adoptee or not, being an adoptive parent or not, exposure to the racial segregation of the apartheid regime, differences in exposure to education among members of the various racial groups and so on. Alternatively, Black African society's stance as a caring society was brought under scrutiny, in light of the scarcity of Black parents willing to adopt black children. Accordingly, this analysis would suggest that this aspect of the findings of the study would deserve particular attention in the recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study, presents the conclusions which were drawn from the findings, offers recommendations and also relates the implications of the findings to social work practice. In addition, suggestions for future studies are also highlighted in this chapter.

6.2 Summary of findings

In this study, data was collected using a qualitative method. The study used a sample consisting of twenty participants with all twenty being engaged in in-depth interviews and ten from the same sample engaged in focus group discussions. The following sections provide a summary of the findings of the study in terms of the research questions.

6.2.1 The practice of cross-racial adoption in South Africa

The findings revealed a number of issues pertaining to the practice of CRA, including the screening of adoptive parents, information and guidance pertaining to cross-racial adoption, rates and trends concerning the annual growth in the practice of CRA and variations in the perception of CRA across the various different races. The study found that most of the community members interviewed lacked knowledge of what the practice of CRA entails, as opposed to the social workers, managers and cross-racial adoptive parents. The study also brought to the fore the fact that the process of CRA is a long, tiresome and often frustrating one for all parties concerned and that the practice is often able to trigger a host of different responses from members of the

various race groups, and that the issue is often deemed to be controversial. It was also found that there are inconsistencies regarding how prospective adoptive parents are being screened by both the Christelike Maatskaplike Raad (CMR) and Child Welfare. The screening of prospective adoptive parents was found to include a number of procedures which include; completing an application form, undergoing a series of individual interviews, a full medical examination and an HIV/AIDS test to ascertain the current health status of the adoptive parents, a home visit and a following up of all the references given by the prospective parent or parents by an adoption social worker, psychometric testing or therapeutic support services, and an assessment of the adoptive parents' infertility and the history of the extended family's involvement.

Although it was found that community members seem to lack information regarding the practice of CRA, it was also found that the six social workers and the two managers interviewed continually provide workshops and on-the job training in the practice of CRA. In addition, it was learned that cross-racial adoptive parents receive adoption training, ranging from training covering pre-adoption, the process of adoption itself and post-adoption. The study also found that there are some disparities in the information and guidance received by all prospective adoptive parents from the two agencies.

The findings show that the arguments surrounding the practice of CRA tend to centre on the importance of Black culture for Black CRA children, with similar variations in constructions of identity relative to race (Roby and Shaw, 2006). As had been highlighted in the relevant literature, the discussions revealed similar socio-economic

conditions underlying the prevalence of Black orphans in South Africa, such as HIV and AIDS, child abandonment and child neglect, together with poverty. In addition, similarities between the literature concerning the practice of CRA and the findings of this research were also found in the ways in which the practice of CRA is perceived in various narratives, such as the one of rescue, which portrays White parents as the saviours of their Black children, and another which regards CRA as a form of cultural genocide, which 'steals' Black babies from Black groups. In addition, the Black participants appeared to be much more concerned with upholding the social desirability of Blackness than the Whites were regarding notions of "Whiteness". Of great significance was the fact that the White participants felt that 'race' should not be the determinant of the culture in which a child is raised or to which a child is exposed and their arguments effectively served to de-racialise and de-culturalise Blackness, regardless of the significance which anyone might wish to attach to this from a cultural perspective.

Furthermore, the findings of the study confirmed that the practice of cross-racial adoption is an increasing phenomenon which is most prevalent among Whites adopting Black children. This finding was in line with the literature which maintains that in South Africa there are few Black parents willing to adopt Black children who are in dire need of permanent homes and families. In addition, despite all the acrimonious debates surrounding the practice of CRA, the literature review noted the documented effectiveness of this practice in providing care and protection to those children who need care and protection most.

6.2.2 The role of social workers, managers and adoption agencies within the realm of cross-racial adoption

The findings of the study identified a number of roles played by social workers, managers and adoption agencies within the ambit of cross-racial adoption, including determining the adoptability of the child or children, recruiting and selecting prospective adoptive parents, providing necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive parents before consenting to the adoption of a child, helping with placement transitions and providing post-adoption services to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships. The findings of the study have shown that when determining the adoptability of the child or children, social workers and adoption managers within their adoption agencies assess the developmental, social, cognitive and cultural needs of the child or children to be adopted in order to match them with the adoptive parent or parents. The study also found that this procedure is followed with reference to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 section 15 (230) (3) (a)- (e). The research findings also revealed that the recruitment and selection of prospective adoptive parents is another vital role played by social workers, managers and adoption agencies within the ambit of CRA. In addition, the study findings indicated that the assessment of the home environment of the prospective adoptive parents is given a great deal of attention, as it is regarded as a very important determinant of the adopted child's future wellbeing, particularly in view of the circumstances which have resulted in the child being available for CRA.

The findings showed that social workers and adoption managers, under the auspices of their organisations, play an important role in providing essential information and counselling to biological parents before consenting to the adoption of a child. This is

regarded as essential, as losing a child to another family often involves a great deal of emotional upheaval, not only for the birth parents but for the adoptive parents as well. In addition, it was learned that helping cross-racially adopted children and adoptive parents with placement transitions also forms part of the workload of adoption social workers and adoption managers, as the practice of CRA is regarded as very traumatic. Finally, the study learned that social workers, adoption managers and adoption agencies all played an important role in ensuring that post-adoption services were rendered well and to the satisfaction of all of the parties involved.

6.2.3 Perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption

This research concurs with the literature consulted, in that diverse perceptions towards the practice of CRA were found among the participants from the various race groups. This study found that Whites rather than Blacks tend to be more accepting of the practice of cross-racial adoption (Freeman and Nkomo, 2006; Moos and Mwaba, 2007). The themes which emerged concerning these perceptions included cultural genocide, enhancing the wellbeing of the adopted child, a perfidious act against the best interests of the child, distorting racial identity, breaking the codes of racial segregation and enhancing a more colour-blind society, necessitating acculturation, enhancement of racial consciousness and distorting the notion of role modelling.

The findings indicated that there are some Black South Africans who view the practice of CRA as a way in which race relations are being positively transformed in South Africa (Moos and Mwaba, 2007). On the other hand, discourses identified in the research suggest that, although positive perceptions towards CRA may exist among

both Black and White participants, this pattern is in no way pervasive, as many discourses reveal perceptions of the practice of CRA as problematic, despite its legalisation in 1991. The study found that for most of the Black participants the practice of CRA represents a social taboo, leading to a loss of cultural ties and resulting in cultural genocide. By contrast, the findings revealed that the White, Coloured and Indian participants were not much concerned about the issues of culture or race and felt, rather, that they wanted to ensure that children who are in need of care are able to live in a family environment.

The issue of racial consciousness was found to have provoked intense debate during the focus group discussions, with some of the participants maintaining that while most children adopted at a tender age may be externally of a particular race, as determined by their skin colour, their internal conscious experiences are not those of a member of that particular race. More importantly, the findings point to the fact that race continues to act as a social construct dividing humankind, resulting in racial segregation, particularly between Blacks and Whites. Accordingly, the findings revealed that if people can manage to see beyond race and its disastrous effects on child care and focus on attaining a more colour-blind society, the practice of CRA will be extremely beneficial and the burden of child custody will become the responsibility of everyone, regardless of skin colour, race or ethnicity. The fact that there are many Black children in need of care and protection as opposed to willing Black adoptive parents in South Africa means that the practice of CRA will continue to gain impetus and increase, despite the objections of those who denounce it for reasons of race, cultural identity and so on.

6.2.4 The challenges facing agencies, social workers, managers and adoptive parents regarding cross- racial adoption

The findings of the study established that discrimination and prejudices include any preconceived judgments and unreasonable attitudes from those who oppose the practice of CRA. In addition, the findings revealed that the adoptive parents, social workers and adoption managers often find it difficult to provide convincing responses to most of the questions centred on issues such as the culture, identity, racial consciousness and socialisation of the adopted children, asked by people who oppose the practice of CRA. It was learned that social workers, managers and adoptive parents found it very difficult to answer such questions, not because they lacked education, but because the people who asked them had negative preconceived ideas about the practice of CRA.

The study found that racial awareness was considered a potential hazard, particularly when an adopted child reaches the adolescent stage and begins to question his or her own identity and to wonder about the incongruities between his or her own external appearance and those of the adoptive family. This precarious stage can be greatly exacerbated if the adopted child becomes a target for inappropriate comments made by members of the community. It was also found that some of the participants felt that if ever the practice of CRA is conducted without proper intervention, it will result in children having behavioural problems, but that there was also a counter-argument to dispute this perception. A shortage of human resources was noted as a challenge for the practice of CRA, together with the common preference of cross-racial adoptive parents to want to adopt females and infants or young children, at the expense of males and older children.

In addition, the findings revealed that the biggest challenge facing social workers, adoption agencies and cross-racial adoptive parents is related to the legacy of the apartheid regime. As a result, the study found that racial issues appear to persist in the discourses of both Black and White South Africans concerning the practice of CRA and that both groups make use of constructs of culture and race to do this. The findings revealed that White people appear to favour multiculturalism and to perceive themselves as having a 'liberal' view of race and racial issues in the aftermath of racism and the consequences of apartheid. Black people, on the other hand, appear to be more preoccupied with promoting Blackness as a socially desirable, positive way of raising Black children.

With respect to the CRT, the significant counter-arguments to these discourses, which emerged during the research, provided evidence challenging the notion that 'race', ethnicity and culture are intrinsic and immutable features of people. By so doing, the findings of the study shone a spotlight on some of the surreptitious ways in which racial discourses operate in society to reinforce race-consciousness and to preserve patterns of racial segregation between Whites and Blacks within the ambit of child care and protection, specifically within the practice of CRA. By also highlighting the voices which call for an end to racialism and race-consciousness, opposing the ideology of racial segregation, the findings point to discursive spaces in which both Black and White people could come together in order to put an end to the debilitating effects of racism, rather than be confined to the respective roles of 'victim' and 'perpetrator'.

6.3 Conclusions

The study had a simple aim: to investigate the practice of CRA in East London. The findings established that despite a great deal of debate surrounding CRA, the practice is increasing every day. It can also be concluded that it occurs mainly between Black children and White adoptive parents, at present. It is also evident from the findings that it is treated as a social taboo within most Black communities, as a result of the legacy of the racial segregation of the apartheid era. It can also be deduced from the findings that HIV/AIDS, abandonment, neglect and poverty are among the most prominent reasons for most Black children being adopted across racial lines in East London. Nonetheless, it was also concluded that there is a disproportionate relationship between Black children in need of permanent homes compared with the availability of willing Black adoptive parents.

The study intended to achieve three objectives, of which the first was to investigate the role of social workers, managers and social welfare agencies in cross-racial adoption. The study therefore needed to synthesise the roles of social workers, managers and social welfare agencies in cross-racial adoption as a vital component in the practice of CRA, with particular reference to the fact that race exerts a very significant influence on this practice. The role of social workers, managers and adoption agencies is a crucial one from the beginning of the adoption process and continues to be so throughout the adoption process and even as far as the post-adoption process, when the child has been adopted into a cross-racial adoption family. Some of the specific roles were found to include: (a) to determine the adoptability of the child or children; (b) the recruitment and selection of prospective adoptive parents; (c) to provide the necessary information and counselling to biological and adoptive

parents before consenting to the adoption of a child; (d) helping with placement transitions; and (e) providing post-adoption services, to ensure lasting and strong adoptive relationships. These roles are all of great importance for the successful practice of CRA. However, owing to the great influence which racial issues continue to exert to separate people from one another both physically and ideologically, the findings suggest that these roles need to be still more effective in order to promote the successful practising of CRA in East London.

The second objective of this study was to examine the perceptions of social workers, adoptive parents and community members regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption. From the research, it was noted there were mixed perceptions among all of the participants from the various racial groups, namely Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians, with particularly great differences being noted between the perceptions of the White and the Black participants. These differences could quite credibly be attributed to the results of the apartheid rule in which the issue of race had been elevated to the level of a national pathology.

In addition, it was noted that these perceptions varied in terms of psychological, social and emotional responses and manifested themselves in the form of cultural disapproval or approval. Among the charges levelled at the practice of CRA were cultural genocide and confusing cross-racially adopted children by destroying their racial and cultural identity. These diverse findings justified the aims of this study, as it intended to focus upon the controversies surrounding the practice of CRA. Accordingly, apart from voicing particular concerns, the perceptions of the participants interviewed pointed to a far greater challenge, namely the need for greater mutual

understanding and tolerance in society. If this is not achieved, for a cross-racially adopted child, fitting into the community of another race group is likely to present huge, if not insurmountable challenges, as has been noted by the researcher and explained by the Critical Race Theory. From this it may be concluded that there is a great and pressing need for a colour-blind approach to the practice of CRA in which race must not and cannot be allowed to influence any adoption decision.

The third objective was to investigate the challenges facing agencies, social workers and adoptive parents regarding the practice of cross-racial adoption. Through both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research detected numerous difficulties, ranging from emotional to social problems. The various concerns and difficulties surrounding the practice of CRA in the study area have resulted in deterioration in the processes pertaining to the practice of CRA in East London. The findings of the study confirmed that, although the challenges are vast and of great magnitude, with increasing numbers of children who are in need of care and protection, this makes the facilitation of CRA an urgent priority.

An investigation of the practice of CRA in East London should pave the way towards a general understanding of the priorities and realities pertaining to the practice of CRA in South Africa as a whole. The study also had a pragmatic value to the extent that the participants were exposed to new ideas and perceptions and encouraged to think more analytically about the practice of CRA. The nature of the questions in the study was such that they encouraged thoughtful inquiry into preconceived ideas for the social workers and managers in the adoption agencies selected and for the community members and adoptive parents who took part in the study.

In addition, for all of the participants the study provided an opportunity for deep analysis of the way in which they perceive other races and view the practice of CRA. The core concern of the study was how the practice of CRA is conducted in relation to the racial issues which surround it. The research also managed to identify challenges in relation to research problem explained initially. Furthermore, the research problem, by highlighting the situation of needy children in South Africa and, specifically, in East London in terms of their need of care and protection and also with specific reference to the practice of CRA. Against that background the research sought to test empirically the assumptions, arguments, rates and trends identified in the research problem. The study provided a background of factors accounting for the high demand for CRA, such as the great number of deaths resulting from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, neglect and abandonment of children and the unavailability of same-race adoptive parents who are willing to take care of needy children. This information was provided in support of the core argument, since it demonstrated a rise in the need for the practice of CRA as an alternative form of child custody, which is associated with a rise in the practice of CRA in the absence of the availability of other alternatives. The role of social workers, managers and adoption agencies and the perceptions and challenges associated with the practice of CRA were discussed from this perspective.

The research made use of two significant theories, namely the Critical Race theory (CRT) and the Crisis theory (CT), in an attempt to explain the findings of the study concerning the practice of CRA in East London. As South Africa is believed to be still mired in the racial malaise emanating from the apartheid era, the Critical Race theory was appropriate in that it explains the aspects of race and racism, which are still prevalent within South African society, which constitute a hindrance to the successful

practice of CRA. The theory was applicable because it endeavours not only to understand social and historical pathology of the sort surrounding the practice of CRA in South Africa, but also to change it for the better by means of an activist dimension, which denounces the slow pace of racial reform in racially- oriented societies such as South African society.

The Crisis Theory is particularly relevant to the crisis in the practice of CRA in South Africa. As is explained by Caplan and Felix (1964), the Crisis Theory posits that prior to a crisis event, the individual, a single entity or system, is either in a stable or unstable state, with the unfolding of a crisis event impinging on the individual's functioning within other supra-systems, such as family and or community systems. Relating this theory to the practice of CRA, the CT's perspective brings into view the possible effects which past racial experiences have on the way in which social workers and managers play their roles within the domain of CRA. The Crisis Theory also maintains that whether through formal crisis therapy or through natural accommodation, a state of equilibrium will eventually occur, whether for good or bad. In the context of this study, if social workers working during the aftermath of the racist rule of the apartheid era do not receive appropriate therapy, the way in which they facilitate the practice of CRA may be affected adversely.

As has been pointed out in the preceding chapters, the difference in the attitudes among the members of the various racial groups interviewed was a consistent theme to emerge from this research. Whether interviewing either White participants or participants of colour, the researcher found that there was a tendency to respond in accordance with what is perceived to favour the participant's own race, at the expense

of the other races. For example, when Black community members were asked about the notion of 'cultural genocide', most of them alluded to the fact that all of the White participants saw nothing amiss concerning the practice. Accordingly, it was noted that these responses were loaded with a racial bias and reactionary, and they did not embody the rationality needed to find workable solutions to the plight of desperately needy children.

6.4 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, their analysis and conclusions, and the perspective provided by the literature review, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ A concerted effort to bring about a radical social shift in the direction of making the society aware of the pressing need to change its racial attitudes, which at present hinder it from engaging in cross-racial adoption and encouraging the practice, and which perpetuate racial prejudices and intolerance, which then hinders the successful practice of CRA in response to the needs of the most disadvantaged members of society.
- ❖ Stringent macro policies addressing racial attitudes in society, such as those directed by the moral regeneration initiatives of the government, should be the basis of improving racial relations which have a great bearing on the perceptions pertaining to and the assumption of the responsibility of care giving.
- ❖ It is significant to note that the society's perceptions towards CRA tend to vary according to race and level of education in the community. In terms of this research is the inescapable conclusion that this phenomenon indicated widely ingrained societal attitudes towards members of other races, rather than attitudes

specifically towards the practice of CRA. In terms of the level of education, the views expressed seemed to indicate the influence of education in the raising of levels of tolerance. These assessments and observations, however, do not negate the views of the participants. Rather, they bring to the fore the fact that education in general, and specifically in terms of the adoption of children across racial lines, has a vital role to play in helping South African society to overcome its racial problems.

- ❖ The practice of CRA needs to be promoted through awareness campaigns in which awareness of the need for colour-blind care and protection of children needs to be fostered. Awareness of this sort will enlighten many people concerning the practice of CRA and ultimately reduce racial bias.
- ❖ Empowering adoptive parents to deal with all the challenges associated with the practice of CRA would help to make them less vulnerable to stigmatisation by society.
- ❖ As adoption social workers and adoption managers have a very important educational role to play within the practice of CRA, it is recommended that the educational role of these practitioners should be incorporated into the educational programmes which deal with racial issues. There is also a great need to empower and educate adoption social workers and adoption managers regarding the practice of CRA, which would, in turn, bring many benefits and positive changes to South African society as a whole.
- ❖ There is also a need to educate all community members concerning the benefits of the practice of CRA, and it is also suggested that adoption social workers should provide this awareness.

6.5 Implications for Social work practice

To fulfil its childcare obligation, social work assumes various roles in relation to society. These roles and their corresponding social work activities are appropriate to the various domains within the overall ambit of social work and the contribution, which it makes to the lives of the neediest members of society. The nature of childcare problems and the way in which society defines, perceives and reacts to the practice of cross-racial adoption influences the extent to which social work is able to achieve and fulfil its aims. Social work embraces the concept of *ubuntu*, which is centred mainly on the care of others. The role of social work in with the domain of the practice of CRA is accordingly to ensure that the same spirit prevails within the ambit of CRA and to enable those children who are in need of care and protection to find permanent homes.

As it is undisputed by all parties concerned that the vast majority of cross-racial adoptions involve White adoptive parents adopting Black children, it is anticipated that the conclusion of this study will have implications for social work practice and its attempt to integrate Black prospective adoptive parents into the adoption arena, to encourage them to share in the responsibility of taking care of Black children who are in need of care and protection. Moreover, the social work community needs to address the racial issues, such as racial segregation and racial prejudices which exist between Blacks and Whites within the ambit of child care, through the process of education at the grass roots level, by providing education to communities.

A broadened and enlightened vision, which incorporates both a national consciousness and new types of knowledge and skills, also needs to be instilled in the

social work profession. Social workers all over South Africa need be prepared to work in an increasingly multi-cultural society and to accept the reality of adopters of diverse races. This requires global, regional, national and local consciousness so that social workers are aware of the ways in which global, regional and national and local events and forces affect the people of the world and how it is both possible and desirable for children to be raised by parents of a different race from theirs. In addition, social workers need specialised education and training to prepare them to work effectively within the ambit of CRA, and particularly with cross-racial adoptive parents. Once again, it is vital to bring diversity and colour-blind perspectives into social work practice, classes and policy courses. Moreover, the dimension of social work education fostering a colour-blind approach and an appreciation of diversity needs more emphasis if social workers are to become more effective in facilitating successful cross-racial adoption within the realm of South Africa's childcare.

In conclusion, the position of social work in relation to the practice of CRA needs to be pre-eminent, prioritised and publicised through an accompanying research agenda, which focuses solely on this area of practice. This agenda should seek to investigate the theoretical and practical contexts which have given rise to poor practices within the field of adoption, specifically with CRA and through which positive changes can be made. It is to be hoped that these changes will, in turn, bring changes to the ways in which social workers deliver adoption services within the practice of CRA, in order to help children who are in need to secure homes as one of the essential rights accorded to children by the Constitution of South Africa.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

- ❖ The fact that this study focused on East London presents itself as a limitation, since it is not necessarily representative of the entire Eastern Cape Province or even of South Africa at large. The practice of CRA may vary elsewhere, and this calls for similar research to be conducted in other provinces of South Africa.
- ❖ A qualitative study to gain an even deeper understanding of the practice of CRA could be carried out among cross-racial adoptees, in order to understand their perceptions, attitudes and challenges regarding the practice of CRA.
- ❖ The study showed that there is a great need for further research in the field of CRA, as the area has not been comprehensively researched at present. Sources of information, publications, trends and rates are not yet readily available from most stakeholders involved in rendering services. Accordingly, more research is to be encouraged from future researchers interested in this area. Their research may not be directly along the lines of this study, but it could investigate various aspects of CRA the analysis of the data appeared to indicate might be rich areas for future research. For example, the perceptions of adoptive parents, adoption practitioners and community members were investigated in this study, but focusing on perceptions could provide an area of research which could produce several other themes for further study.
- ❖ In addition, the issue of education was perhaps more prominent in the discussions than could be adequately reflected in this study. Accordingly, this research does not adequately address the myriad ways in which existing social constructs and conditions intersect with issues of 'race', and the practice of CRA in South Africa, which should encourage future research into issues pertaining to race and race relations in other South African contexts, by including participants from other

disciplines, with different levels of education. Research of this type might also attempt to account for the ways in which education intersects with South Africans' perceptions of self, identity, family and race. It would also benefit from a greater investigation into the ways in which both Black and White people interpret the concept of "child care and protection" in relation to the concept of "race" in South Africa, and what the implications of these meanings may be for the country, and for relations among the various racial groups in South Africa.

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ANNEXURES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKERS AND MANAGERS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

My name is Nyasha Kausi. I am a student from the University of Fort Hare and I am currently doing Master's degree in Social work. I am undertaking an academic research on -The practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) in East London. I am looking forward to learning from you and I am kindly asking for your co-operation with regards to this matter. I would, thus like to kindly ask you to spare your time with me and respond to my interview questions as truthful as you can. I believe that this research will contribute to the useful information that will assist social workers as well as any other relevant stakeholder who might be interested in this area of concern. The research can also be a yard stick on which future researches and policies will be based. The interview takes about 15 to 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and all the issues discussed will be kept confidential.

I would like to ask your permission to take notes and tape record the discussions because what you have to say is important to me and I do not want to forget what you tell me. I will have one person take notes and tape record our discussion to make sure I have understood what you have said. The tapes will be locked in a safe place and be destroyed once the review has been completed by the researcher. I would want to know if this is okay. If yes, thank you very much for your assistance

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC/ PERSONAL INFORMATION

Pseudo Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Race _____ Professional _____

SECTION B

1. What is your understanding of cross-racial adoption?
2. What are the reasons for the adoption of children across racial lines?
3. What is the rate of children adopted by parents of different race to theirs?
4. How long does the cross-racial adoption procedure take to be finalized?
5. Have you thought of any prejudices, stereotypes that may arise or that you have experienced with your involvement with the practice of cross racial adoption?
6. What are the legislative mandates that apply to cross-racial adoption?
7. Do you think the community is aware of cross-racial adoption?
8. What is your general perception about the practice cross-racial adoption?
9. Will you be comfortable if your child is to be adopted across racial lines?
10. What impacts does cross-racial adoption have on Child Welfare/Social Work profession?
11. Do you think culturally is good to place a child in cross-racial adoptive care? If not what could be the problem?

12. What do you consider are the benefits associated with cross racial adoption?
13. What are the implications associated with the practice of cross racial adoption?
14. What role does your organisation play in cross racial adoption?
15. What is your role as a Social Worker in the practice of cross racial adoption?
16. What challenges do you think your organisation faces in regard to cross racial adoption?
17. How does your organisation address these challenges?

Section C

1. What, in your opinion do you suggest should be done in order to address challenges regarding to the practice of cross racial adoption?
2. Do you have any questions?

Thank you once again for your assistance

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

My name is Nyasha Kausi. I am a student from the University of Fort Hare and I am currently doing Master's degree in Social work. I am undertaking an academic research on -The practice of cross racial adoption (CRA) in East London. I am looking forward to learning from you and I am kindly asking for your co-operation with regards to this matter. I would, thus like to kindly ask you to spare your time with me and respond to my interview questions as truthful as you can. I believe that this research will contribute to the useful information that will assist social workers as well as any other relevant stakeholder who might be interested in this area of concern. The research can also be a yard stick on which future researches and policies will be based. The interview takes about 15 to 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and all the issues discussed will be kept confidential.

I would like to ask your permission to take notes and tape record the discussions because what you have to say is important to me and I do not want to forget what you tell me. I will have one person take notes and tape record our discussion to make sure I have understood what you have said. The tapes will be locked in a safe place and be destroyed once the review has been completed by the researcher. I would want to know if this is okay. If yes, thank you very much for your assistance

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC/ PERSONAL INFORMATION

Pseudo Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Race _____ Professional _____

SECTION B

1. What is your understanding of cross racial adoption?
2. What do you think are the reasons for the adoption of children across racial lines?
3. What do you think is the rate of children adopted by parents of different race to theirs?
4. How long have you been an adoptive parent?
5. Have you thought of any prejudices, stereotypes that may arise or that you have experienced as a cross racial adoptive parent?
6. What challenges do you encounter as a cross racial adoptive parent?
7. What do you think are the reasons behind those challenges?
8. What is your general perception about the practice cross racial adoption?
9. Do you think culturally is good to place a child in cross racial adoptive care? If not what could be the problem?
10. What do you consider are the benefits associated with cross racial adoption?
11. What are the implications associated with the practice of cross racial adoption?

Section C

1. What, in your opinion do you suggest should be done in order to address challenges regarding to the practice of cross racial adoption?

2. Do you have any questions?

Thank you once again for your assistance

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS



University of Fort Hare
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My name is Nyasha Kausi. I am a student from the University of Fort Hare and I am currently doing Master's degree in Social work. I am undertaking an academic research on -The practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) in East London. I am looking forward to learning from you and I am kindly asking for your co-operation with regards to this matter. I would, thus like to kindly ask you to spare your time with me and respond to my interview questions as truthful as you can. I believe that this research will contribute to the useful information that will assist social workers as well as any other relevant stakeholder who might be interested in this area of concern. The research can also be a yard stick on which future researches and policies will be based. The interview takes about 15 to 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and all the issues discussed will be kept confidential.

I would like to ask your permission to take notes and tape record the discussions because what you have to say is important to me and I do not want to forget what you tell me. I will have one person take notes and tape record our discussion to make sure I have understood what you have said. The tapes will be locked in a safe place and be destroyed once the researcher has completed the review. I would want to know if this is okay. If yes, thank you very much for your assistance

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC/ PERSONAL INFORMATION

Pseudo Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Race _____ Professional _____

SECTION B

1. What is your understanding of cross-racial adoption?
2. What do you think are the reasons for the adoption of children across racial lines?
3. What do you think have you been aware of cross-racial adoption?
4. Have you thought of any prejudices, stereotypes that may arise or that you have experienced with your involvement with the practice of cross racial adoption?
5. What is your general perception about the practice cross-racial adoption?
6. Will you be comfortable if your child is to be adopted across racial lines?
7. What impacts does cross-racial adoption have on you community?
8. Do you think culturally is good to place a child in cross-racial adoptive care? If not what could be the problem?
9. What do you consider to be the benefits associated with cross racial adoption?
10. What are the implications associated with the practice of cross-racial adoption?

Section C

2. What, in your opinion do you suggest should be done in order to address challenges regarding to the practice of cross-racial adoption?

2. Do you have any question

Thank you once again for your assistance

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS, MANAGERS, ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

My name is NyashaKausi. I am a student from the University of Fort Hare and I am currently doing Master's degree in Social work. I am undertaking an academic research on the practice of cross-racial adoption (CRA) in East London. I am looking forward to learning from you and I am kindly asking for your co-operation with regards to this matter. The discussion takes about 45 minutes to an hour. Participation is voluntary and all the issues discussed will be kept confidential.

Thank you very much for coming today. I would like to ask your permission to take notes and tape record the discussions because what you have to say is important to me and I do not want to forget what you tell me. I will have one person take notes *and* tape record our discussion to make sure I have understood what you have said. The tapes will be locked in a safe place and be destroyed once the review has been completed by the researcher. I would want to know if this is okay. If yes, thank you very much for your assistance

Ground rules

Before we start, I would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. I am interested in knowing what each of you think, so please feel free to be frank and to share your point of view, regardless of whether you agree or

disagree with what you hear. It is very important that I hear all your opinions. You probably prefer that your comments not be repeated to people outside of this group. Please treat others in the group as you want to be treated by not telling anyone about what you hear in this discussion today.

Section A: Demographic Information

Let's start by going around the circle and having each person introduce him/herself *providing information on:*

1. Age
2. Race/Ethnicity
3. Position in adoption (eg. Manager; Social worker; adoptive parent or community member)
4. Years of experience with the practice of CRA
5. Sex (male/female)
6. Whether you are also a cross racial adoptee or not?
7. Any other thing that you feel is important to this discussion?

Section B: The practice of cross racial adoption in South Africa, East London.

8. What do you think about the topic that has brought us here and how is it being done?
9. What do you think are the reasons for the adoption of children across racial lines?
10. In your organisations and communities, what is the rate of children adopted across racial lines?
11. According to you, what are the reasons for:

- i) Having a lot of children being adopted across racial lines?
- ii) Having few interracial adoptive parents for children in need of care and protection?

12. In your own opinion, what do you consider are the benefits associated with cross racial adoption?

Section C: The role of social workers, managers and social welfare agencies within the practice of CRA.

13. What do you think are the roles of social workers managers and adoption agencies within the practice of CRA

14. When and in what cases do you normally perform those roles?

15. What impact do those roles have within the realm of CRA?

16. What other roles do you think you embark on in order to make the practice of CRA more effective?

Section D: The perceptions of social workers, managers, adoptive parents and community members with regards to the practice of cross racial adoption.

17. According to you, what is your general perception about the practice of cross racial adoption?

18. Will you be comfortable if your child is to be adopted across racial lines?

19. Do you think culturally is good to place a child in cross racial adoptive care? If not what could be the problem?

20. What impacts does cross racial adoption have upon all the society, child, and adoptive parents? Please explain.

21. What do you think is an ideal form of child custody of children in need of care and protection and why?

Section E: The challenges facing agencies, social workers, managers and adoptive parents with regard to cross racial adoption

22. What challenges do you face as social workers, managers and adoptive parents face with regards to practice of cross racial adoption?

23. What strategies have you ever employed to address the problems and to what extent were they effective or not effective?

24. If the strategies are not ineffective, what are the hindrances?

25. What is it that you and your organisations are doing to address such hindrances?

Section F: General

26. Let's summarize some of the key points from our discussion. Is there anything else?

27.. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your assistance once again!!!

APPENDIX E: THE MAP OF EAST LONDON SHOWING THE STUDY AREA



APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT



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ETHICS RESEARCH CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please note:

This form is to be completed by the researcher(s) as well as by the interviewee before the commencement of the research. Copies of the signed form must be filed and kept on record

(To be adapted for individual circumstances/needs)

Our University of Fort Hare / Department is asking people from your community / sample / group to answer some questions, which we hope will benefit your community and possibly other communities in the future.

The University of Fort Hare / Department/ organization is conducting research regarding the practice of cross racial adoption in South Africa: A case study of East London. We are interested in finding out more about how the practice of cross racial adoption is being done and what are the loopholes rates and trends inherent within the practice. We are carrying out this research to help the policy makers, government and the department of social development to adjust, reformulate or restructure policies so as to address the challenges associated with the practice of cross racial adoption.

Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, we would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with us. If you choose not take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may stop me at any time and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

I will not be recording your name anywhere on the questionnaire and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only the researchers will have access to the unlinked information. The information will remain confidential and there will be no "come-backs" from the answers you give.

The interview will last around 60 minutes (*this is to be tested through a pilot*). I will be asking you a questions and ask that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. We know that you cannot be absolutely certain about the answers to these questions but we ask that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When we ask questions about the future we are not interested in what you think the best thing would be to do, but what you think would actually happen. (*Adapt for individual circumstances*)

If possible, our organisation would like to come back to this area once we have completed our study to inform you and your community of what the results are and discuss our findings and proposals around the research and what this means for people in this area.

INFORMED CONSENT by Participant

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interviews, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

APPENDIX G: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Reference Number: TAN013 1SKAU01

Project title: **An exploration of the practice of cross racial adoption in South Africa: The case of East London**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Nyasha Kausi

Supervisor: Prof Pius Tangwe Tanga

Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

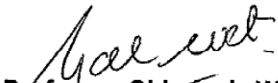
The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

28 October 2013