

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the research problem

Cultural diversity is one of the most important topics in social research. In South Africa, the topic of cultural diversity and cross-cultural relations are of particular significance as individuals are confronted with an increasingly diverse environment at schools, universities, and in the workplace.

Tertiary institutions in South Africa are experiencing significant changes in the composition of students, from a relatively homogeneous population, towards a multicultural heterogeneous student population. In this context, social perception and behaviour are guided by the norms and values contained within the collective pillars of cultural identity, such as language, a shared history, religion and external appearances. This can be the source of much intergroup conflict and misperception.

Students at universities work in close proximity to members of other cultural groups and are thus exposed to a variety of cultures at a more intimate level than previously experienced. This type of contact creates amplified affect and cognitions that shape the behaviour of students in intergroup situations. In the light of the broader socio-political changes in South Africa, it appears necessary to investigate the intergroup attitudes amongst students and the variables that influence these attitudes.

The questions concerning the characteristics of group perceptions and the variables influencing the ways in which cultural groups perceive one another, are of both theoretical and practical significance. It is important in terms of theoretical significance that certain theories are able to offer powerful conceptual tools for understanding intergroup perceptions and behaviours. On a practical level, it is important that research provides an understanding of such problems as intergroup conflict and discrimination. Identifying important variables implicated in the development of negative group perceptions may have implications for social policies and interventions which are aimed at the improvement of cross-cultural relations.

A wide range of local and international studies relating to intergroup attitudes have been documented. However, relatively few of these studies have sought to compare group attitudes across cultures and identify cultural mechanisms underlying group attitudes. The majority of the attitude studies in South Africa have focused on the social perceptions of single cultural groups in terms of their attitudes towards

their own and various out-groups (Foster & Nel, 1991). The generalizability of these research studies can thus be questioned in terms of the representation of the broad cultural groups in South Africa.

Research on intergroup perceptions have largely ignored cross-cultural effects, such as the influence of subjective culture and underlying core values, and the relationship between core cultural values and intergroup attitudes in the South African context has remained unexplored. Studies assessing intergroup attitudes assume that the populations they are assessing are homogeneous in terms of their underlying values and perceptual styles.

In the South African context, it is likely that members of different cultural groups are not homogeneous, particularly in terms of cultural value-orientation and degree of acculturation. Consequently, it is possible that studies assessing for example, intergroup attitudes in African and Asian populations, as compared to Western populations, may make overgeneralizations if these studies do not control for differences in cultural values and levels of acculturation.

Cultural value differences describe important variations in how the self relates to others and thus may cause individuals to hold different attitudes and perceptions (Yuki, 2003; Matsumoto, 2000; Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga, 1999; Smith & Bond, 1998). Cultural value differences also have the potential to create social distance and conflict between groups (Triandis, Kurowski & Gelfand, 1994). Hence, there is a need for investigating cultural values in order to understand the central processes involved in the perceptions of other groups.

Consideration of the relative influence of cultural variables on intergroup attitudes is invaluable in the South African context and may contribute to a better understanding of intergroup relations, as well as facilitate intervention programs that would assist with improving intergroup relations and foster positive intergroup attitudes.

Accordingly, the general aims of this study are to explore the attitudinal and related cultural variables for the diverse cultural groups of volunteer resident and non-resident (day) psychology students at the Rand Afrikaans University. Given the vast cultural differences that characterise the population groups in South Africa, a cross-cultural approach to the study of intergroup relations is invaluable.

## **1.2 A cross-cultural perspective**

According to cross-cultural theorists, individualistic models of social psychology have been enacted with the assumption that they describe universal characteristics of human experience instead of particular culture-bound views. Mainstream psychology is based on a Westernised system of values which place emphasis on individuality. It claims to identify general laws of human behaviour which it assumes to be universal, despite the fact that they have been established on the basis of empirical studies with restricted, non-representative, homogeneous samples, usually residing in Western, urbanized, industrial societies (Matsumoto, 2000; Smith & Bond, 1998; Segall et al., 1999).

Research carried out within the confines of mainstream psychology cannot always separate variables that are confounded. This is especially true of social psychology. Social psychological research is usually based on homogeneous research samples that do not present the variability that would allow researchers to distinguish universal behaviours from those that are culture specific. Instead of attributing specific findings to specific causes, for example, attributing ethnic prejudice to certain personality traits, cross-cultural psychology seeks to identify whether such findings can be explained in terms of different experiences, values, norms, etc. Cross-cultural psychology aims to document cultural variation as well as to identify universal laws. Cross-cultural psychology thus provides a theoretical framework which helps us to understand the ways in which our own enculturation influences our behaviour. It helps us to understand and interpret the behaviour of those from a different culture to our own, thus providing the means to decentre from one's own ethnocentric perspective (Matsumoto, 2000; Smith & Bond, 1998; Segall et al., 1999).

## **1.3 General aims of the study**

The specific objectives of the study will thus be to explore the relation between intergroup attitudes and certain variables amongst resident and non-resident psychology students at the Rand Afrikaans University.

More specifically, the aims of this study are to clarify the relation between cultural perceptual style (Individualism and Collectivism as core cultural value-orientations), gender, contact (resident and non-resident students), cultural group-orientation, first language and intergroup attitudes.


## 1.4 Delimitation of the study

The current study is limited to the perceptions of students who identify with a Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) or African cultural orientation, as well as certain variables that are related to these perceptions. These variables include Individualism and Collectivism (as core cultural values), gender, students in residences versus day students, cultural identity group membership and first-language speakers.

The research sample is limited to first and second year psychology volunteers from residences or day students from five faculties. They include students on various academic levels of study at the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg. The sample included 541 students from Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Indigenous African and Westernised-African cultural groups, as well as English, Afrikaans and African first-language speakers.

## 1.5 Structure of the chapters

Chapter two of this dissertation consists of a definition and discussion of the pertinent concepts in this study. These are

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- Attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination
  - Culture
  - Individualism and collectivism
  - Acculturation
  - Social identity and intergroup relations
  - Intergroup / cross-cultural relations in South Africa

Chapter three consists of an overview of the social psychological literature as it pertains to intergroup relations and perceptions of other cultural groups. Chapter four consists of a discussion of the existing research on intergroup perceptions, and in chapter five, the methods used in this study are introduced. This includes a description of each of the data collection tools, the samples, the procedures, the statistical analysis of the data and the ethical procedures. In chapter six, the statistical analyses and results are provided. Chapter seven focuses on the discussion of the results described under chapter six. It also provides a general discussion of the limitations of the study. Chapter seven concludes this study with a concise summary of all the chapters of this dissertation by mentioning the most important aspects of each chapter. Recommendations with regards to future research and social interventions are also presented.

## Chapter 2

### Definition and discussion of the main concepts

#### 2.1 The Attitude construct

Attitudes have been defined in many different ways by many different researchers. Feldman (1998) defines attitudes as a mental state of readiness to act towards an object or set of objects in a consistently positive or negative way. While there are many definitions of attitudes, there appears to be a fair amount of acceptance for the idea that an attitude has three components, namely:

1. A cognitive component, that is, a person's belief about, or factual knowledge of the object or person.
2. An affective component, i.e., a person's emotional response to some person or object.
3. And a behavioural component, i.e., a person's overt behaviour directed towards the person or object (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel, Cooper, Goethals & Olson, 2000).

Stereotypes are believed to form the cognitive components of attitudes and are described by social psychologists as beliefs about the characteristics attributed to typical members of a group (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000).

The current study is concerned with the cognitive and affective components of students' perceptions of the broad cultural groups in South Africa. This incorporates the beliefs students' hold concerning the characteristics of the various cultural groups, as well as the evaluation (positive or negative) of these beliefs.

#### 2.2 Prejudice and discrimination

Prejudice refers to a biased, often negative attitude held towards members of a group, and discrimination entails behaving differently, usually unfairly towards members of a group (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000). Prejudice is a major social problem. It harms the victim's self-concept, creates tension and conflict between groups, and suppresses human potential. When prejudicial attitudes are translated into overt behaviour, the result is discrimination (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000).

## 2.3 Ethnocentrism

Gergen and Gergen (1994) describe ethnocentrism as the tendency to view one's own group as superior to others, often with a concomitant dislike of other groups. Ethnocentric beliefs tend to be rigidly held, and are often accompanied by intolerance and disapproval of out-groups which prevents people from perceiving other points of view. Individuals who are ethnocentric not only perceive members of other cultural groups as different, but they evaluate members of other cultural groups as inferior, glorifying their own group while denigrating the other groups (Gergen & Gergen, 1994).

## 2.4 Culture

In order to understand the nature of intergroup relations in cross-cultural situations, one needs to examine the core processes that determine behaviour within a particular culture and the elements that underlie cultural differences. Before this can be done, one needs to define the concept of culture.

According to Segall et al. (1999) culture refers to one's learnt behaviour that is passed on from generation to generation, through mechanisms of socialization, such as parents, mass media and education. This process of cultural transmission from one generation to the next is termed enculturation. Through enculturation one learns socially appropriate ways of behaving (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999).



Some of the earliest definitions of culture incorporate the knowledge, beliefs, art, laws, morals, customs, and other behaviours acquired by man in interaction with their society. Hence, culture is a way of life of an entire group of people and it represents an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behaviours. Recent definitions of culture tend to emphasize the abstract elements that lie behind one's observable behaviour. Culture is described as a set of norms or values that are regarded as proper and acceptable by members of that culture (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999).

Cultural norms and values direct behaviour by prescribing appropriate behavioural scripts and providing a frame of reference for interpreting social situations. These frames of reference form a filter for the impressions of our social environment and cause us to interpret events in a particular manner (Matsumoto, 2000; Mwamwenda, 1999).

In many ways, culture designates what an individual pays attention to and what an individual chooses to ignore. People from different cultures therefore hold different views regarding social and interpersonal situations and may make different social attributions as to the causes of others' behaviour. Triandis

(1972; 1995) refers to this perceptual difference as subjective culture. Subjective culture is a shared set of values, attitudes, norms and social roles; it is the common denominator that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to the group. Individuals within a particular culture assimilate particular ways of thinking and acting which results in a homogeneity of world view and behaviour (Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995).

Subjective culture is dynamic in that it is adapted in response to people's basic life situations (Triandis, 1995). Elements of subjective culture are usually organized around a central theme which gives rise to "cultural syndromes", or generalized cognitive orientations such as Individualism and Collectivism (Triandis, 1995).

Not all individuals within a culture think and behave in exactly the same manner. Often, individuals within a group hold different values as a result of age, sex, occupation, social class, place of residence and other demographic variables. This group functioning within a larger culture is called a subculture and the degree to which it is tolerated varies from culture to culture (Matsumoto, 2000).

## **2.5 Values**

Cultural values provide the means through which cultural influences shape the social perceptions and behaviours of individuals (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999). The rules of behaviour, norms and customs that constitute culture are an expression of the underlying value systems in that culture. Similarly to attitudes, values consist of cognitive beliefs, affective and behavioural components that exist at a higher level of abstraction (Triandis, 1994). Values have a strong affective component and may have many attitudes, goals and behavioural intentions that are consistent with them. However, they do not necessarily predispose particular actions. Values are more likely to predict behaviour when they are specific, and when they are directly related to the behaviour in question (Triandis, 1994).

## **2.6 Race versus culture**

When racial and cultural factors are considered to be synonymous, or when cultural factors are ignored, conceptual confusion often results. In South Africa, the term "White" has often been referred to as a Western culture whilst the term "Black" has been used to refer to a Non-Western culture. This understanding portrays race and culture as convergent phenomena. Such a stereotyped presentation portrays cultures as monolithic groups and ignores the variation that may occur within such narrowly defined categories (Matsumoto, 2000).

Cultural-level phenomena vary across age, race, sex, socio-economic and educational status etc, and not every individual within a particular ethnic or cultural group will necessarily adhere to identical cultural values (Segall et al., 1999). The dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism provide an alternative to proxy measures of culture by assessing core cultural values and factors thought to predispose individuals to particular forms of behaviour (Gouveia, de-Albuquerque, Clemente & Espinosa, 2002; Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

## **2.7 Individualism and Collectivism**

The constructs of Individualism and Collectivism are major dimensions of cultural variability isolated by a number of cross-cultural theorists (Hofstede, 1980; Hui and Yee, 1994; Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). These dimensions correspond to cultural values that are instrumental in social arrangements, norms, attitudes and beliefs of any given society; they describe the relationship between individuals and their social groups; and different societies and cultural groups have been found to differ in terms of these dimensions (Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

The value of Individualism and Collectivism in cross-cultural research is that it provides an objective assessment of cultural variations in social behaviours and perceptions (Gouveia et al., 2002; Matsumoto, 2000; Smith & Bond, 1998; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Such constructs provide a basis from which cross-cultural comparisons can be made. The constructs of Individualism and Collectivism are quantifiable, and can be measured in ways that are sensitive to various cultural backgrounds. The validity of these constructs have been supported by studies of beliefs, attitudes, and values across many cultures (Gouveia et al., 2002; Matsumoto, 2000; Robert & Wasti, 2002; Segall et al., 1999; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Different positions on the dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism can be used to explain differences in the attitudes and perceptions among people from different cultural backgrounds, as well as differences in the behaviour of people from the same cultural group (Segall et al., 1999; Smith & Bond, 1998).

Triandis (1995: 2) provides a preliminary definition of Individualism and Collectivism. Collectivism is defined as "a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of these collectives ... Individualism is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights and the contracts they have



established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associate with others.”

Individualism and Collectivism correspond with a number of variations in behaviour and perception: For example, members of individualistic cultures monitor their self-presentations more than members of collectivistic cultures, while members of collectivistic cultures are more concerned with being socially appropriate than members of individualistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1995; Matsumoto, 2000). Members of individualistic cultures tend to emphasise the use of independent self-construals. Members of collectivistic cultures, in contrast, emphasize the use of interdependent self-construals (Matsumoto, 2000).

Although cultures are characterized as relatively collectivistic or individualistic, there exists in every culture people who endorse collectivist (allocentric) values, and those who endorse individualistic (idiocentric) values (Triandis, 1995). Individualism/Collectivism is a cultural dimension while idiocentrism-allocentrism is a psychological dimension, which focuses on individual differences in value-orientations (Segall et al., 1999). Individualism/Collectivism and idiocentrism-allocentrism are thus two synonymous concepts of two different dimensions.

Many social researchers use the dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism pejoratively to explain diverse types of cultural variables. Despite its' value in cross-cultural research, it must be emphasised that Individualism and Collectivism are merely two value dimensions which have the potential to influence social behaviour. It is also important to note that Individualism and Collectivism do not form coherent syndromes that are in polar opposition (Gouveia et al., 2002; Segall et al., 1999).

Hofstede (1984) initially proposed that Individualism and Collectivism are opposing value dimensions that can be located at extremes of a continuum (Segall et al., 1999). A number of theorists refute this conception of Individualism and Collectivism (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). They note that individuals and societies can be high or low on both dimensions and that Individualism and Collectivism should form separate dimensions. Cultures can thus be characterised by their degrees of Individualism and Collectivism, rather than as purely collectivistic or individualistic (Segall et al., 1999).

## **2.8 The role of Individualism and Collectivism in in-group/out-group relations**

Triandis (1995) is of the opinion that the number of in-groups, the extent of influence of each in-group, and their depth of the influence must be taken into consideration in the analysis of Individualism/Collectivism. The specific forms of in-group and out-group relationships are influenced by the degree of Individualism and Collectivism present in a specific culture. Regarding the number of in-groups, individualistic cultures are characterised by many and less stable in-groups, whereas collectivistic cultures are characterised by few and stable in-groups (Gudykunst, 1995; Yuki, 2003). Triandis (1995) contends that the larger the number of in-groups, the narrower the influence and the less the depth of influence. Therefore, in-groups are believed to exert less influence on individuals in individualistic cultures compared to collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995).

Members of collectivistic cultures emphasise the needs and goals of their few in-groups and the harmonious relationships among in-group members. In-groups have different rank-orders of importance in collectivistic cultures. The family, for instance, will have a higher ranking than some other in-groups. On the other hand, members of individualistic cultures emphasise their own personal needs, and group memberships exert less influence on the behaviours of individualists (Yuki, 2003; Triandis, 1995).

Members of collectivistic cultures draw sharper distinctions between members of in-groups and out-groups and perceive in-group relationships to be more intimate than members of individualistic cultures. According to Gudykunst et al. (1992), these sharper distinctions in collectivistic cultures lead to different patterns of communication with members of the in-group and members of the out-groups. Fewer distinctions between the in-group and the out-group in individualistic cultures are conducive to greater similarity in the communications with members of the in-group and members of the outgroups (Gudykunst et al., 1992).

Given the different roles of the in-groups in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, cultural value-orientations in terms of Individualism and Collectivism may have a significant influence on the nature of intergroup perceptions in multicultural contexts such as South Africa.

## **2.9 Determinants of cultural value-orientations**

Several factors may influence whether a person is more individualist or collectivist. Examples of such factors include: Age, social class, child rearing, travelling abroad, educational status and occupation. Collectivism tends to arise in relatively homogeneous and isolated cultures, with a history of co-

operation, and a high population density. Individualism, on the other hand, tends to arise in cultures that are complex, consisting of many groups, roles, lifestyles, many choices of group membership and a high level of functional specialization, division of labour and social stratification (Triandis, 1995).

Affluent, urban, younger, educated, male, upper class populations, geographic mobility, exposure to mass media, modernity and occupations that involve independence, are factors that tend to be associated with Individualism and their opposites tend to be associated with Collectivism (Triandis, 1995).

Triandis (1995: 68) mentions certain social factors that may increase the probability that a collectivist value-orientation will be activated. For example: "The individual knows that most other people in that particular situation are collectivists, which makes the collectivist norm salient; the individual is in a collective, such as the family; the situation emphasizes that people are in the same collective (e.g., wearing the same uniform); and individuals are engaged in a cooperative task."

This highlights the possibility that individuals may express value-orientations that differ from their expected cultural-orientations. Individuals from Western cultures, for example, who are expected to be highly individualistic, may exhibit degrees of collectivistic values, depending on the salience of such values in their social environment, their exposure to collectivistic cultures, and variables such as a history of interdependence and co-operation with significant in-groups. In this regard, acculturation may have a significant influence on the individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations of individuals and cultural groups.

## **2.10 Acculturation**

It is important to note that culture is not a homogeneous entity. Cultures contain many subjective elements that are influenced by factors such as education, religion, socio-economic factors, intercultural relations and so on. Studies assessing cultural phenomena, such as cultural values and attitudes, are complicated by the influences of the culture in which an individual develops (enculturation), as well as the influence of cultures from the outside (acculturation) (Matsumoto, 2000; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Segall et al., 1999).

Acculturation is multifaceted and includes individual changes in identification, attitudes, values and behavioural norms, as a result of continuous, direct contact with a different culture (Matsumoto, 2000; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Segall et al., 1999). This induces changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Two cultural groups in contact may influence one another equally, although in

practice it is likely that one culture tends to be dominant (Matsumoto, 2000; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Segall et al., 1999).

Acculturation often brings about cultural diversification and attitudinal reaction, such as prejudice, discrimination, or greater cultural empathy and tolerance (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992; Padilla & Perez, 2003). The level of acculturation in each group may play an important role in determining one's attitude towards the other culture. Often, the process of acquiring the values and norms of one's culture involves the development of attitudes and values antipathetic to other cultural groups and individuals, their values, actions and perceptions. Familiarity and empathy for the values of other cultural groups may increase one's understanding and liking of the other culture and combat prejudicial attitudes. The development of complex thinking and isomorphic attributions about a target culture may develop with intercultural sensitivity and may come to replace oversimplified, negative, stereotypical thinking about other cultural groups (Padilla & Perez, 2003).

Acculturation may occur both as a group phenomenon (collective change in the culture of a group), and as an individual psychological phenomenon. While collective acculturation may be vast, individual, psychological acculturation will vary in terms of the degree to which individuals participate in the general acculturation of their group (Segall et al., 1999). A further distinction can be made between behavioural acculturation (the adoption of and participation in the customs, language and practices of the new culture), and value acculturation, where the values of the new culture are adopted (Segall et al., 1999).

Early conceptualizations of the acculturation process assumed that the adoption of values, customs and norms of the new culture are accompanied by the loss of values, customs and norms of the original culture. Researchers have however realized the complexity of this process and have recognized the possibility of the adoption of values and norms of the new culture with a concurrent maintenance of the values and norms of the original culture (Berry et al., 1992; Segall et al., 1999).

In the South African context, it is likely that members of different cultural groups are not homogeneous, particularly in terms of cultural value-orientation and degree of acculturation. Given the diversity of cultures on campus, students at RAU are likely to experience a number of acculturative influences. Students may thus exhibit cultural values that differ from their culture of origin. These acculturative influences may in turn impact on the nature of their perceptions of other cultural groups.

## 2.11 Social identity and intergroup relations

Group identification influences an individual's perception of, attitudes and behaviour towards other persons and groups. An important criterion in terms of which relationships differ, is whether the other persons are members of an in-group or an outgroup. Social Identity theorists contend that in-group members tend to treat one another preferentially- their attitudes and behaviours are biased in favor of the in-group (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

The application of the terms 'in-group and out-group' is practical and commonly found in the literature, but it is also problematic. In societies such as South Africa, characterised by its' multiplicity of cultures, the use of the dichotomous in-group/out-group distinctions presents an oversimplified understanding of the many overlapping relationships and affiliations within and across the various groups. Nevertheless, the lack of more appropriate definitions has led to the adoption of these terms, and the reader is asked to bear in mind that in reality intergroup relations are vastly more complex than the dichotomy of in-group/out-group relations suggests.

According to Social Identity theorists, we place ourselves in categories with others that we see as similar to ourselves on some dimension and different to others on that dimension. This leads us to define ourselves in terms of social and personal identities. Tajfel, credited as one of the founders of the Social Identity Theory, defines social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of membership" (Campbell, 1995: 31). In terms of this definition, social identity is defined as an integral part of an individual's sense of self.

The processes of group membership and related social identifications are not passive. Social identifications are dynamic as they shift according to the salience of group memberships in different situations (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003). Simon, Pantaleo & Mummendy (1995) maintain that the accentuation of the facets of group identifications will vary according to three factors, namely: the value assigned to temporary salient in-group features; the attractiveness of the in-group; and the awareness of the group receiving special treatment in the wider society. This collection of variables has been referred to as subjective belief structures (Abrams & Hogg, 2001). In multicultural societies such as South Africa, where different degrees of status were accorded to officially classified ethno-cultural groups, the subjective belief structures concerning group memberships and related social identifications may vary considerably between the broad cultural groups.

Tajfel (1981) distinguishes between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour by proposing that all social interactions can be located along a continuum of behaviour that is anchored by two extremes: On the

one end, behaviour is purely interpersonal in nature, while at the other end behaviour is purely intergroup. During intergroup interaction people behave in accordance with their social identifications and group memberships, whereas during interpersonal interactions behaviours are governed by personal identifications and idiosyncratic perceptions (Hogg, 2003).

During intergroup encounters, people react to themselves and others not as differentiated individual persons, but as homogeneous and relatively interchangeable members of groups. Regardless of the variation in personal traits and physical attributes, when behaviour is intergroup, individuals are treated as undifferentiated interchangeable units belonging to a unified social category. Group members tend to behave in a homogeneous fashion towards other groups and their members. In addition, low intra-group variability in attitudes, beliefs and treatment of other groups is exhibited within the group. Stereotyping may result from this process. When group membership is salient, perceivers assign common characteristics that distinguish the out-groups from the in-group (Hogg, 2003).

Tajfel (1978) maintains that there is a constant interplay between the social environment and the salience of group memberships, which determines whether interaction is of an intergroup or interpersonal nature. Whilst the above distinction describes pure instances of interpersonal or intergroup behaviour, our daily interactions will consist of a mixture of these behavioural responses (Hogg, 2003).

## **2.12 Intergroup / cross-cultural relations in South Africa**

Intergroup relations in South Africa is an important area of social research in that it plays a central role in the quality of peoples' lives (HSRC, 1985). The South African population consists of a number of cultural groups that are complex and deeply segmented. For a substantial portion of South Africa's history, the division between the cultural groups occurred along racial and ethnic lines. The Apartheid dispensation divided the population into four broad ethnic categories, namely, Asians, African, Whites and Coloureds. Physical criteria were used as a means of categorising the population thereby forcing groups to adopt collective identities in relation to these criteria. South Africans were identified as members of a particular ethnic group rather than as individuals with common interests, aspirations and associations.

Apartheid sought to perpetuate and restructure the relations between the cultural groups in the form of a policy of segregation. This policy of segregation was based on the supposition that the separation of groups would eliminate the potential for intergroup conflict and competition (Mynhardt & Du Toit, 1991).

Intercultural contact was kept to a minimum and there was little opportunity for members of different cultural groups to interact on the basis of equality. Cross-cultural interaction was restricted by the provision of different schools, residential areas and facilities. This system of racial segregation was legitimated by means of racist ideologies which socialised individuals into accepting the status hierarchies in society. Apartheid thus served as a powerful mechanism for shaping people's attitudes, social identities and emotional attachments.

South Africa has now undergone a number of fundamental political changes that have resulted in the displacement of the Apartheid regime by a new democratic order and a government of national unity. The ANC supports the view that South Africa belongs to all cultural groups living in it and the concept of integration and bridge-building is central to the new political dispensation (Giliomee, 1991).

The emergence of democratic, non-racial political structures signals the becoming of important changes that are likely to reshape and alter the social attitudes of students in South Africa. The removal of compulsory segregation in racially segregated schools and other social services provides more opportunities for cross-cultural contact in a number of spheres. These transitional processes and the accompanying social stressors and uncertainty about the future are likely to have a considerable influence on students' perceptions of other cultural groups and intergroup relations within their university.

In conclusion, it is apparent that South Africa has experienced a number of years of intense intergroup conflict. The abolishment of Apartheid seems to have marked the beginnings of social change that may hopefully produce a new social order free of intergroup conflict. It is hoped that this study will provide a contribution to the better understanding of the social psychological aspects of intergroup relations in South Africa and that this understanding may help to foster more positive intergroup relations.

## Chapter 3

### Literature review: Theories of intergroup perceptions and behaviours

#### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the main issues, concepts and theoretical models involved in the study of cross-cultural relations and intergroup attitudes. As a background for the study, a number of factors are discussed. The perspective of this review is to view cross-cultural relations as being largely determined by the groups to which people belong, and to the nature and quality of the relationships existing between the respective groups. This study considers the role of social identity, cultural-orientation, intergroup contact and a number of contextual and psychosocial processes that may influence intergroup perceptions among students in culturally diverse settings.

Various theoretical approaches have been proposed to explain the nature of intergroup perceptions and relations in society. These can be broadly classified as intra-individual, social cognitive and intergroup-based explanations. Intra-individual approaches focus on how social perceptions are determined by the characteristics of the individual, whilst social cognitive theories focus on how social perceptions are shaped by the social and interpersonal environment. Group-based explanations go beyond the intra-individual characteristics and cognitive processes of the individual and focus on the properties of the groups themselves, as well as the relationships between the groups and the individual consequences thereof (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Foster, 1991).

These levels of explanation on their own focus on only part of the picture of intergroup perceptions in society. Increasingly, research has shown that social and psychological factors cannot be viewed separately, but should rather be seen as having different, complementary roles in determining intergroup perceptions (Abrams & Hogg, 2001)

The current study is informed by a cross-cultural perspective in that it aims to incorporate cultural and contextual variables in an understanding of intergroup relations. Intergroup attitudes are viewed in the current study as embedded in a matrix of interpersonal and intergroup experiences, cultural norms, ideological factors, and economic and socio-political circumstances.

The theories pertaining to intergroup relations will be presented according to their principal theoretical orientations.



## **3.2 Intra-individual approaches**

Intra-individual theories of intergroup relations concentrate on individual causes linked to emotional dynamics. The Frustration-Aggression, Projection/ Displacement Theories and the Theory of the Authoritarian Personality exemplify an intra-individual perspective of social behaviour. These theories focus on an understanding of the development of hostility, prejudice and discrimination (De la Rey, 1991).

### **3.2.1 The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis**

According to the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, frustration and aggression are believed to play an important role in negative group evaluations. This theory proposes that frustration is an antecedent of aggression, and intergroup phenomena, such as prejudice, are seen as the uniform expression of aggression by large numbers of individuals (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000).

### **3.2.2 Psychoanalytic Theories**

Within the psychoanalytic school, projection is considered to be the process of ascribing unacceptable and repressed impulses or attributes of one's own onto others. Projection functions as a defence mechanism to protect the individual from anxiety that arises from a repressed inner conflict. These motivational forces influence the perceiver's cognitive functioning and perception of the social environment. Prejudice and discrimination are thus described as irrational generalisations based on the externalisation of repressed, unacceptable aspects of oneself, through projection, onto others (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel, et al., 2000).

### **3.2.3 The Theory of Authoritarianism**

Ardono and his associates conducted a number of studies to investigate which type of people tend to be racially prejudiced, and whether their attitudes could be understood as part of a more general analysis of personality. The authoritarian personality was conceptualised as a complex of characteristics that includes ethnocentrism (a tendency to reject people who are culturally dissimilar to one's own ethnic group and to accept without questioning those who are culturally like one's own ethnic group), hostility towards out-groups, and an emphasis on obedience, discipline, and respect for authority (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel, et al., 2000).

A criticism of the intra-individual approaches is that the interaction between individuals and the social context is ignored. General laws governing individual thought and behaviour are believed to be sufficient to understand social behaviour (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; De la Rey 1991). With regard to the Theory of the Authoritarian Personality, studies have shown that in social contexts with a tradition of cultural intolerance, such as in Apartheid South Africa, normative factors are more important than personality variables in determining intergroup attitudes (Duckitt, 1991).

### **3.3 Social cognitive approaches**

Theories of social cognition focus on how social information is cognitively organised, and the perceptual processes underlying the perceptions of others. Such approaches include theories of attribution and social categorization (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004).

#### **3.3.1 Theories of attribution**

Attribution theories have been developed to explain some of the processes involved in the formation, maintenance and changes in people's attitudes and perceptions of others. The manner in which individuals make inferences regarding the causes of an actor's actions and internal states, and the way in which overall impressions are formed are believed to constitute the basic processes underlying social perception (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

In our interactions with other people, our attitudes towards others' are influenced by the attributions we make regarding the causes of others' behaviours, as well as our understanding of the interaction. We form impressions of other people, how they feel, the behaviours they are likely to perform, and what causes them to act the way they do (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

We seek to explain the behaviours we observe by attributing motives to those who perform them. The interpretations and inferences people make about the causes of behaviour have been referred to as attributions. These interpretations have predictable behavioural consequences and may serve to define the nature of interpersonal or intergroup behaviour (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

People tend to show systematic bias towards certain kinds of attributions. One of these biases is towards internal (dispositional) rather than external (situational) causes to explain the behaviour of others. Internal attributions are made when we use behavioural cues to infer dispositions and motives in ourselves and in others. We tend to over-attribute consistent dispositions to others and minimize the

role of the situation in our explanations of their behaviours. In our explanations of our own behaviours, we tend to be more aware of situational causes. This is termed the Fundamental Attribution Error (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003). One possible explanation for this may be that when we try to explain our own behaviour we have more information available concerning the complexity of the behaviour, whereas our observation of others' behaviours occur mostly in narrow contexts. This may cause us to over-generalize certain dispositional traits in others (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

Self-serving and group-serving biases refer to the tendency to select attributions that are more positive to one-self and one's group. For example, internal attributions are made regarding ourselves, or our group, to explain positive events, and external attributions are made to explain negative outcomes or events. Conversely, the causes of behaviour of other individuals or groups are attributed to external factors when the behaviour is positive, and to internal factors when the behaviour is negative (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

Triandis (1972; 1995) highlights the relationship between subjective culture and attribution processes. He noted that the occurrence, form, and meaning of a particular behaviour in a particular situation may differ from culture to culture as a result of differences in norms, values, role expectations, and historical experiences. Consequently, individuals from different cultural traditions bring to cross-cultural interactions different implicit, as well as explicit frameworks for interpreting these experiences. These differences in interpretive frameworks may lead culturally different people to view the same situation or behaviour very differently (Salzman, 1995).

### **3.3.2 The Theory of Social Categorization**

The Theory of Social Categorization postulates that humans have a limited information-processing capacity and that in order to cope with a vast, complex array of social stimuli, human beings engage in a process of categorization. This theory suggests that intergroup behaviour can be understood in terms of naturally occurring cognitive processes whereby people structure and give meaning to their social environment (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

There are many dimensions around which social categorization could occur, race, gender and culture being just a few. Social categorization involves the tendency to conceptualise people as belonging to different groups. This is motivated by a fundamental, universal need to develop organized, stable impressions of other people in terms of underlying constancies (categories) that may be used to explain

a variety of observed behaviours (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000).

Based on a series of minimal-group studies, Tajfel and his associated demonstrated that the division of groups on the basis of arbitrary criteria could evoke a favourable in-group bias and discriminatory behaviour against the out-group. The conflict between the in-groups versus out-groups can introduce, or be preceded by certain effects that encourage ethnic homogeneity and intolerable attitudes. The assumed similarity effect is the perception of the in-group by the other in-group members as more similar to themselves than to out-group members (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003). The out-group homogeneity effect and in-group favouritism effect are other ramifications of people's need to categorize. In-group members perceiving out-group members as the same in many respects illustrates the former. The latter is explained as the preferential and more positive evaluation and treatment of in-group members by other members of the in-group (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003).

The major criticism of the cognitive approaches are that social perceptions are presented as individual, private cognitive processes in which the complexities of social life are reduced to the limited capacity of categorization (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003). The Theory of Social Categorization is thus acontextual in its treatment of social perception. Abrams & Hogg (2001) maintain that social categorizations cannot be divorced from the socio-political context in which they occur. They maintain that the social origins and collective functions of social categories need to be addressed.

### **3.4 Intergroup approaches**

Intergroup approaches focus on the relationship between social forces and individual cognitive and motivational elements. These approaches suggest that group thought and behaviour should be regarded as distinctive from that of individual thought and behaviour. The underlying psychological mechanisms of the individual and the group are perceived to be different (Abrams & Hogg, 2001). The Theories of Realistic Conflict, Relative Deprivation and Social Identity exemplify a group-based approach to the understanding of intergroup relations and perceptions.

#### **3.4.1 The Realistic-Conflict Theory**

The Realistic-Conflict Theory proposed by Sherif is concerned with the role of conflict between groups and the creation of super-ordinate goals and their influence on the nature of intergroup attitudes and intergroup relations. Sherif proposed that intergroup conflict stems from the differentiation of groups into

the “us” and “them”, that is, a distinction between those who belong to the in-group and those who are a member of the out-group. The categorization of the social world into in-groups and outgroups and the resultant hostility is due, according to Sherif, to competition for scarce resources. Incompatible goals or competition between groups over scarce resources is believed to lead to intergroup conflict and negative intergroup perceptions, and the creation of super-ordinate goals or co-operative activities is believed to induce harmony and positive intergroup perceptions (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Worchel et al., 2000).

Contrary to this theory, there is evidence that the mere division of people into groups without any history of social conflict or hostility is sufficient to trigger in-group/out-group distinctions and discriminatory behaviour. In addition, research has indicated that the resolution of objective conflict does not necessarily negate negative intergroup perceptions (De la Rey, 1991).

### **3.4.2 The Theory of Relative Deprivation**

The Theory of Relative Deprivation is based on the idea that negative intergroup attitudes can be generated on the belief that one's group is getting less than one is entitled to. Social comparison plays an important role in the perception of relative deprivation. The experience of relative deprivation arises when a person evaluates his or her group situation as being less fortunate than another group. The crucial aspect of this idea is that the outcome of the social comparison relates to the person's perception of reality and not necessarily to actual social reality (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Mynhardt, 2002).

A number of studies in South Africa suggest that the experience of relative deprivation plays an important role in shaping ethnic attitudes (Appelgryn, 1985; 1987; 1988; Bornman, 1988; Mynhardt, 2002; Van Dyk, 1988), and that relative deprivation based on the comparison of one's social group with other ethnic groups is a contributing factor to the personal evaluation of one's quality of life (Human Sciences Research Council, 1985).

Cross-cultural contact amongst students in South Africa may highlight significant differences between the cultural groups. These differences may be based on a number of social, economic or political factors, and may significantly influence students' attitudes towards other cultural groups. Given the vast differences in the political and economic positions of social groups in South Africa, the experience of relative deprivation amongst students may be an important factor shaping intergroup relations amongst students in South Africa.

### 3.4.3 The Social Identity Theory (SIT)

According to the Social Identity Theory, intergroup perceptions and relations can be explained in terms of three cognitive-motivational factors that underlie the development of social identity, namely, social categorization, social comparison and self-esteem management (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Hogg, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Social categorization involves the perceptual division of individuals into groups and the perception of belonging to a group that is distinct from other groups. This results in a tendency for people to exaggerate the similarities between members of the in-group, and to accentuate the differences between the in-group and the out-groups (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Hogg, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Social comparison involves the tendency for individuals to compare different social groups in terms of value-laden judgements, often with affective significance. Self-esteem management is a fundamental need to strive for positive social identification. According to this tenet, individuals strive to improve their self-esteem through improved relatedness to significant social groups (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Hogg, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Social Identity theorists propose that group memberships become internalised as part of the self-concept of the individual. The outcome of the process of social comparison thus has implications for an individual's self-concept (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Hogg, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Simon, Pantaleo & Mummendy (1995) maintain that the strength of group identifications will vary according to three factors, namely: the value assigned to temporary salient in-group features; the attractiveness of the in-group; and the awareness of the group receiving special treatment in the wider society. These collection of variables have been referred to as the subjective belief structures. These belief structures determine whether group membership contributes positively or negatively to an individual's social identity. If social comparison confers a high status to the in-group, its members will have a positive social identity. However, if the result of the social comparison is negative, the members of the in-group will have a negative social identity (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003).

Perceptions of group status are related to the hierarchical position of the groups in society with respect to politics and economics. This suggests that the outcomes of social comparisons for disadvantaged groups may confer to those groups a negative social identity. If the outcomes of social comparisons are

negative, it follows that the individuals belonging to the low status group will be motivated to achieve some type of change so as to gain a positive social identity.

Social Identity theorists suggest three main strategies in which an unsatisfactory social identity will motivate behaviour in an effort to gain positive social identity. These strategies are: social mobility, social creativity and social change. Social mobility refers to attempts to leave or to disassociate from the in-group, including actual and psychological attempts at decreased individuation with the in-group and increased similarity with the chosen out-group. Social creativity strategies involve attempts to alter elements of social comparisons to result in more favourable comparisons for the in-group, and social change strategies refer to direct competitions with the outgroup to produce real changes in the relative status of the competing groups (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004 ; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Hogg, 2003).

#### **3.4.3.1 A critical overview of the Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

The value of the Social Identity Theory is that it looks at intergroup phenomena at the analytic level of the social group. Intergroup attitudes are seen as broadly shared or consensual within social groups. The Social Identity Theory thus specifies the social parameters and normative patterns that give rise to particular social perceptions, attitudes and behaviours (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003).

Although the Social Identity Theory provides a framework for understanding the ways in which group membership and identification influence attitudes and behaviour, it has been criticized for neglecting the social context at a number of levels (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003).

Firstly, the Social Identity Theory is based on the findings of experimental research with artificially constituted groups. Research in naturalistic settings may yield different findings to those predicted by the Social Identity Theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003).

Secondly, the Social Identity Theory pays little attention to the dynamic interaction of psychological processes within a changing social context, and the ways in which identity is shaped and constrained by the social context (Campbell 1995). Group identities are dynamic and change over time, over generations, and in response to different modes of acculturation and intergroup relations (Padilla & Perez, 2003). In this regard, Hogg (2003) states that intergroup relationships in real life are more complex than SIT suggests, and are influenced by factors such as history, power, status and control.

In addition, the theory fails to account for the ideological processes that create and maintain power-relations and conditions of social dominance and oppression that give rise to various forms of status

hierarchies within a given social context (Foster, 1991; De la Rey, 1991). Given the political transitions taking place in South Africa, from a system of institutionalised racism to a new non-racial dispensation, socio-political, economic and ideological factors are a central to understanding intergroup relations in South Africa.

Based on a review of the theoretical and empirical literature of the Social Identity Theory, as applied and researched across cultures, Yuki (2003) argues that the tenets of the Social Identity Theory may not be operative across all cultural groups. Instead, they may depend on the type of perceptual processes underlying group-related orientations in different cultures. Yuki (2003) argues that the Social Identity Theory may be more applicable to those individuals who adopt an intergroup (relational) orientation where there is a concern for one's group standing or performance relative to that of other groups. It thus appears that there is a need for more cross-cultural research to identify the types of cultural perceptual processes underlying group-related attitudes and behaviours in different cultures. Given the vast cultural differences in South Africa, an understanding of the cultural perceptual processes underlying group-oriented behaviour and perceptions of other cultural groups are essential for understanding intergroup relations.

#### **3.4.3.2 Social identification and Individualism-Collectivism**

Acknowledging cultural influences on intergroup behaviour and attitudes is important considering their propensity to be involved in social perception. The implications of one aspect of cultural variability, individualism/ collectivism, will be discussed for the purposes of this study, as this powerful dimension has been given the most research attention.

Closely related to our identities are our selfconstruals. Cross-cultural theorists have identified variations of selfperceptions across cultures. Markus and Kitayama (1991) have conceptualised these differences in self-perceptions in terms of independent and interdependent selves. The interdependent self is reflected in Eastern/Asian Collectivism and is the view of the self as interdependent with others and as part of a social relationship. In terms of this conception of the self, an individual's self-concept is influenced by the degree to which one is able to adjust to certain important relationships, perform their assigned roles within a group, participate in ongoing group-relations and maintain the interdependence amongst individuals in a group (Matsumoto, 2000).

In contrast to the interdependent selfconcept characteristic of East/Asian Collectivism, Mwamwenda (1999) notes that members of Indigenous African cultural groups manifest embedded selves due to the social enmeshment in their cultural or social groups which typifies traditional African collectivism. In



terms of African collectivism, the embedded self is viewed as interdependent with the surrounding context, and the focus of individual experience is the “self-in-relation-to-the-other” (Mwamwenda, 1999: p.4). In terms of this conception, the self cannot be viewed in isolation, but in relation to other significant persons. The African self is viewed as meaningful and complete when it is viewed in terms of significant social relations. In traditional African cultures, individuals’ self-concepts are typically dependent on their symbiotic relationships with their significant others.

The independent self-concept, characteristic of Western thought, is reflected in an individualist value-orientation, and is the view of oneself as separate from and independent of others (Matsumoto, 2000). Integral to this conception of the self, is an emphasis on uniqueness and self-actualisation. The independent self-concept is premised on personal, internal attributes, individual ability, individual goal achievement and self-expression. These differences in self-perceptions have implications for the processes of social identification and intergroup perception and behaviour (Gudykunst, 1995).

Triandis (1988; 1995) notes that the importance of in-groups is one of the major differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. People in individualistic cultures have many specific in-groups, such as national, ethnic, religious and work groups, to which they belong simultaneously. Members of collectivistic cultures on the other hand usually belong to relatively few, valued in-groups. Because members of individualistic cultures tend to have many specific in-groups, it has been suggested that these groups are likely to have less influence on the perceptions and behaviours of individualists than members of collectivistic cultures who belong to relatively fewer in-groups (Gudykunst, 1995; Triandis, 1995).

Gudykunst (1995) notes that while the in-group may be the same in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, their influence may differ. In individualistic cultures, the in-group affects the behaviour of individuals in very specific circumstances, whilst in collectivist cultures the in-group affects behaviour in many different circumstances.

Triandis (1995) notes that in addition to the in-groups and outgroups, some groups are considered as neither in nor outgroups and individualists and collectivists are likely to differ in their behaviour towards these groups. In individualistic cultures in-groups are perceived as more heterogeneous than the outgroups, whereas in collectivistic cultures, in-groups are perceived as more homogeneous than the outgroups. Triandis (1995) attributes this to the social desirability of homogeneous in-groups in collectivistic societies.

The relative importance of social and personal identities are likely to differ amongst individuals with a collectivistic or individualistic orientation. Strong beliefs about in-group identification and loyalty are very likely to be perpetuated in the socialization processes of collectivistic cultures (Gallois, Giles, Jones, Cargile & Ota, 1995). Gudykunst (1995) notes that meeting the need for group inclusion is more important for members of collectivistic cultures than for individualistic cultures. Given the emphasis on the group, members of collectivistic cultures are most concerned with sustaining their interdependent self-construals and feeling secure in their social identities. In contrast, members of individualistic cultures are most concerned with sustaining their independent self-construals and feeling secure in their personal identities.

Members of individualistic cultures are thus more likely to use person-based information to predict the behaviour of others and their social behaviour is more likely to be influenced by their personal identifications. Members of collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, are more likely to use group-based information to predict the behaviour of others and their social behaviour is more likely to be influenced by their social identities (Gudykunst, 1995).

Gudykunst (1995) argues that because members of collectivistic cultures draw a strong distinction between the in-group and the out-groups, they tend not to empathize with members of out-groups. For strangers to be accepted in collectivistic cultures, they must accommodate their behaviour to members of the in-group. In individualistic cultures, members of the outgroups are also expected to accommodate their behaviour to a certain degree, but the expectation for accommodation is not as high as in collectivistic cultures. This is because individualistic cultures draw fewer distinctions between members of the in-group and the out-groups.

A tendency for members of collectivistic cultures to draw strong distinctions between members of the in-group and the out-group leads to a differentiation in how members of collectivistic cultures communicate and interact with members of out-groups compared to members of the in-group. Members of individualistic cultures are less likely to differ to the same extent in their interactions with members of out-groups (Gudykunst, 1995).

The emphasis on group memberships and relatively few in-groups in collectivistic cultures makes it easier for collectivists to isolate similarities and differences between in-groups and out-groups, and to categorise others on the same dimensions in which they categorise themselves. The focus on group-based information also leads members of collectivistic cultures to attribute the behaviour of others to their group membership more than members of individualistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1995). Members of collectivistic cultures are also more likely to see variability in the characteristics of out-groups than are

members of individualistic cultures (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Because members of individualistic cultures pay more attention to person-based information, they are more likely to recognise personal similarities and differences between themselves and others (Gudykunst, 1995).

The strong distinctions between the in-group and the out-group drawn by members of collectivistic cultures leads collectivists to have less contact with members of out-groups compared to members of individualistic cultures. Because members of the outgroup are viewed as different, there is more moral exclusiveness toward out-group members in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures. This leads members of collectivistic cultures to view relationships with out-groups as less intimate (Gudykunst, 1995).

An individualistic cultural-orientation on the other hand, is associated with an increase in moral inclusiveness towards members of the out-group, an increase in the quantity and quality of contact with out-groups, and an increase in the perceived intimacy of relationships with members of the out-group (Gudykunst, 1995).

People in individualistic cultures tend to be more universalistic than people in collectivistic cultures, that is, they are more likely to apply the same value standards to all individuals. In contrast, people in collectivistic cultures tend to be more particularistic, that is, the value standards that they apply to others differ depending on whether they are dealing with a member of the in-group or an out-group (Gudykunst, 1995).

These differences in self/group behaviour and perceptions between members of individualistic and collectivistic cultures highlight the importance of cultural values in the processes of social identity, social perceptions and intergroup relations. Given the variety of cultural groups on campus, students are likely to differ in terms of the degree to which they adhere to individualistic and collectivistic values. These value differences may give rise to vastly different group perceptions. It is thus important to identify these value differences and their relation towards specific intergroup perceptions.

### **3.5 Determinants of improved group perceptions**

The elimination of negative group perceptions, stereotypes and prejudice have been a preoccupation of psychologists for many years. Various approaches have been espoused in remedying the problem of prejudice. The Social Contact Hypothesis focuses on the improvement of intergroup relations and perceptions through the creation of ideal contact situations (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

### 3.5.1 The Social Contact Hypothesis

The idea of contact as an attitude-changing mechanism in social psychology holds that increased contact would provide individuals with opportunities to discover that in reality different groups often share the same basic attitudes and values (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

This assumption has been questioned on the account of research findings which indicate that contact does not always lead to positive attitude changes. Contact theorists expanded on their original hypothesis, arguing that for positive attitude change, contact must take place on an equal-status basis, groups must work interdependently towards common goals, the contact situation must allow for interpersonal interaction with members of the outgroup, and social norms which favour group equality must take place (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Whether positive relationships result from cross-cultural contact is largely determined by the nature of the contact. In contrast to superficial contact situations, contact which allows for the development of more intimate relationships between members of different cultural groups will assist in fostering positive attitudes towards other cultural groups (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).



A cooperative context is more likely to promote a process of acceptance while competitive and individualistic contexts are likely to give rise to hostility and rejection. Cooperative interaction requires "promotive" behaviours, such as assisting, helping, sharing and encouraging one another. Physical proximity and frequency of contact facilitate the establishment of intimate relations and the attainment of common goals. However, a high frequency of contact does not necessarily foster positive intercultural relations. Favourable norms which facilitate cultural tolerance are also important (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

Social contact theorists argue that for contact to serve as a factor in reducing prejudice, contact between cultural groups must be based on equal status between the groups (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002). Favourable attitudes towards other cultural groups are most likely to develop when members of all cultural groups occupy the same status. If they do not, their contact is most likely to be status-oriented rather than person-oriented (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003). A distinction has been made between equal status within the wider social context and equal status within the contact situation. This distinction is clearly important for South Africa where

extremely large differences in economic, educational, and social status still persist between the broad cultural groups (Mynhardt, 2002).

### **3.5.2 Limitations of the Contact Hypothesis**

Although researchers have found a great deal of support for the qualitative aspects of the Contact Hypothesis, others argue that the entire model is too simplistic. They point out that even when qualitative issues are taken into consideration, intergroup attitudes should not be described solely in terms of contact. Intergroup attitudes are complex and may comprise many factors (Segall et al., 1999; Smith & Bond, 1998).

The most consistent criticism of the Contact Hypothesis is that the permanence of the attitude changes may not have been established and may reflect surface changes and not norm changes (Mynhardt & Du Toit, 1991; Worchel et al., 2000). Positive attitude changes may be a temporary reaction and may not be generalised to members of other cultural groups as a whole.

A further criticism of the Contact Hypothesis is that some of the conditions specified are unrealistic. Objective status differentials within the contact situation may be eliminated, but the feasibility of creating equal psychological status amongst minority and majority groups based on status differentials in the wider social context is remote. The status and power differentials which exist in society lead to certain expectations regarding group members which may be more influential than contact (Mynhardt & Du Toit, 1991; Mynhardt, 2002; Worchel et al., 2000).

### **3.5.3 Models of decategorization, recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation**

An abiding problem in research evaluating the Contact Hypothesis has been how to promote the generalization of positive attitudes towards individuals to the cultural groups from which those individuals come. Three models of group categorization have attempted to address this issue. These are: decategorization, recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation models (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

The model of decategorization proposes that harmonious relations will ensure as people focus on the similarities that transcend group boundaries. This is based on the perspective that positive attitude changes can be achieved by replacing category-based interaction with interpersonal interaction. In contrast, the model of recategorization suggests that it is not common interests that unify people but a common group membership (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

The model of recategorization is based on the perspective that people cannot be divorced from their social identities, and that it is unrealistic to deny the influence of group memberships. It is maintained that the creation of superordinate, common categories relevant to the given social context will reduce the salience of other in-group-out-group distinctions (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

The third model (the mutual intergroup differentiation) is based on the argument that decreasing the importance of group boundaries may pose a threat to existing social identifications leading to increased in-group bias and sharp group boundaries. The objective of this model is to create an awareness of multiple group memberships which may coincide with those of others who are considered part of the out-group. The acknowledgement of multiple group memberships is aimed at encouraging individuals to cross-cut category distinctions and negate the importance of any one category as a source of intergroup comparison. This approach also advocates that subgroup identifications should be preserved and perceived threats to the integrity of a groups' identity should be minimized (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

#### **3.5.4 Contact and the theory of acculturation**

The concept of acculturation cannot be ignored in any study of cross-cultural relations if one wishes to understand the relations and attitudes of individuals from diverse communities. Theories of acculturation suggest that ethno-cultural groups usually change substantially as a result of extensive contact between two or more cultural groups. Cross-cultural contact may result in a number of changes both at the level of the group and at the level of the individual. Such changes include behavioural, language, religious and value changes amongst others (Berry et al., 1992; Segall et al., 1999).

Acculturation is regarded in general as the outcome of two dual processes involving cultural maintenance (to what extent cultural identifications and values are considered important, and their maintenance striven for), and contact and participation (to what extent cultural groups and their members become involved with other groups). These processes may have significant implication for the development of favourable attitude changes amongst acculturating groups (Berry et al., 1992; Segall et al., 1999).

### 3.6 Summary, conclusions and positioning of the present study

This chapter highlights the diverse perspectives that are usually evoked to explain intergroup relations. It is clear from this review that there are several different levels at which group attitudes can be analysed. Intra-individual explanations include frustration and aggression, authoritarianism and projection. Cognitive theories, such as those of attributions and social categorizations, focus on fundamental aspects of human cognition. These theories are however limited because of their tendency to ignore the role of situational factors and the relations between individuals or groups. These theories are also unable to account for the widespread uniformity of attitudes amongst members of the same cultural group.

Group-based explanations of intergroup attitudes include the Realistic-Conflict Theory, the Theory of Relative Deprivation and the Social Identity Theory. The Realistic-Conflict Theory regards attitudes in terms of the outcomes of conflicting group goals, and the Theory of Relative Deprivation concerns feelings of group deprivation based on the comparisons of one's group with those of others. Explanations based on conflicting interests and feelings of deprivation are however not sufficient to account for the widespread uniformity of attitudes amongst members of the same social group. Social Identity theorists maintain that in-group favouritism is based on the need for a positive social identity. Social identities are said to be maintained by making positively biased intergroup comparisons. Cross-cultural theorists regard the Social Identity Theory as limited in the sense that the processes described by the theory do not appear to operate in all groups. In this regard, group identifications and related processes of in-group favouritism may depend on prevailing levels of Individualism or Collectivism in the group (or its members), and their inclination to engage in intergroup comparisons.

The problem of how to change negative group perceptions has been a persistent dilemma in social research. Various approaches have been espoused in remedying this problem. These include the Contact Hypothesis and models of group categorizations. Finally, it is noted that acculturation is a significant factor that may influence perceptions of other cultural groups.

The perspective of this dissertation is to view intergroup attitudes as primarily a phenomenon originating in in-group processes. Intergroup attitudes are regarded as a socially shared orientation. That is to say, group members broadly agree in their perceptions of salient out-groups. This study also considers the role of cultural perceptual styles, specifically those of Individualism and Collectivism, on the nature of group relations and the resulting attitudes.

Group memberships and cultural identifications may be of particular relevance to intergroup relations and group attitudes amongst students in the present study. In the South African context, rigid group boundaries have been drawn on the basis of ethnic and cultural markers. Cultural group memberships thus provide individuals with the norms and boundaries that are responsible for producing particular forms of social behaviour, such as group solidarity, cohesiveness and group favouritism. This may be very vivid in the case of students living in close proximity to members of other cultural groups. In addition, it is likely that different perceptual styles relating to core cultural values, such as those of Individualism and Collectivism, and acculturative influences, may account for the variation in group-orientations and identifications, and the resulting patterns of intergroup attitudes amongst students in the present study. The following chapter provides a survey of the empirical findings in South Africa and in other countries that are related to the research topic.





## Chapter 4

### Overview of intergroup attitude research

#### 4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study is to compare intergroup attitudes across a broad range of cultural-orientation groups with one another, and to identify the relation between group attitudes and general cultural value-orientations (Individualism and Collectivism), as well as to identify the influence of gender, contact (resident vs. day-students), cultural and language group memberships on group attitudes and core cultural value-orientations (Individualism and Collectivism). This chapter provides a concise survey of the most relevant empirical findings related to this research topic, as located in South Africa and in other countries.

#### 4.2 Group attitudes and cultural variation

A wide range of local and international studies relating to intergroup attitudes have been documented. However, relatively few of these studies have sought to compare group attitudes across cultures, and to identify underlying cultural mechanisms responsible for the variation in group attitudes.

It has been suggested in the literature that the extent to which individuals focus on individualist or collectivist value-orientations is likely to determine the extent of group favouring biases. Members of collectivist cultures show a greater identification and commitment with their valued group affiliations. This may foster more negative emotions towards the out-group. Individualist cultures on the other hand, tend to treat outgroups more equally. This has been attributed to the relatively greater importance of in-group/ outgroup distinctions for the self-definition in collectivist cultures, compared to individualist cultures (Gudykunst, 1995; Matsumoto, 2000; Smith & Bond, 1998; Segall et al., 1999).

In keeping with this perspective, Yuki (2003) argues that there is virtually no support for the claim that people in collectivistic societies tend to show greater in-group favouritism than people in individualistic cultures. Moreover, some studies suggest that discrimination against out-groups and in-group favouritism may be more pronounced in individualistic cultures (Bond & Hewstone, 1988; Gudykunst, 1988; Wetherell, 1982; Yuki, 2003).

In this regard, speculations involving the effect of Individualism and Collectivism on intergroup behaviour and group favouring biases are limited in the sense that researchers often suggest that cultural

variations are the result of the assumed differences between the cultures in terms of Individualism and Collectivism. Unless researchers actually measure Individualism and Collectivism in their study, and found that the two cultures differed on this dimension, and found a significant correlation between these dimensions, and the attitude/ behavioural scores, the interpretation that the Individualism-Collectivism construct is responsible for the group differences is unwarranted (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999).

On this basis, Yuki (2003) proposes that the psychological mechanisms responsible for particular forms of group behaviour, specifically those relating to group identification and group favouritism, may differ amongst members of individualistic and collectivistic groups. The results of a survey of 122 Japanese and 126 American respondents, conducted by the author, provides support for this hypothesis. Yuki (2003) found that for Americans, in-group loyalty and identity with small and large groups were positively correlated with perceived intergroup comparisons (in-group homogeneity and in-group status). No such correlations were indicated for the Japanese respondents. Instead, in-group loyalty and identity evidenced by the Japanese respondents, were predicted by intra-group comparisons (the respondents' knowledge of the relational structure within the group, differences between group members, and feelings of personal connectedness with in-group members). This suggests that the same group behaviours in the two cultural groups are derived from different cognitive foundations and perceptual styles.

Reviews of experimental minimal group studies suggest that the correlation between group identification and in-group favouritism does not occur equally in all groups exposed to the same minimal group situations (Yuki, 2003; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Smith & Bond, 1998). These observations led Hinkle & Brown (1990) to speculate that the correlation between group identification and in-group bias would be more prevalent amongst individuals or groups who adopt a collectivistic (or allocentric) orientation as opposed to those who are more individualistically (or idiocentrically) inclined. This idea is based on observations and studies which suggest that group affiliations are more important for those individuals belonging to collectivistic cultures as opposed to those members of individualistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1995; Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis et al., 1988).

In this regard, Hinkle and Brown (1990) note that if a collectivistic orientation is a necessary condition for a significant correlation between the strength of group identification and in-group favouritism, it must be accompanied by a concern for intergroup comparisons. They referred to this as a relational-orientation, which refers to a type of orientation in which group comparisons are made in reference to the in-group and its outcomes in comparison with other groups and their outcomes. In contrast to this type of orientation, Hinkle and Brown (1990) suggest that a low correlation between strength of group identification and group favouritism may be more likely amongst individuals who adhere to an

autonomous-orientation in which group evaluations are made with reference to abstract standards, which typically do not implicate other groups. On the basis of this speculation, Hinkle and Brown (1990) proposed a taxonomy consisting of four basic types of groups or group members by crossing the individualistic-collectivistic dimensions with the autonomous-relational dimensions. This model predicts that group-favouritism will be most readily observed amongst collectivist groups with relational-orientations (Brown et al., 1992; Hinkle & Brown, 1990).

In order to investigate this assumption, Brown et al., (1992) conducted two investigations (laboratory minimal-group experiments) with psychology students at Miami University in the United States, and one field study with adolescents in the United Kingdom, to test the hypothesis that significant positive correlations between in-group identification and in-group bias would be more likely amongst those groups or individuals who adhere to a collectivistic and relational-orientation. The three studies required the participants to complete a questionnaire designed to measure individualistic and collectivistic orientations, autonomous and relational group-orientations, in-group identification and in-group favouritism. As expected, the results for each of the three studies indicated significant, positive correlations between identification and in-group favouritism for the participants with collectivist and relational-orientations, and a zero correlation between in-group identification and in-group favouritism for individualists with an autonomous-orientation. With regard to these findings, Brown et al. (1992) conclude that the prediction of group-related attitudes can be enhanced by recognising that group-orientations vary across different types of groups and group members.

These studies are limited by the fact that they are based on respondents within Western individualistic societies. Similar studies conducted in non-Western, collectivistic societies may produce completely different results. In addition, these studies are limited in the sense that they concern group distinctions that are based on experimentally manipulated groups. Group distinctions based on widespread social identifications, such as those of cultural group membership, may be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the type of orientations implicated in these studies.

Given the vast cultural differences amongst the population groups in South Africa, variations in group-related orientations and perceptual styles might give rise to vastly different patterns of group identifications and related group attitudes amongst the broad cultural groups. Social identification and group attitude studies have indicated a number of broad trends in group identification and related attitudes amongst the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa. African cultural groups generally indicate a lower ethnic identification in comparison with Western-Afrikaans cultural groups, and Western-English cultural groups indicate the lowest ethnic identifications in comparison to the Western-Afrikaans and African cultural groups. In addition, a strong ethnic identification amongst the Western-

Afrikaans group is significantly and positively associated with a greater need to protect the identity of the in-group, less uncertainty and ambivalence regarding group membership, and a positive self-esteem. On the other hand, self-esteem and ethnic identification amongst the African groups are significantly negatively correlated. For the Western-English group, no significant correlations were indicated for ethnic identification and self-esteem (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996; Bornman, 1995; 1999; Bornman & Mynhardt, 1992; Mynhardt, 2002).

These findings are in accordance with the Social Identity Theory, which predict that social identifications and related self-esteem are related to the relative status of the in-group in the wider social environment. As a result of their previously disadvantaged political position, the social group status of African cultural groups in South Africa is generally lower than that of the Western cultural groups. This may contribute to the negative relation between group identification and self-esteem for the African group. Social identifications based on ethno-cultural group membership thus may not contribute positively towards the self-esteem of African group members (Mynhardt, 2002). A strong positive correlation between group identification and a greater willingness to protect the identity of the in-group amongst the Western-Afrikaans group is in line with the Social Identity Theory, which predicts a positive relation between strength of group identification and in-group favouritism.

These findings may also suggest that the consistent differences in the patterns of group identifications amongst the broad cultural groups are indicative of cultural variations in group-related orientations and perceptual styles. Given the vast cultural differences amongst the population groups in South Africa, different cognitive orientations and perceptual styles underlying group-related orientations and behaviour are likely to exist between the broad cultural groups.

### **4.3 Contact and group perceptions**

As indicated in the previous chapter, contact as a means of improving group attitudes is a widely researched approach. Given the multicultural nature of the South African society, and the desegregation of the public institutions and organizations, contact as a means of positive attitude change is of particular relevance to intergroup relations in South Africa (Mynhardt, 2002).

Studies suggest that in order to facilitate favourable attitude changes, the contact situation must be made as favourable as possible. Factors such as institutional support for the contact, frequency, duration, closeness, equal status, and co-operative activity are found to significantly influence the extent of positive attitude changes (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2004; Baron & Byrne, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002).

South African studies have provided mixed results for the effect of contact on attitude improvement. These studies have highlighted a number of additional factors that appear to influence the effect of contact. These include: the experience of contact, the contentious nature of the contact, and the relative status of the groups within the wider social context (Mynhardt, 2002).

Different cultural groups in South Africa have been found to differ in terms of their experiences of contact with other groups, and the experience of contact, as perceived by the various groups, has been identified as a major determinant of attitudes towards out-groups (Mynhardt, 2002; Holtman, 2002).

Mynhardt (2002) notes that contact in schools and universities are generally less successful than other forms of contact. He attributes this to the contentious nature of the contact in these situations. During the previous constitution in South Africa, school contact took place in a segregated society. This implied a greater demand for social change.

The status of the groups within the contact situation, as well as in the wider social context, have been identified as important variables for the improvement of group attitudes. Generally, contact appears to increase the awareness of social identifications amongst members of low status groups in the South African society. These findings suggest that equal status within contact situations are difficult to achieve unless they are reflected in the social structure of the wider social context (Mynhardt, 2002; Mynhardt & Du Toit, 1991).



Bradnum, Nieuwoudt & Tredoux (1993) conducted an investigation to determine whether contact with other cultural groups in a multicultural environment, compared to a segregated environment, would have more positive effects on the attitudes of other cultural groups. They compared the attitudes of samples of school children in integrated and segregated schools in South Africa, with children from Zimbabwean schools, who had experienced intercultural contact for many years. Bradnum, Nieuwoudt & Tredoux (1993) expected to find higher levels of prejudice amongst the South African children who had experienced less contact with other cultural groups in comparison with children from Zimbabwe. Their results did not confirm their expectations. They found high levels of prejudice amongst the Zimbabwean children and minimal levels of prejudice amongst the South African children. Certain methodological restrictions within the study may have contributed to the unexpected findings. The authors noted that the South African sample of children attended schools where 80% to 100% of the student population were from a Western cultural-orientation (White). In such situations, contact with other cultural groups would be minimal, and would thus not provide an opportunity for the generalization of positive attitude changes to the out-group as a whole (Bradnum, Nieuwoudt & Tredoux, 1993).

Jocelyn (1991) conducted a study of intergroup relations amongst students within the residences at the University of Natal. The author found that the longer students from a Western cultural-orientation (White English-speaking students) were in a student residence with other African students, the less willing they were to have contact with members of African cultural groups. This implied that close contact, as experienced within the university residences, actually decreased the readiness of the Western students to have contact with African students.

These findings provide little support for the contention that cross-cultural contact situations within integrated, multicultural situations, would be characterised by lower levels of prejudice in comparison with segregated situations. In the present study, cross-cultural contact may have a significant influence on the group attitudes and perceptions of students. It is expected that students within the residences experience a greater frequency and intimacy of contact with members of other cultural groups, and as result, their attitudes are likely to differ from students who are not in the residences (day-students). Contact between the cultural groups within the residences may also allow for a greater degree of acculturation amongst students within the residences compared to non-resident students. This may impact on the group identifications and group attitudes of students within the residences.

#### **4.4 Intergroup attitude studies in South Africa**

A vast amount of research has been conducted looking at intergroup attitudes of South Africans over the past 60 years. Since this covers a vast amount of literature, only the variables directly related to this study will be discussed.

Attitude studies in South Africa suggest that gender may be an important source of variation in an individual's perception of other cultural groups. In some South African studies, females were found to have less favourable attitudes towards out-groups than males (Nieuwoudt & Nel, 1975). Other studies suggested no significant differences between male and female respondents (Foster & Nel, 1991).

A variable that has been found in previous studies to have the most pervasive effect on group attitudes is that of cultural group membership, as expressed in terms of previous official ethnic and language group categories. It is possible that this is a result of the historical segregation of the groups in South Africa and the subsequent emphasis on group differences.

These studies have documented a number of broad trends in group attitudes that have remained relatively consistent over time. All cultural groups provide the most positive evaluations of their own in-group. Western English-speaking groups in South Africa are consistently less ethnocentric than Western

Afrikaans-speaking groups (Appelgryn, 1987; Bornman, 1988; 1995; HSRC, 1985; Mynhardt, 1980, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983; Nieuwoudt, Plug & Mynhardt, 1977; Spangenberg & Nel, 1983; Thiele, 1988).

English and Afrikaans-speaking Western groups provide the most positive evaluations for both Western cultural groups, (with their own group rated more favourably), and provide the most negative evaluations of the African cultural groups. Indian/ Asian cultural groups tend to be rated in a position between that of the African and Western cultural groups, in order of favourability, whether rated by the Western or by African group.

Conversely, African and Indian/Asian groups differentiate clearly in their evaluations of the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural groups, providing the most negative evaluations of Afrikaners and the most positive evaluations of the Western-English group (rated second to the in-group). These groups thus reciprocate the negative out-group attitudes of Afrikaners, but tend to be more favourably disposed toward the Western-English cultural groups (HSRC, 1985; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983). In some studies, the African groups evaluated the attributes of the Western-English cultural group more favourably than those of any other groups, including the African groups (Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983).

In a multinational study of intergroup perceptions in South Africa, it was found that all population categories differentiated perceptually between the cultural groups (HSRC 1985). Using a measure of social distance, respondents were asked to give a graphic representation of where they placed the different cultural groups in relation to themselves. The results indicated that English and Afrikaans-speaking Western-oriented groups regarded themselves as closest (more similar) to one another, and African cultural groups as being furthest away from them with Indian/Asian groups half way in between.

African and Indian groups differentiated clearly between the Afrikaans and English-speaking Western-oriented groups and regarded the Western-Afrikaans group as being furthest removed from themselves. These patterns of intergroup attitudes are almost identical to those reported by Nieuwoudt & Plug (1983) and the HSRC (1985) investigation.

Similar patterns of attitudes to those reported above have been found in a nationwide study of ethnic stereotypes conducted by the HSRC from 1973 to 1985. Non-Western groups were given the most negative stereotypes as viewed by the Western-English and Western-Afrikaans groups. The Western-English group however appeared to be more tolerant in their perceptions of the Non-Western groups than the Western-Afrikaans group. The African and Indian groups provided the most favourable

evaluations of their own groups in relation to all out-groups and held more favourable stereotypes of the Western-English group than of the Western-Afrikaans group.

The results of these studies suggest that intergroup attitudes are widely and consistently held amongst members of the same cultural groups in South Africa. It appears that group attitudes in South Africa have begun to assume a normative character. This norm could inhibit positive attitude changes (HSRC, 1985). Furthermore, the results indicate that there is more differentiation than convergence in the patterns of group perceptions (HSRC, 1985). This may be due to the fact that groups have little experience with other cultures and thus have little understanding of their values, perceptual styles and group-orientations.

Regarding the above findings, it needs to be born in mind that contact with other cultural groups, especially contact between the Western and African cultural groups, was limited during the time of these investigations. Educational policies explicitly discouraged contact with other cultural groups. It followed therefore that attitudes and perceptions of other cultural groups were not the result of first-hand experience. Individuals mainly experienced second-hand exposure with members of other cultural groups and intergroup perceptions were formed on the basis of this. Indirect forms of contact, such as the media, served to reinforce existing group stereotypes and vast distances between the cultural groups. Furthermore, the nature of direct contact with members of other cultural groups was usually of an impersonal nature. Groups interacted with one another mainly in clearly defined role situations. Such contact did not allow for the development of an objective understanding of the other group (HSRC, 1985).

It is hoped that the desegregation of the South African society, following the new political constitution, may foster positive attitude changes amongst the broad cultural groups in South Africa. In the present study, it is expected that contact amongst the broad cultural groups may be less contentious and impersonal to that experienced during the previous constitution. This study thus provides a valuable opportunity to identify whether changes in the wider political and social environment in South Africa may foster positive changes in the patterns of group attitudes amongst students.

A limitation of previous group attitude studies in South Africa is that the majority of these studies have focused on the attitudes of single ethno-cultural groups towards a target group, or towards a number of target groups. Only a handful of these studies have investigated the attitudes of the broad cultural groups in relation to one another (Foster and Nel, 1991). Such an exclusive focus on single ethno-cultural groups gives us only part of what we need to know in order to understand the relationships between the cultural groups in South Africa.



A further critique of previous studies in South Africa is that cultural groups are often treated as independent variables in research design and data analysis. Such studies are limited to the association between cultural group membership and attitude scores. These studies are thus unable to account for the type of psychological processes that are responsible for producing different patterns of attitudes amongst the broad cultural groups. Given the vast cultural differences amongst the South African population groups, a study of the underlying value-orientations and perceptual styles within and across the broad cultural groups may be valuable for identifying the different psychological mechanisms responsible for the variation of group attitudes across cultures.

#### **4.5 Conclusions and positioning of the present study**

It is against the background of research already done in the field of intergroup relations in South Africa that the present investigation will be carried out. This study will attempt to fill some of the gaps that existing studies of intergroup relations have ignored.

It is apparent that there is a need for more cross-cultural studies of group attitudes and intergroup behaviours. Local research is limited in the sense that these studies have mostly focused on the attitudes of single target groups. South Africa provides an ideal setting for an investigation of the cultural differences underlying group perceptions. It would thus seem necessary to identify dimensions of cultural variations that may account for the differences in the patterns of attitudes amongst the broad cultural groups in South Africa.

As noted in this review, cross-cultural studies highlight the importance of cultural perceptual styles and group-related orientations on the nature of group perceptions. In this regard, the dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism have the potential to provide a useful way of describing different cultural groups and group members in terms of their concern with social identity-based intergroup comparisons.

The dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism may thus provide a means of identifying underlying cultural differences between the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa, that are responsible for producing particular forms of group attitudes and behaviours. However, given the paucity of research in the field of Individualism and Collectivism in South Africa, it would appear necessary to explore the patterns of individualistic and collectivistic attitudes amongst the broad cultural groups before investigating the relation between these cultural dimensions and group attitudes. Once the patterns of individualistic and collectivistic attitudes amongst the cultural groups are carefully described, tentative theoretical formulations linking these dimensions with group attitudes can proceed.

Given the lack of clear research on the effects of Individualism and Collectivism on group perceptions and the limited studies of individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations amongst the population groups in South Africa, the aim of this study is largely exploratory. In line with the theoretical and empirical review, it is expected that the type of perceptual-orientations central to Western cultures, are based on individualistic values, and that these perceptual-orientations are central to the perceptions of Western cultural groups. In a similar manner, it is expected that the type of perceptual-orientations central to Non-Western cultures, are based on collectivistic values, and that these perceptual-orientations are central to the perceptions of Non-Western cultural groups (Gudykunst, 1995). It is thus hypothesised that Individualism would be significantly, and positively correlated with perceptions of Western (individualist) cultures, and that Collectivism would be significantly correlated with perceptions of Non-Western (collectivistic) cultures. One of the central aims of this study is to investigate this hypothesis.

The importance of identifying optimal cross-cultural contact situations has been highlighted in the literature. The effect of contact on the nature of group perceptions in South Africa is of particular significance given the increasing diversity of the South African society. This study provides a valuable opportunity to study different contact situations and their implications for group perceptions amongst students. In accordance with the Contact Hypothesis and research studies relating to this topic, it is expected that the greater frequency and intimacy of contact amongst students within the residences, compared to non-resident students, will give rise to more favourable group perceptions. Contact may also influence the patterns of individualistic and collectivistic values amongst students through the process of acculturation. In accordance with this hypothesis, this study will investigate the differences in the group attitudes and value-orientations (Individualism and Collectivism) amongst students in the residences compared to the day-students.

In conclusion, this study aims to contribute to an understanding of intergroup attitudes, and the cultural variables that are implicated in the perceptions of other groups, by exploring group attitudes, core cultural values (Individualism and Collectivism), and the correlations between the attitudes and values. This study also aims to investigate the effects of related attitudinal variables (gender, contact, cultural group membership and language) on group attitudes and core cultural value-orientations.

## Chapter 5: Research Methodology

### 5.1 Statement of the problem

Cross-cultural relations comprise one of the most persuasive and problematic issues worldwide. This sensitive topic is of particular relevance to contemporary South Africa where rapid transformations in cross-cultural relations have been occurring over the past few years.

A number of research studies have been conducted looking at the intergroup attitudes of South Africans over the past 60 years. The majority of these studies have focused on the social perceptions of single cultural groups in terms of their attitudes towards their own and various outgroups (Foster & Nel, 1991). The generalizability of these research studies can thus be questioned in terms of the representation of the broad cultural groups in South Africa. Furthermore, no studies have been located in the literature that have addressed the influence of underlying cultural values and acculturation on the perceptions of one's own and other cultural groups.

Of particular interest to cross-cultural relations in South Africa, are the ways in which the diverse cultures evaluate the broad cultural groups with whom they are in contact, including their own cultural group. In addition, the vast cultural differences that exist between the respective population groups warrants the investigation of their differential individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations, and the degree to which these values are related to the perceptions of their respective cultural groups.

### 5.2 Research objectives

In accordance with the problem statement as mentioned above, the aim of this research is largely exploratory. The specific objectives of the study will be to explore intergroup attitudes and core cultural values (Individualism and Collectivism), and certain related variables, amongst resident and non-resident psychology students at the Rand Afrikaans University.

More specifically, the aims of this study are to clarify the relation between cultural perceptual style (Individualism and Collectivism as core value-orientations), gender, contact (resident versus non-resident or day students), cultural group membership/orientation, language and intercultural attitudes.

### **5.3 Research Hypotheses and postulates**

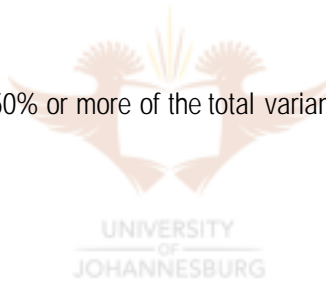
The following section refers to the hypotheses and postulates that were formulated in accordance with the research goals, as well as the motivation for the choice of each postulate and hypothesis. In order to determine the suitability of the scales as a measure of core cultural values and intercultural attitudes, three postulates, referring to the construct validity of each dependent measure, have been constructed.

In accordance with the problem statement and research objectives indicated above, a general null-hypothesis and alternative-hypothesis is provided which pertains to each major independent variable in this study. Where more than one variable is involved in the hypothesis testing, separate statistical tests for each one implies specific hypotheses for each of those variables. The expected finding for each hypothesis is indicated by means of an asterisk (\*) placed to the left of the relevant hypothesis.

#### **5.3.1 Postulate 1**

##### **5.3.1.1 Postulate 1.1**

A single factor solution explains 50% or more of the total variance of the Individualism Scale (IS) scores of the total sample.



##### **5.3.1.2 Rationale**

In order to ensure the construct validity of the IS items, the total variance of the IS scores are expected to be explained largely by individualistic value-orientations and therefore by one significant major factor.

##### **5.3.2.1 Postulate 1.2**

A single factor solution explains 50% or more of the total variance in the Collectivism Scale (CS) scores of the total sample.

##### **5.3.2.2 Rationale**

In order to ensure the construct validity of the CS items, the total variance of the scores are expected to be explained largely by collectivistic value-orientations and therefore by one significant major factor.

### 5.3.3.1 Postulate 2

A single factor solution explains 50% or more of the variance in the Semantic Differential Scale (SDS) attitude scores of the total sample. This postulate holds for each of the five sets of SDS attitude scores for the cultural groups included in the research questionnaire.

### 5.3.3.2 Rationale

Since the Semantic Differential Scale was designed to measure perceptions of each of the five broad cultural groups respectively, it was expected that the total variance of the scores for each separate SDS data set would be explained largely by one significant major factor, to ensure perceptual coherence and therefore the construct validity of each scale.

### 5.3.4.1 Hypothesis 1

H<sub>01</sub> : There is no statistically significant difference between the male and female scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

\*H<sub>a1</sub> : There is a statistically significant difference between the male and female scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

### 5.3.4.2 Rationale

Gender is an important source of social identity that may have an important influence on individuals' perceptions of their own and other cultural groups. For this reason, gender has been included as a dependent variable in the present study. In some South African studies of cultural group attitudes, gender differences have been identified as a significant source of variation on individuals' attitude scores. Females were found to have less favourable attitudes towards other cultural groups than males (Nieuwoudt & Nel, 1975; Foster & Nel, 1991). Other studies have found no substantial differences between males and females. In the present study, it is expected that gender will provide a significant

source of variation on the participants' attitude scores towards each of the five cultural groups respectively.

It is also expected that gender will provide a significant source of variation on the participants' individualistic and collectivistic value scores. This is based on the Individualism/Collectivism literature that predicts a higher collectivistic orientation amongst females and a higher individualistic orientation amongst males (Triandis, 1995).

### 5.3.5.1 Hypothesis 2

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between the resident students and the day (non-resident) students' scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

\*H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the resident students and the day (non-resident) students' scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

### 5.3.5.2 Rationale

Membership of a student residence is expected to be an important source of influence on the participants' attitudes towards the respective cultural groups. This expectation has been drawn from the contact hypothesis which suggests that contact with members of other cultural groups is likely to have a more positive influence on attitudes towards out-groups, if the contact is of sufficient frequency, duration, and closeness to permit the development of meaningful relationships with members of the other groups concerned (Aronson et al., 2004; Mynhardt, 2002). In the present study, it is expected that the student residences provide contact situations with a greater acquaintance potential that forms a necessary precondition for the disconfirmation of negative stereotypes of the out-groups. It is thus hypothesised that the participants that are part of a student residence will have significantly more favourable attitudes towards the various cultural groups than the students that are part of a student day-house.

The greater frequency and intensity of contact amongst students within the residences compared to the day-students, is also expected to have a significant influence on the participants' individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations. This is in line with the theory of acculturation that suggests that extensive intercultural contact may result in value acculturation (Segall et al., 1999; Berry et al., 1992). It is expected that the participants within the residences will differ significantly from the participants within the day-houses in terms of their individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations.

### 5.3.6.1 Hypothesis 3

H<sub>03</sub>: There are no statistically significant differences between the Indigenous-African, the combined Middle-Eastern/Muslim and Indian/Asian groups, as well as the Western-English, Western-Afrikaans and Westernised-African groups' scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

\*H<sub>a3</sub>: There are statistically significant differences between the Indigenous African, the combined Middle-Eastern/Muslim and Indian/Asian groups, as well as the Western-English, Western-Afrikaans and Westernised-African groups' scores in respect of the following variables:

- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
- ii) The IS and CS scores separately.

### 5.3.6.2 Rationale

The literature on the Social Identity Theory asserts that in a situation such as South Africa, where strong boundaries exist between the diverse cultural groups, group memberships and cultural group identifications provide an important source of influence in the attitudes of individuals towards their own and other cultural groups. This theory is supported by a number of group attitude studies in South Africa, which have reported significant, consistent differences in the group attitudes of the broad cultural-orientation groups (Bornman, 1995, Mynhardt, 2002; Thiele, 1988; Plug & Nieuwoudt, 1983). It is thus expected that the participants within the present study will differ significantly from one another in their evaluations of the respective cultural groups with regard to the effect of cultural group membership/orientation.

It is also expected that the participants within the present study will differ significantly from one another in their individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations with regard to the effects of their cultural group membership/orientation. Cross-cultural studies of work-related values have identified significant differences between diverse cultural groups in respect of their individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations (Hofstede, 1980; Masumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995). The general finding with regard to the cultural groups in the present study, is that members of an Indigenous African, Middle-Eastern or Asian/Indian cultural group are more collectivistic than members of a Western cultural group, and members of a Western cultural group are more individualistic than members of a Middle-Eastern, African or Asian/Indian cultural group. It is thus expected that the individualistic value scores of the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English groups will be significantly higher than the individualistic value scores of the Middle-Eastern, Asian/Indian and African (Indigenous and Westernised-African) cultural groups, and that the collectivistic value scores of Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural groups will be significantly lower than the collectivistic value scores of the Middle-Eastern, Asian/Indian and African cultural groups.

#### 5.3.7.1 Hypothesis 4

- Ho<sub>4</sub> : There are no statistically significant differences between the Afrikaans, English and African language speakers' scores with regard to the following variable:
- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
  - ii) The IS and CS scores separately.
- \*Ha<sub>4</sub> : There are statistically significant differences between the Afrikaans, English and African language speakers' scores with regard to the following variables:
- i) The SDS attitude scores towards Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim), and African-oriented cultural groups respectively.
  - ii) The IS and CS scores separately.



### 5.3.7.2 Rationale

A significant variable that has been consistently found in previous attitude studies to have an important effect on attitudes towards the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa, is that of culture as expressed through language (Bornman, 1995; Mynhardt, 2002; Thiele, 1988; Plug & Nieuwoudt, 1983). Similarly, language may be an important source of cultural variation of individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations. In the present study, it is expected that the Afrikaans and English language groups will have significantly higher Individualism scores, and significantly lower Collectivism scores than African language speakers. This expectation is based on the assumption that Afrikaans and English language speakers form part of a Western cultural-orientation that is predominantly individualistic, and that African language speakers form part of an African cultural-orientation that is predominantly collectivistic (Hofstede, 1984; Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995).

### 5.3.8.1 Hypothesis 5

H<sub>05</sub>: There are no statistically significant correlations between the IS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural-orientation groups for the total subject sample.

\*H<sub>a5</sub>: There are statistically significant correlations between the IS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural-orientation groups for the total subject sample.

### 5.3.8.2 Hypothesis 6


H<sub>06</sub>: There are no statistically significant correlations between the CS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern and African cultural-orientation groups for the total subject sample.

\*H<sub>a6</sub>: There are statistically significant correlations between the CS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern and African cultural-orientation groups for the total subject sample.

### 5.3.8.3 Rationale

The rationale for **hypothesis 5 and 6** are based on the assumption that the type of perceptual processes underlying the perceptions of Western cultural groups, are relative to core cultural values that predominate amongst Western cultural-orientation groups, viz. Individualism, and that the type of perceptual processes underlying the perceptions of Non-Western cultural groups, are relative to core values that predominate amongst Non-Western cultural-orientation groups, viz. Collectivism. Furthermore, it is expected that acculturation, in terms of an adoption of an individualistic or collectivistic value-orientation characteristic of the other cultural group, may result in a more favourable attitude of the other cultural group, and thus a higher attitude score. This assumption of shared values through acculturation is largely speculative. Given the central role of cultural perceptual processes and core cultural values (Individualism and Collectivism) on the perception of and orientation toward the in-group (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998; Yuki, 2003), and the influence of value acculturation on the perceptions of other groups (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999), an understanding of the relative influence of Individualistic and collectivistic values on group attitudes appears invaluable.

## 5.4 Method



Over a two-month period, data was collected from 541 first-and second-year psychology students, using a questionnaire that was designed specifically for the present study. This section of the dissertation will describe in detail the sample of the participants who participated in the research, the overall design and procedures of the project, the data collection, the instruments which were administered, and the steps that were utilised in the analysis of the resulting data.

### 5.4.1 Sample

The target population for this study were South African university students enrolled at RAU. In order to obtain a large sample size and to produce comparable samples from various faculties of study, and across the broad cultural groups at RAU, volunteer students from first and second year psychology related courses from most of the faculties were obtained to participate in the study. The accessible population consisted of 541 participants. Pertinent demographic data for the participants may be found in **Tables 1 to Table 8**.

### 5.4.1.1 Age

Table 5.1.a Frequency distribution of the sample according to age in complete years

Age in years	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
17	2	.4	.4	.4
18	79	14.6	14.6	15.0
19	223	41.2	41.3	56.3
20	129	23.8	23.9	80.2
21	45	8.3	8.3	88.5
22	21	3.9	3.9	92.4
23	9	1.7	1.7	94.1
24	8	1.5	1.5	95.6
25	4	.7	.7	96.3
26	5	.9	.9	97.2
27	4	.7	.7	98.0
28	2	.4	.4	98.3
30	1	.2	.2	98.5
31	2	.4	.4	98.9
32	2	.4	.4	99.3
33	1	.2	.2	99.4
39	1	.2	.2	99.6
42	1	.2	.2	99.8
49	1	.2	.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	540	99.8	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	1	.2		

**Table 5.1.a** indicates the raw data pertaining to the frequency distribution of the participants according to age in complete years. The ages of the sample ranged between 17 and 49. Approximately **80%** of the sample were between the ages of 18 and 20. **Table 5.1.b** was subsequently constructed to provide a frequency distribution of age according to two general age-groups, viz. 19 years and younger, and 20 years and older.

**Table 5.1.b** Frequency distribution of the sample according to two broad age categories.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	<b>19 years and younger</b>	304	56.2	56.3	56.3
	<b>20 years and older</b>	236	43.6	43.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	540	99.8	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>		1	.2		
<b>Total</b>		541	100.0		

**Table 5.1.b** indicates the ages of the respondents classified in terms of two broad age groups, viz. 19 years and younger, and 20 years and older. The research sample appeared to be relatively equally representative of both age groups. Approximately **56%** of the participants were 19 years and younger, and approximately **43%** of the participants were 20 years and older.

#### 5.4.1.2 Gender

**Table 5.2** Frequency distribution of the sample according to gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Male</b>	104	19.2	19.2	19.2
<b>Female</b>	437	80.8	80.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	541	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.2** indicates that the research sample was not equally representative of both male and female students. Only **19.2%** of the sample population were male and **80.8 %** of the sample population were female. This finding is in line with many psychological research studies making use of volunteer students, and may also indicate a greater proportion of female Psychology students in general.

### 5.4.1.3 Academic year of study

Table 5.3.a Frequency distribution of the sample according to academic year of study

	Frequency	Percent %
1st year	320	59.4%
2nd year	188	34.9%
3rd year	21	3.9%
4th year	7	1.3%
5th year	2	.4%
6th year	1	.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 5.3.a indicates that the majority of the sample were in their first academic year of study (59.4%). Only 6% of the sample enrolled for Psychology I or II, were actually in a third or post-graduate year of study. It is necessary to note that those students who indicated that they were in a fourth, fifth or sixth year of study may not necessarily be post-graduate students. The number of academic years of study may be more indicative of the historical number of years of study rather than level of study. Table 5.3.b was subsequently constructed to provide a frequency distribution of academic year of study according to two general categories, viz. 1<sup>st</sup> year, and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, or more senior student.

Table 5.3.b Frequency distribution of the sample according to academic year of study (recoded)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1st year	320	59.1	59.4	59.4
	2nd year and longer	219	40.5	40.6	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Missing		2	.4		
<b>Total</b>		<b>541</b>	<b>100.0</b>		

**Table 5.3.b** indicates the frequency distribution of the sample according to 1<sup>st</sup> academic year of study and 2<sup>nd</sup> year and longer. As only a small number of respondents indicated that they were in a third or postgraduate year of study, these respondents were combined into a single category with the second year students. Approximately **60%** of the research sample indicated that they were in their first academic year of study and approximately **40%** of the research sample indicated that they were in a second, third or post-graduate year of study.

#### 5.4.1.4 Faculty of study

**Table 5.4.a** Frequency distribution of the sample according to faculty of study

	Frequency	Percent %
Faculty of Arts	406	75.5%
Faculty of Business Sciences	23	4.3%
Faculty of Law	15	2.8%
Faculty of Nursing and Education	54	10.0%
Faculties of Science and Engineering	40	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 5.4.a** provides a frequency distribution of the sample according to faculty of study. Approximately **76%** of the sample were registered within the Faculty of Arts, and approximately **24%** of the sample were registered within one of the other faculties. **Table 5.4.b** was thus subsequently constructed to provide a frequency distribution of the sample according to two broad categories of study, namely: Faculty of Arts and other.

**Table 5.4.b** Frequency distribution of the sample according to faculty of study (recoded)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Faculty of Arts</b>	406	75.0	75.5	75.5
	<b>Other Faculties</b>	132	24.4	24.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	538	99.4	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>		3	.6		
<b>Total</b>		541	100.0		

**Table 5.4.b** indicates the frequency distribution of the sample according to those registered within the Faculty of Arts, and those registered within one of the other faculties. The sample distribution was not equally representative of students in all the faculties at RAU. The majority of the respondents were registered within the Faculty of Arts (**75.5%**), and a relatively small proportion of respondents were registered within another faculty (**24.5%**). However, these were the only volunteer Psychology students from other faculties that could be accessed through their registration in more than one faculty.

#### 5.4.1.5 Resident students vs. day-students

**Table 5.5** Frequency distribution of the sample according to resident-students and day-students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Resident</b>	98	18.1	18.8	18.8
	<b>Day-student</b>	423	78.2	81.2	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	521	96.3	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>		20	3.7		
<b>Total</b>		541	100.0		

**Table 5.5** indicates the frequency distribution of the sample according to whether they are a resident or a non-resident (day-student) at RAU. The majority of the sample were day-students (**81.2%**), and a relatively small proportion of the sample indicated that they were resident students at RAU (**18.8%**).

#### 5.4.1.6 Nationality

**Table 5.6** Frequency distribution of the sample according to nationality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	<b>South African</b>	521	96.3	96.3	96.3
	<b>Other</b>	20	3.7	3.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	541	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.6** indicates the sample was predominantly South African (**96.3%**). Only **3.7 %** of the sample were not South African.

#### 5.4.1.7 Cultural -group membership/orientation

In order to classify the broad cultural groups in the present study, the respondents were asked to indicate with which broad cultural-orientation group viz. Western, Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and African, they identified with the most. This, together with the respondents' home/ first learned language, was used as an indication of the respondents' cultural-group membership/ cultural-orientation. In order to incorporate a group of respondents who identified themselves with a Western cultural-orientation, yet they spoke an African language as a first language, a new variable was created. This was referred to as the Westernised-African group. As only a small proportion of the respondents identified with a Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural-orientation, these respondents were classified together with the Indian/Asian group. The final cultural-orientation groups included in the analysis were: Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Indian/Asian, Indigenous-African and Westernised-African groups.

**Table 5.7 Frequency distribution of the sample according to cultural group membership/orientation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Indigenous-African	104	19.2	19.4	19.4
	Middle-Eastern/Indian	61	11.3	11.4	30.7
	Western-English	187	34.6	34.8	65.5
	Western-Afrikaans	138	25.5	25.7	91.2
	Westernised-African	47	8.7	8.8	100.0
	Total	537	99.3	100.0	
Missing		4	.7		
Total		541	100.0		

**Table 5.7** indicates that the study population consisted of subjects belonging to the five cultural-orientation groups. The majority of the sample consisted of Western-English (**34.8%**), Western-Afrikaans (**25.7%**) and Indigenous-African (**19.4%**) cultural groups, and a relatively smaller proportion of the sample consisted of Westernised-African (**8.8%**) and Indian/Asian (**11.4 %**) cultural groups.



### 5.4.1.8 Language

The first/home language groups included in the analyses were African, English and Afrikaans-speaking groups. As only a small number of students indicated that they spoke an Indian/Asian or Middle-Eastern language as a first/home language, these respondents were omitted from the analyses.

**Table 5.8 Frequency distribution of the sample according to first/ home language**

	First language	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African Language	136	25.1	25.7	25.7
	English	247	45.7	46.6	72.3
	Afrikaans	147	27.2	27.7	100.0
	Total	530	98.0	100.0	
Missing		11	2.0		
Total		541	100.0		

**Table 5.8** indicates that the majority of the respondents spoke an English language as a first language (**46.6**), a relatively smaller proportion of the respondents spoke an Afrikaans (**27.7**) and an African language (**25.7**) as a first language.

### 5.4.2 Research Design



The study was carried out within a positivist research paradigm in that it used measurable data to explain the nature of intergroup perceptions amongst students. Positivist research has a practical value for society in that it aims to discover and explain stable, pre-existing patterns of social behaviour in terms of logical deductive systems of interconnected definitions, axioms and laws that are based on existing evidence. Positivists attempt to discover the factors that cause observed phenomena by using information that can be directly observed, recorded or measured. This research approach uses precise measures that are objective, and that do not depend on the views and actions of the researcher, thus minimising influences that may threaten the objectivity of the results. Good positivist research is based on precise research measurements that can be replicated in other studies (Neuman, 2000; Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

This study took the form of a survey research. This measure is appropriate for measuring self-reported beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions, and is able to measure a number of variables at a time

(Neuman, 2000). A cross-sectional design was employed in this study. The analyses of the data were made across the independent groups of participants.

The survey was conducted by means of a self-administered questionnaire. It was decided that such a questionnaire would be the most appropriate way to collect the information given the sensitive nature of the issues under consideration. A questionnaire as a self-report method ensures anonymity and hence confidentiality, which may elicit less socially desirable responses than in face-to-face interactions, due to a systematic assessment of respondents with psychometrically constructed questionnaires. A further advantage is that a questionnaire can be administered to large groups of individuals, enabling data to be gathered in an economical and efficient manner (Neuman, 2000).

### 5.4.3 Procedure

The actual procedures of the study were as follows: Firstly, the relevant professional and scientific literature was examined (see **chapter one to four**). This was done in order to ground the project in a suitable theoretical and empirical context. Then the design and procedures of the research were planned and critiqued and the questionnaire that included the SDS and IS/CS scales was developed. Permission to collect data was obtained from the authorities in charge of the psychology lectures that were specifically scheduled for the purposes of collecting the data. The questionnaires were administered to the participants in a controlled classroom setting at a time that was allocated by the psychology lecturers. The participants were informed about the nature of the study, they were informed that their participation would be voluntary, and the anonymity and confidentiality of the data was guaranteed. The questionnaires were completed within the first 30 minutes of a scheduled psychology practical under the supervision of the researcher and the study supervisor. A letter of informed consent explaining the nature of the study was distributed to the participants together with the questionnaire. All the students who were present at the time the questionnaires were administered, willingly participated by signing the letter and completing the questionnaires. The few questionnaires without sufficient information, or those with a fixed response set (endorsing only one scale point in a scale), were considered invalid for the purposes of the analyses. The data was then coded into a text file and verified for accuracy. The analyses were then performed and the results of the study were formally presented. The production of this written report comprises the final step of the project.

#### 5.4.4 Instrumentation

Data was collected using several measures. A Semantic Differential Attitude Scale (Nieuwoudt, 1973), an Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Gudykunst, 1995), a biographical questionnaire and qualitative measures specifically designed by the researcher. For the purposes of the present study, only information pertaining to the demographic variables, the Semantic Differential Attitude Scale (SDS), and the Individualism/Collectivism Scales (IS/CS) will be considered. One comprehensive document including all the questionnaires and letter of consent was specifically developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was compiled in such a way as to enable the measures to be administered to different groups of participants as a self-administered task.

The purpose of the questionnaire was outlined on the first page. Respondents were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The first section of the questionnaire required the participants to provide certain biographical information about themselves. It was intended that this information would offer an indication of the variation of the responses according to the respondents' age, gender, academic year of study, membership of a student resident or student day-house (proximity and intimacy of contact with other cultural groups), faculty of study, cultural-orientation/ group membership and first/home language. An approximate measure of cultural-orientation was identified in terms of the participants' broad cultural-orientation and their home language.

The following section of the questionnaire described in simple language the nature of the rating procedure that was to be done on the Semantic Differential Scales, instructions on how the task was to be carried out, together with examples. This was followed by five identical Semantic Differential Attitude Scales (Nieuwoudt, 1973) designed to measure the respondents' perceptions of each of the five cultural-orientation groups at RAU. The third section consisted of a modified version of a Likert-Scale designed to measure the respondents' individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations (Gudykunst, 1995). In the fourth section, open-ended questions were designed to measure perceptions of changes in intergroup relationships amongst students and attributions for the current state of intergroup relations amongst students at RAU. This section also consisted of self-rating scores for past, present and expected future intergroup relations amongst students at RAU. The fourth section of this questionnaire will not be considered for the purposes of this study, but will form part of further studies. A detailed description of the questionnaire will be found in the sub-section "Data and Instrumentation".

#### 5.4.4.1 The Semantic Differential Attitude Scale

Attitudes towards the five cultural-orientation groups at RAU were measured by means of a Semantic Differential Attitude Scale (SDS) that has been previously validated for the purposes of this study. The scale was originally developed by Nieuwoudt (1973) for use with South African populations. The SDS has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability coefficients ranging from 0.816 to 0.97 in previous published studies, and has been evaluated as having sufficiently acceptable content and construct validity (Bornman, 1988; Mynhardt, 1982, Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983; Thiele, 1988; Van Dyk, 1988).

The SDS chosen for this study was intended to allow the investigation of the participants' perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups. This scale, which is referred to as an evaluative scale, has been applied to measure the meaning of concepts as well as the affective (favourable-unfavourable) component of attitudes (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957). The advantage of this measure is that the same scale can be used to assess a number of different attitude objects (Foster, 1991). Using the test-retest method, Osgood et al. (1957) found the reliability of the Semantic Differential as a measure of attitudes to be 0.91. As a measure of meaning it has a reliability coefficient of 0.85. According to Nieuwoudt & Plug (1983), this scale has both face and construct validity. All the items of Nieuwoudt's (1973) scale have high loadings on the evaluative factor identified by Osgood et al. (1957). Bornman & Mynhardt (1991) conducted an item analysis of the scale which revealed that the corrected discrimination values of all the items were higher than 0.25 for both Coloured and Afrikaner participants in their study.

The validity of the results are supported by the pattern of attitudes found in previous ethnic attitude studies. The order of ethnic preferences found for each group, as reflected by the Semantic Differential scores, the paired comparisons, and proportions of the most and the least liked responses were found to converge. There is also substantial consistency amongst the patterns of attitudes across a number of different group attitude studies conducted in South Africa over an extended period of time (Mynhardt, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983).

Fifteen pairs of bipolar adjectives/adverbs were chosen from the original list of Nieuwoudt's (1973) scale which are easily understandable to students of all the cultural groups within the present study and which had high factor-loadings on the evaluative dimension. To these were added five pairs of bipolar items which the researcher believed would be relevant to the present study. These included: open-minded - closed-minded; flexible - rigid; accepting - rejecting; argumentative - co-operative; courteous - rude, and

harmonious - aggressive. The motivation for using these twenty items was to provide a measure of attitudes towards a variety of cultural groups.

It was proposed to incorporate the 20 pairs of bipolar adjective/adverbs into a questionnaire that would list the ethnic groups, each of which would be evaluated by the participants using the same set of Semantic Differential Scales. Great care was taken with regard to the arrangement of the cultural groups and their accompanying scales within the questionnaire. The order of the scale items were kept constant across each cultural group to facilitate the scoring. The poles of approximately half of the scales selected at random were reversed. This was done to prevent the tendency of scale point position preference during the process of rating.

A seven-point scale was used by the participants to evaluate a particular group in terms of each adjectival or adverbial pair. When scoring, the participants' ratings were converted into numbers, seven being given to an extreme positive rating, and one to an extreme negative rating, with intermediate values between the two poles as four, indicating neutrality.

The evaluative or attitudinal scores obtained on the 20 item scales for each target group were summed, as advised by Osgood et al. (1957: 191), to yield totals ranging from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 140. Thus, the higher the score attributed to an ethnic group, the more favourable the attitude of the rater towards that group. For ease of interpreting the attitude scores, calculations were carried out on the scale point average for each respondent towards each cultural group. The mean total scores range from a value of one (most negative), to a value of seven (most positive). The scores obtained on the Semantic Differential Scales were submitted to factor analysis. Since five new pairs of adjective/adverbs have been added for the purposes of the present study, it was necessary to ascertain their factor loadings. A detailed description of the factor analyses has been provided in the results chapter.

#### **5.4.4.2 The Individualism and Collectivism Scales (IS/CS)**

The scale that was used in this study to measure the Individualism/Collectivism (I/C) construct was one that was adapted from Triandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990) by Gudykunst (1995). The Individualism/Collectivism Scale measures cultural variables that denote the extent to which interpersonal competition, individual achievement and independence from groups is emphasised over intragroup cooperation, collective achievement and interdependence with fellow in-group members (Gouveia, de-Albuquerque, Clemente & Espinosa, 2002; Robert & Wasti, 2002; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

Triandis et al. (1990) suggested that the differences between individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations include: 1) an emphasis on in-group goals, views and needs, 2) duty towards the in-group, and 3) shared beliefs amongst members of collectivistic cultural groups; and 1) an emphasis on personal goals, views and needs, 2) obtaining pleasure and 3) personal beliefs amongst individuals belonging to individualistic cultural groups. The I/C Scale developed by Triandis et al. (1990) is a multi-method approach to measuring I/C that views I/C as cultural syndromes that include values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. The scale focuses on the various psychological domains of subjective culture as an entire collective rather than separate aspects of culture. At the individual level, this scale measures idiocentric and allocentric tendencies.

The I/C construct offers the advantage of cross-cultural, sub-cultural and individual measurement in that it provides a useful way of describing different groups and group members in terms of their concern with social identity-based intergroup comparisons (Gouveia et al., 2002). According to Triandis et al. (1988), this scale has both face and construct validity. Underlying the four first-order factors, there was enough common variance between them to provide one second-order factor scale. Triandis et al. (1988) found internal consistency reliability coefficients of between 0.78 and 0.96 for the I/C constructs with Japanese, Puerto Rican and Illinois participants, and internal reliability coefficients of 0.83 for the I/C constructs with participants in the United States. Brown, Hinkle, Ely, Fox-Cardamone, Maras & Taylor (1992) have reported internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.90 and 0.81 for the Triandis et al. (1988) I/C with university students in the United States.

The I/C Scale of Gudykunst (1995) provided a 20-item, Likert-scale, 10 items for Individualism and 10 items for Collectivism. The participants were required to rate the extent to which they agreed with each of the value statements in each item, + 3 being "very strongly in agreement with my views", -3 being "very strongly in opposition to my views", with 0 indicating a position of neutrality.

The scores for each item were added to obtain a separate score for each construct. For ease of interpretation, calculations were carried out on the scale point average for the IS and CS scores separately. The mean total scores for each construct ranged from a value of one, indicating a strong endorsement of a particular value-orientation, to a value of seven, indicating an extreme opposition, or weak endorsement of a particular value-orientation.

The items were subjected to a factor analysis as a verification of their construct validity following the actual data collection. The constructs for which the value statements were developed (I/C), demonstrated adequate factor structures. A second-order factor analysis of the scores for each

construct produced a single factor explaining more than 50% of the total variation of the responses. A detailed summary of the factor analyses have been provided in the results chapter.

#### **5.4.5 Ethical considerations**

In accordance with professionally recognised ethical guidelines, all subjects participated in the study on a voluntary basis with no penalties for withdrawal. Owing to the nature of the study, it was not expected that the participants would be under any psychological or physical risk at any time. They were given verbal and written instructions prior to their participation and they were provided with adequate information regarding the nature of the study prior to their participation. No negative feedback about the study was received. In order to maintain confidentiality, the participants were instructed not to place any identifying information on the materials which they returned to the researcher.

A letter of informed consent explaining the nature of the study was distributed to each participant together with the questionnaire. The letter explained that the study was intended to investigate social perceptions amongst students at RAU and informed the participants that their participation would be voluntary, that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and that the information they provided would be kept completely anonymous. They were asked to initial and sign the letter before participating in the study. The participants were given the opportunity to page through the questionnaire before signing the letter.



#### **5.4.6 Data analysis procedures**

The above questionnaire was designed to generate a large amount of information. An in-depth analysis of all this data was beyond the scope of this mini-dissertation. Thus, various sections of data were either ignored or condensed. Any information not utilised in this study will form the basis of further analyses and articles.

Data analysis for this study was performed using several statistical techniques. The first consisted of simple descriptive statistics (viz. age, gender, academic year of study, faculty of registration, resident vs. day-student, nationality, cultural group identification/membership and language), computed for the demographic variables and the dependent measures, which were checked for normality of distribution. This provided a quantitative picture of the data collected from the participants. The independent variables included in the analysis were: 1) gender, 2) student resident vs. day-house membership (proximity of contact variable), 3) cultural orientation/group membership (as a function of home-language and identification with a general cultural-orientation), and 4) language. The dependent

measures were the IS/CS scores and the five SDS scores pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups included in the questionnaire. The construct validity pertaining to each dependent measure was determined by means of factor analysis (principal axis factoring) for the scores of the total sample.

Levene's test was applied to provide an indication of the equality (homogeneity) of variance of the dependent variables across the groups. Subsequently, between-group comparisons were then conducted. Differences in the attitude and the value scores for the male and female respondents, as well as resident and day-students, were analysed by means of t-tests for independent groups. ANOVA and subsequent post-hoc analyses were used to identify differences between the scores of the five cultural-orientation groups, as well as the three language groups. Post-hoc Scheffé tests were used for the multiple comparisons between the five cultural-orientation groups and the three language groups, in those instances where the statistically significant value of Levene's test indicated a value that was  $p \geq .05$ . Dunnett T<sub>3</sub> tests were applied when the statistically significant value for Levene's test was  $p \leq .05$ . Finally, Pearson's product-moment correlations were used to identify significant correlations between the IS scores and the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural groups, and the CS scores and the perceptions of Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern and African cultural groups.

The predetermined decisional level of statistical significance was set at  $p = .05$ . In the cases where the observed significance values are on a smaller probability level, for example  $p = .01$  or  $.001$ , these values exceed the required levels of statistical significance and are therefore regarded as highly significant.