

**ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN BLACK AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS**

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## DECLARATION

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**TITLE: Ethnic identity development in black African adolescents.**

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Kind regards

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored ethnic identity development among black African adolescents in the Motheo district. The specific aim of this study was to investigate the degree to which black African adolescents' exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity strength manifest in black African adolescents of various gender, ethnic and age groups. The differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups were also explored. Furthermore, the adolescents' response to the challenges of developing a black African identity was investigated. A mixed methods research design was used.

In the quantitative section of the study, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R) and the Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM) were used to measure exploration, commitment and strength of ethnic identity. The data were used primarily to report the descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength in this population group. Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine the differences between various gender, ethnic and age groups. It was found that the sample displayed high rates of exploration and commitment, as well as a strong ethnic identity. Female participants displayed statistically significantly higher rates of exploration/commitment and strength. With regard to ethnic group, significant differences were found in terms of some aspects of exploration/commitment (more relating to commitment than to exploration), as well as strength with the Setswana group obtaining consistently lower scores than the other two ethnic groups. No statistically significant differences were found between the different age groups.

In the qualitative section of the study, focus groups were conducted to explore how adolescents respond to the challenges of developing a black African identity. Through thematic analysis, four main themes regarding the challenges in developing a black African identity were identified. These related to “Finding my place of belonging”, “My path to knowing where I belong”, “Aspects preventing me from being me” and “Finding myself within a changing environment”.

*Keywords: Identity, ethnicity, ethnic identity development, black African adolescents*

## ABSTRAK

Hierdie studie het die etniese identiteitsontwikkeling onder swart Afrika-adolessente in die Motheo-distrik bestudeer. Die spesifieke doelwit van hierdie studie was om die mate waarin swart Afrika-adolessente etniese identiteit verken en tot 'n etniese groep verbind, vas te stel, sowel as die sterkte van die swart Afrika-adolessente se etniese identiteit vir verskillende geslagte, etniese groepe en ouderdomsgroepe te ondersoek. Verder is die adolessente se reaksie op die uitdagings van die ontwikkeling van 'n swart Afrika-identiteit ondersoek. 'n Gemengde metodes navorsingsontwerp is gebruik om die navorsing doelwit te ondersoek.

In die kwantitatiewe gedeelte van die studie is die “Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R)” en die “Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM)” gebruik om verkenning, toewyding en sterkte van etniese identiteit te meet. Die data is hoofsaaklik gebruik om die beskrywende eienskappe van die verskynsel van etniese identiteitverkenning, toewyding en sterkte aan te meld. 'n Meerveranderlike analise van variansie is gedoen om die verskille tussen die verskillende geslagte, etniese groepe en ouderdomme te bepaal. Daar is gevind dat die steekproef hoër vlakke van verkenning en toewyding, sowel as 'n sterkte van etniese identiteit vertoon. Vroulike deelnemers vertoon statisties beduidend hoër vlakke van verkenning/toewyding en sterkte. Met betrekking tot etniese groep, is beduidende verskille gevind in terme van sommige aspekte van verkenning/verbintenis (meer met betrekking op verbintenis as verkenning). Die krag van die Setswana-groep het konsekwent laer tellings as die ander twee etniese groepe behaal. Geen statisties beduidende verskille is tussen die verskillende ouderdomsgroepe gevind nie.

In die kwalitatiewe gedeelte van die studie is fokusgroepe gebruik om adolessente se reaksie op die uitdagings van die ontwikkeling van 'n swart Afrika-identiteit te verken. Tematiese analise is gebruik om vier temas ten opsigte van die uitdagings in die ontwikkeling van 'n swart Afrika-identiteit te identifiseer, insluitende “Ontdekking van die plek waar ek behoort”, “My pad om uit te vind waar ek behoort”, “Aspekte wat voorkom dat ek myself kan wees” en “Ek vind myself in 'n veranderende omgewing”.

*Sleutelwoorde: Identiteit, etnisiteit, etniese identiteit ontwikkeling, swart Afrika-adolessente*

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY**

In this study, ethnic identity development among black African adolescents was investigated. The aim of the study was to determine the degree to which black African adolescent males and females explore and commit to an ethnic identity and what the strengths are of black African adolescent males' and females' ethnic identity. Furthermore, adolescents' responses to the challenges of developing a black African identity were investigated. In this chapter, a general orientation to the study and an overview of the research process will be provided.

### **1.1 Context and rationale of the research**

South Africa, known as the rainbow nation, has a unique, multicultural context. According to the 2011 census, there are four main racial groups in South Africa, namely black African (79.6%), Coloured (9%), Indian/Asian (2.5%) and White (8.9%) (StatsSA, 2012). Each of these umbrella groupings can be divided into different ethnic groups, each with their own set of characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Adams, Van de Vijver, & De Bruin, 2012). These ethnic groups create the context in which adolescents in South Africa have to accomplish several developmental tasks, including the development of their unique identity (Erikson, 1968) and, more specifically, their ethnic identity.

Adolescence is a dynamic time, which varies from individual to individual. Therefore, defining adolescence is challenging. Steinberg (2010) defined adolescence as the period of life between the onset of puberty and the achievement of a stable, independent role in society. During adolescence, individuals experience many changes and growth. This includes, but is not limited to, physical development, cognitive development and psychosocial development. During middle to late adolescence, physical, cognitive and social development coincides in order for the adolescent to choose or discard identifications from their childhood and form new pathways towards adulthood (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Marcia, 1980). During the time in which physical development takes place, growing social expectations also occur (Bergh & Erling, 2005). It is

thus during middle to late adolescence that the development of identity becomes central to individuals' growth processes.

In the current South African context, adolescents are faced with specific and unique challenges during their processes of identity development. The end of apartheid and the transition into a new democratic government during the 1990s resulted in the transformation in a variety of aspects of society. This transformation includes desegregation, the integration of different racial groups, affirmative action and the encouragement of positive intergroup relations (Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2012; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). It is within this context of change and transformation that South African adolescents have to find their identities. In spite of the changes, black African adolescents in particular still face challenges, which include low socio-economic status (Adams et al., 2012), domestic violence and abuse (Makhubela, 2012), discrimination (Peacock, 2008) and gender inequality (Nyembezi et al., 2012). All these challenges result in dynamics that have an impact on black African adolescents' identity development.

Ethnic identity development has been studied in multiple populations worldwide, including, among others, the American population (Phinney & Ong, 2007), the Latino population (Torres, 2003), the African-American population (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006) and the Turkish population (Dimitrova, Bender, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2013). In these studies, it was found that each ethnic group has unique cultural and historical experiences that might influence ethnic identity formation (Cokley, 2007). Therefore, it is important that ethnic identity for different ethnic groups should be studied to determine the challenges and influences for the particular ethnic group.

Within the South African context, research on ethnic identity development has been limited. Some researchers have shown interest in and explored the topic of ethnic identity development in South Africa (Harris & Findley, 2014; Pretorius, Jacobs, & Van Reenen, 2013). Still, the need exists for more focused studies, using primary data collection, qualitative research designs and specific groups of the South African youth with different ethnic backgrounds (Adams et al., 2012; Norris et al., 2008). No research studies could be found regarding the black African ethnic

groupings of the Motheo district in central South Africa. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore ethnic identity development amongst black African adolescents in the Motheo district.

## **1.2 Theoretical perspectives underpinning the study**

During the investigation of ethnic identity development, several theoretical perspectives were considered to comprehend the construct of ethnic identity development fully. In the following section, a brief overview of the theories will be given.

Identity formation was initially proposed by Erikson (1968) as a critical stage of development. Erikson introduced his psychosocial theory of development in 1959, describing eight tasks of psychological and physical development within a social context. Erikson (1968) stated that the task that occurs during adolescence is identity versus role confusion. During this time, it is expected that individuals experience a moratorium (or an identity crisis) in order to integrate all the identity components attained in their childhood (Erikson, 1968; 1983). Identity development, according to Erikson (1968), occurs through the processes of integration and identification. Erikson (1968) explained that role confusion mainly occurs when an adolescent fails to commit to an occupational or sexual preference or identity.

The concept of ego identity status was developed by James Marcia in response to Erikson's theoretical concept of identity. Marcia's identity statuses are based on two dimensions, or processes, namely exploration and commitment (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, Beyers, & Vansteenkiste, 2005). Marcia (1980) proposed four styles, called identity statuses, to resolve the identity crisis. Each status is defined by the absence or presence of exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1980). These identity statuses are *identity achievement* (presence of exploration and commitment), *identity foreclosure* (presence of commitment without exploration), *identity diffusion* (absence of exploration and commitment) and *moratorium* (presence of exploration without commitment) (Marcia, 1980; Phinney & Ong, 2007). According to Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980), more female adolescents go through the identity crisis, and commit to identity options, than male adolescents do.

Expanding on the idea of an individual identity, the social identity theory focuses on the feelings and attitudes of belonging to a group (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The social identity theory was introduced by Tajfel in 1978. In this social-psychological theory, it is proposed that people have a tendency to view themselves and others in certain social categories, whether it is religious affiliations, gender, age, group membership or race (Ashford & Mael, 1989; Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). This tendency to view self and others in a social category is the basis on which ethnic identity development is built.

Ethnic identity is considered one aspect of social identity development (French et al., 2006; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) and is defined as the sense of self that stems from individuals' knowledge and commitment to their group (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; French et al., 2006; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Tajfel, 1981). Phinney (1989) suggested an ethnic identity development theory for all ethnic groups based on Marcia's (1980) theory of identity development. She identified three stages of development, namely *unexamined ethnic identity*, *ethnic identity exploration* and *achieved ethnic identity* (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; French et al., 2006; Phinney, 1989).

The work of Torres relates to the influence of ethnicity on identity development in the Latino culture (Torres, 2003). Torres has used the framework provided by Phinney and developed a theory for Hispanic identity development based on choices made between the majority and minority cultures. Torres identified four cultural orientations, namely a Bicultural orientation, a Latino/Hispanic orientation, an Anglo orientation and a Marginal orientation (Torres, 2003).

The above-mentioned theories inform this research study and create a theoretical base for explaining identity development and ethnic identity development.

### **1.3 Overview of the research design and methods**

To explore ethnic identity development among black African adolescents in the Motheo district, a mixed methods research design was used.

The following research questions were investigated:

1. To which degree do exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity strength manifest in black African adolescents of various gender, ethnic and age groups?
2. What are the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups?
3. How do adolescents respond to the challenges of developing a black African identity?

Participants included in the study were in middle to late adolescence and from the black African population group. The participants included in the sample were from three main ethnic groups, namely the Sesotho, Setswana and isiXhosa groups. The sample for the quantitative section of the research consisted of 388 participants, chosen by convenience sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), from four secondary schools in the Motheo district. The ages of the participants ranged from 13 to 21 years. The sample for the qualitative research was chosen by convenience sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), consisting of three focus groups, of which two groups were female and one group was male.

For the quantitative section of the study, two measuring instruments were used, namely the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R) (Phinney & Ong, 2007) and the Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM) (Cislo, 2008). The MEIM-R was used to measure the exploration of and the commitment to an ethnic identity. The SEIM was used to measure the strength of ethnic identity. These measuring instruments were not designed to measure exploration, commitment and strength regarding a specific ethnic group, but rather to measure the construct of exploration, commitment and strength regarding any ethnic group. Biographical information (including gender, age, home language, race and ethnic group) was also requested from the participants. The reliability of the measuring instruments for this specific sample was determined by means of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The statistical analysis that was used for the quantitative section of the study focused primarily on reporting the descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength. To determine the



differences between various gender and ethnic groups, multivariate analysis of variance was done.

The qualitative data collection was done by means of focus groups. The value of focus groups is the knowledge created when different experiences and perceptions are combined in an interactive way. Interaction can inspire communication and emphasise perceptions, attitudes, thinking and understanding of the participants (Grønkjær, Curtis, De Crespigny, & Delmar, 2011). The focus groups were used to explore how adolescents respond to the challenges of developing a black African identity. Trustworthiness was assured through measures improving credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). This was achieved by, among others, the verbatim transcription of the data and ensuring that adolescents' realities are represented appropriately. Furthermore, an audit trail of the original documentation was kept. For the qualitative section of the study, thematic analysis was used. The aim of thematic analysis was to identify, analyse and report patterns, or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical clearance for this study was gained from the Research Committee of the Department of Psychology, the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of the Free State and the Free State Department of Education. Each participant gave informed consent by means of a signed consent form prior to participation in any data collection. Confidentiality was assured. All participants participated voluntarily and had the option to withdraw from the study at any stage.

#### **1.4 Delineation of chapters**

The chapters that follow will include a literature review, the methodology used for this study, the results and discussion thereof and, finally, the limitations of the study. Each chapter will highlight the following aspects:

Chapter 2 will focus on the description of identity development. It will start with an overview of adolescent development. Thereafter identity will be defined and conceptualised, followed by the theories underlying identity development. The theories that will be discussed include

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory, Marcia's (1980) ego-identity status theory and Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory. This will be followed by a discussion on gender-related aspects of identity development. This chapter will conclude with a focus on identity development in the South African context.

After the discussion on identity development, the discussion on ethnic identity development, specifically, will continue in Chapter 3. In this chapter, ethnic identity will be defined and conceptualised. The theories that will be discussed with regard to ethnic identity development include the theories of Phinney and Torres. Gender-related issues and ethnic identity development in adolescents will be highlighted. Ethnic identity development in the South African context will form the last section of this chapter.

Chapter 4 will focus on the methodology used in this study. This chapter will give a brief overview of the research rationale, purpose and aims of the study, as well as the research questions. In each section of this chapter, the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the study will be discussed. This will include a description of the sample, the data collection procedures, the data analyses, ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

Chapter 5 will focus on the presentation and discussion of the quantitative and qualitative results. In the first section, the quantitative results will be reported. The descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity commitment and strength will be reported, followed by the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups. This will be followed by the qualitative section of the study where the main themes of the data will be reported. After the presentation of the results, an integrated discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative findings will follow.

Chapter 6 will conclude the study. This chapter will contain the most prominent findings and the limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research will be provided in the final section of this chapter.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to give a broad overview of the context of the study. In the first section of the chapter, the context and rationale of the study were discussed. This was followed by the theoretic perspectives underpinning the study. An overview of the research design and methods was given, as well as the delineation of the chapters.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

This chapter will provide an overview of adolescent development and identity theory in general. This will serve as a basis to understand the more specific developmental process of ethnic identity (which will be discussed in the following chapter) better. In this chapter, adolescent development is explained and the concept of identity is defined and conceptualised. Thereafter, the different theories explaining identity development and the gender-related aspects of identity are discussed. Lastly, identity in the South African context is discussed.

#### **2.1 Adolescent development**

Various authors refer to the difficulty in defining adolescence, because it is a time that varies in each individual (Marcia, 1980; Norris & Richter, 2005; Pinyerd & Zipf, 2005). The onset of adolescence is usually marked by physiological changes in the body. The ending, however, is not as clearly defined. Marcia (1980) argued that, if the end of adolescence is determined by the achievement of certain psychosocial tasks, adolescence will never end for some. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013), adolescence is the time in the development of an individual that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, with an age estimation of between 10 and 19. Steinberg (2010) defined adolescence as the period of life between the onset of puberty and the achievement of a stable, independent role in society. During adolescence, individuals experience many changes and growth. This includes, but is not limited to, physical development, cognitive development and psychosocial development. Adolescence is divided into three phases, namely early, middle and late adolescence. Specific age ranges for each of these phases are not agreed upon, due to the varying development of individuals (Pickhardt, 2013). Newman and Newman (2012) estimate early adolescence to be from age 12 to 18 and late adolescence from age 18 to 24. Pickhardt (2013) suggests that early adolescence is estimated to be from age 9 to 13, middle adolescence from age 13 to 15 and late adolescence from age 15 to 18. For the purposes of this study, the following age ranges will be used: early adolescence from age 9 to 13, middle adolescence from age 13 to 15 and late adolescence from age 15 to 24.

### **2.1.1 Physical development**

During adolescence, different biological changes occur. The set of biological processes during adolescence is called puberty. Puberty entails the hormonal and somatic changes in an adolescent's reproductive system and general appearance (Norris & Richter, 2005). Hormonal changes include the secretion of somatotropin (growth hormone) and gonadotropin (stimulates the secretion of sex hormones). In males, the specific sex hormone secreted is androgen (including testosterone and androsterone). In females, the primary sex hormones are oestrogen and progesterone (Norris & Richter, 2005; Pinyerd & Zipf, 2005). The main somatic changes during adolescence include a growth spurt and the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics. These secondary characteristics in males include the increase in testicular size, pubic hair growth and facial hair growth (Pinyerd & Zipf, 2005). In females, the secondary characteristics include the growth of breasts, pubic hair and body hair (such as legs and underarms) (Newman & Newman, 2012).

Another important aspect of physical development during adolescence is the physiological alterations that occur in the brain. The volume of cortical grey matter in the frontal and parietal lobes increases throughout childhood, with its peak estimated to be at the same time as the onset of puberty. Due to changes in synaptic pruning and myelination, a decrease in the volume of cortical grey matter and cortical thickness occurs during adolescence (Paus, Keshavan, & Giedd, 2008). Synaptic pruning is seen as the process of eliminating overproduced synapses during childhood (Blakemore, 2012). Changes in the neural connectivity and neurotransmission may also occur and directly influence the functional changes related to adolescence (Paus et al., 2008).

### **2.1.2 Cognitive development**

Cognitive development is best explained by Piaget's cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1983). In this theory, Piaget described that a child's cognitive or intellectual development progresses through four stages. These four stages are the sensorimotor stage (birth to age two), the pre-operational stage (two to seven years), the concrete operational stage (ages seven to

eleven years) and the formal operational stage (adolescence to adulthood) (Modgil & Modgil, 2013). During late adolescence, individuals move from the concrete operational stage to the formal operational stage, during which they acquire hypothetic-deductive reasoning. Hypothetic-deductive reasoning entails the ability to think hypothetically and abstractly, as well as to weigh different options (Boltin, 2001; Piaget, 2007). According to Paus et al. (2008), most executive functions, including working memory and response inhibition, are fully developed by the time puberty is reached. Planning and delayed gratification improves significantly during mid-adolescence (Paus et al., 2008). Cognitive autonomy (i.e. the ability to evaluate thoughts, voice an opinion, make decisions and self-assess) reaches its peak during adolescence (Beckert, 2007). During the formal operational stage, adolescents still display a large measure of egocentrism, where adolescents have difficulty differentiating their own thoughts and feelings from those of others (Elkind, 1967). Related to this egocentrism, adolescents often confuse their own thoughts with those of a hypothesised imaginary audience. They also have the tendency to believe in a personal fable and think that their thoughts and feelings are unique (Elkind, 1967).

### **2.1.3 Psychosocial development**

Another factor to consider when studying identity in adolescents is social development. During the cognitive development that children and adolescents undergo, they acquire the skill to categorise themselves in social situations (Tanti, Stukas, Halloran, & Foddy, 2011). During adolescence, two major social transitions occur. The first transition is a transition from a primary to a secondary school, which usually occurs in early adolescence. The second transition is during late adolescence, with the transition from secondary school to university or work. With these changes, adolescents are confronted with diverse social situations and therefore they learn new roles, responsibilities and expectations (Tanti et al., 2011).

Adolescents experience transition in their social roles regarding their relationship with their peers and family. During adolescence, the amount of time spent with family or parents decrease and the time spent with peers increases. Adolescents also become less emotionally attached to their parents, giving rise to an increase in conflict between parents and adolescents. This is an important transition for adolescents to achieve autonomy (Collins & Laursen, 2006). Adolescents

also experience changes in the type of friends they choose. They start preferring friends with similar psychological qualities than their own, such as similar interests, values and personalities (Hamm, 2000).

During adolescence, personality development mainly refers to the development of self-esteem, a self-concept and forging a sense of identity. The development of identity will be the focus of this chapter. Identity formation is not an age-specific task, but rather an on-going process starting as a child with self-object differentiation and continuing into old age with “self-mankind integration” (Marcia, 1980, p. 160). However, identity development is most prominent during middle to late adolescence. According to Erikson’s (1959) psychosocial stages of development, identity formation reaches its peak during the identity versus role confusion stage of adolescence. The peak in identity development during adolescence is explained by the transition period that adolescents undergo regarding physical, cognitive and social development (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). During middle to late adolescence, physical, cognitive and social development coincide, in order for the adolescent to choose or discard identifications from their childhood and form new pathways towards adulthood (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Marcia, 1980). During the period in which physical development coincides, growing social expectations also occur (Bergh & Erling, 2005).

## **2.2 Defining and conceptualising identity**

Identity is a commonly used term in everyday life and a term that many theories have been built on. The idea of identity comes from the Latin term *idem*, meaning *the same*. This refers to the capacity of something or someone to stay the same or consistent (Peacock, 2008). However, the definition of the concept of identity is not clear. Many definitions of identity have been made by many different theorists. Erik Erikson (1968) defined identity as:

A sense of inner wholeness ... between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future; between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and expect of him. (p. 87)

Marcia defined identity “as a self-structure – an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history” (Marcia, 1980, p. 159). Identity has also been defined as “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 2). In the many different definitions of identity, there seems to be a few consistent aspects. This includes the connection between the past, present and future, as well as the integration of behaviour and motivation (Waterman, 1984). Identity development has been simply defined by Bester and Quinn (2010) as “defining who you are, what you value, and what direction you wish to pursue in life” (p. 395).

Identity is a multidimensional concept that includes personal, public and group identities (Bester & Quinn, 2010). The main dimensions focused on in earlier studies of identity, such as with Marcia’s theory on identity statuses, were occupational choice, religious belief and political ideology (Alberts, Mbalo, & Ackermann, 2003; Low, Akande, & Hill, 2005). However, recent research focuses on a wider range of dimensions, including, among others, sexual identity, gender identity, ethnic identity and social identity.

## **2.3 Theories explaining identity development**

In order to gain a better understanding of identity formation, certain seminal identity theories should be considered. In the following section, the psychosocial theory of Erikson, the ego-identity status theory of Marcia and the social identity theory of Tajfel will be discussed.

### **2.3.1 Psychosocial theory - Erik Erikson**

When identity development is discussed, one of the most prominent figures is Erik Erikson. Erikson introduced his psychosocial theory of development in 1959, describing eight tasks of psychological and physical development within a social context (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Erikson, 1959, 1968). These eight tasks are as follows: 1) Trust versus mistrust, 2) autonomy versus shame and doubt, 3) initiative versus guilt, 4) industry versus inferiority, 5) identity versus role confusion, 6) intimacy versus isolation, 7) generativity versus stagnation and 8) integrity versus



despair. Each of these tasks is accomplished during a certain life stage. If it is not completed in the specific life stage, it becomes a potential crisis. A crisis is seen as a positive turning point for an individual marked by increased vulnerability and heightened potential. Successful accomplishment leaves the individual with a certain set of skills. If a task is not accomplished in time, it will compromise the successful completion of the following task (Erikson, 1959; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980).

Erikson (1968; 1983) proposed that the task of identity versus role confusion occurs during adolescence. However, identity development begins from the first stage of psychosocial development. As individuals move through the tasks preceding identity versus role confusion, individuals are systematically prepared for their identity crisis by accumulating certain skills or components. For example, during the task of trust versus mistrust, the mutual recognition versus autistic isolation component is formed. If infants do not successfully complete the first task, it will have a great influence on their social identity during the identity versus role confusion task. This is true for each of the tasks preceding identity versus isolation as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Skill and component accumulation during psychosocial tasks*

Psychosocial task	Skills or components
<b>Trust versus mistrust</b>	Mutual recognition versus autistic isolation
<b>Autonomy versus shame and doubt</b>	Will to be oneself versus self-doubt
<b>Initiative versus guilt</b>	Anticipation of roles versus role inhibition
<b>Industry versus inferiority</b>	Task identification versus sense of futility
<b>Identity versus role confusion</b>	

In adolescence, individuals experience a moratorium in order to integrate all the identity components attained in their childhood (Erikson, 1968, 1983). Identity development, according to Erikson (1968), occurs through the processes of integration and identification. During this stage, the adolescent experiments with different identities, with the urgency to commit to certain choices and decisions for life (Erikson, 1968, 1983). The adolescent reaches a final identity, resulting in “a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity” (Erikson, 1968, p.

19). According to Erikson (1968), identity confusion mainly occurs when an adolescent fails to commit to an occupational or sexual preference or identity. This may lead to isolation, mild depression, a decrease in concentration, over-identification with others and criminal and psychotic events.

### **2.3.2 Ego-identity status theory – James Marcia**

The concept of *ego-identity status* was developed by James Marcia in response to Erikson's theoretical concept of identity. Marcia developed a theory regarding ego identity statuses for the purpose of empirical studies; however, these statuses have become a major part of identity theory (Marcia, 1980) and they are widely used in studies regarding identity. During Marcia's initial studies of identity, the focus was mainly on occupational, religious and politic identity (Alberts et al., 2003; Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1980). Occupational identity is seen as individuals' awareness of their occupational interests, goals, abilities and values and connecting these aspects to a career role (Ibarra & Burbulescu, 2010). Religious identity refers to the process of the exploration and commitment to a specific set of religious practices or beliefs (Sibusiso & Mdikana, 2013). Political identity refers to a form of group identity in relation to politics. Political identity development is the process of exploring and committing to a political view (Jackson, 2011).

According to Marcia (1980), identity formation is a gradual, non-conscious process with elements constantly added and discarded. A more developed identity results in individuals having an increased awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with an identity that is less developed are more confused and uses external resources to evaluate themselves (Marcia, 1980). Marcia's identity statuses are built on two dimensions or processes, namely exploration and commitment (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Luyckx et al., 2005). Each of these processes will now be discussed.

Exploration is the process of asking questions and investigating different identity options (Luyckx et al., 2005). Meeus, Iedema and Maassen (2002) proposed a two-dimensional theory of exploration, namely exploration in breadth and exploration in depth. Exploration in breadth

refers to the exploration of many different options. Exploration in depth refers to the exploration of one option in several different ways or approaches. Luyckx et al. (2005) suggested that a process of exploration in breadth should ideally occur first. After a commitment possibility has been identified, exploration in depth should follow. Exploration in depth tends to lead to a stronger and more satisfactory commitment, while exploration in breadth may create confusion (Luyckx et al., 2005). Årseth, Kroger and Martinussen (2009) have found that a secure attachment style in an adolescent's family can enhance the exploration process because it allows adolescents to explore their environment freely while their family provides a secure base.

Commitment occurs when an adolescent has a clear preference and a strong belief in a certain option, and has selected personal goals and values (Bilsker, Schiedel, & Marcia, 1988; Luyckx et al., 2005). In a longitudinal study, Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, and Meeus (2010) have established that commitment is consistent and stable for both genders throughout adolescence. Furthermore, they have found that commitments are more explored, in an increasingly active manner, as the adolescents' age increased. Adolescents' attachment styles may also have an influence on commitment. It is suggested by Årseth et al. (2009) that an insecure attachment style at home may contribute to the inability to commit because of the failure to form strong attachment bonds with parents.

Exploration and commitment are two separate dimensions or processes that may occur in the presence or absence of one another (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Luyckx et al., 2005). Ideally, it is expected of adolescents to engage in a process of exploration followed by commitment. However, as seen in Marcia's (1980) ego-identity status theory, this is not always true. Furthermore, it is stated that exploration is not only a process that occurs before commitment, but may also serve as a reflective process after commitment (Luyckx et al., 2005). Exploration and commitment have an influence on each other. The type of exploration that individuals engage in may influence the presence or absence of commitment and the strength of commitment (Luyckx et al., 2005).

According to Marcia (1980), adolescents form their identity in different ways. He has identified four different identity statuses classified according to the absence or presence of

exploration and commitment. These statuses are identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement (Arefi, Ghoreishi, & Eiman, 2011; Bergh & Erling, 2005; Klimstra et al., 2010; Luyckx et al., 2005; Marcia, 1980). Each of these statuses is related to varying levels of sophistication in identity development: Identity diffusion is seen as the least advanced status. Foreclosure is on the level just above identity diffusion with moratorium a level higher than foreclosure. Identity achievement is seen as the most sophisticated status (Bergh & Erling, 2005). These identity statuses can be different for different domains of identity, including occupational, religious and political identity (Alberts et al., 2003).

### **2.3.2.1 Identity diffusion**

*Identity diffusion* refers to the status where the individual has not committed to a certain preference or choice, in the presence or absence of exploration (Marcia, 1980). Characteristics usually seen in these individuals include shyness, carelessness, individualism, self-centeredness, neuroticism and being carefree (Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1980), without a clear direction for their future (Arefi et al., 2011). They also show a pattern of a lack of commitment, difficulty thinking under stress (Bergh & Erling, 2005), procrastination, hopelessness, low self-esteem and low levels of autonomy (Kroger, 2003). This group of individuals is greatly influenced by their peers and they easily conform under peer pressure. These individuals are expected to show low levels of attachment with their parents or have rejecting caretakers. Individuals currently in the status of identity diffusion are more isolated and have a greater tendency to use bribes and deception in social relationships (Kroger, 2003).

### **2.3.2.2 Identity foreclosure**

*Identity foreclosure* refers to the status of strong commitment to a certain preference without exploration of different options (Luyckx et al., 2005). These preferences are usually guided by parents and the adolescent experiences little or no crisis (Marcia, 1980). Individuals in the identity foreclosure status are usually less anxious, more goal-directed, well behaved, inflexible and defensive, with higher levels of conformity and authoritarianism (Arefi et al., 2011; Bergh & Erling, 2005; Kroger, 2003). This is caused by the values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours they

rigidly adopt from their parents without questioning its origin or meaning (Arefi et al., 2011; Bergh & Erling, 2005). Identity foreclosure has also been linked to homophobic attitudes and racial prejudice (Fulton, 1997; Kroger, 2003; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossen, 2005). Interpersonal relationships typically related to individuals in the identity foreclosure status are stereotyped with a focus on superficial features and expectations of relationships (Kroger, 2003). Identity foreclosure is associated with a secure attachment style (Årseth et al., 2009). Family patterns with such individuals are very close and child-centred (Kroger, 2003). It has been found that female adolescents with overprotective or overinvolved mothers tend to mirror their parents' values without exploration (Kroger, 2003).

### **2.3.2.3 Moratorium**

*Moratorium* is the status better known as an identity crisis (Marcia, 1980). Individuals in the moratorium stage are exploring their identity and defining options without making commitments to a particular option (Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1980). During the moratorium stage, individuals question values and goals, reaching a deep understanding about themselves and the objective truth (Arefi et al., 2011). This status has been described as an anxiety-provoking process for adolescents (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Kroger, 2003) with more deaths occurring during this status than any of the other identity statuses (Kroger, 2003). Denial, identification and projection are some of the defence mechanisms used by adolescents during this time to manage anxiety (Kroger, 2003). Adolescents in the moratorium status may show particular characteristics, including sensitivity, anxiety, flexibility and self-righteousness (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1980). In this identity status, an individual may show both rebellion and commitment in alternating phases (Bergh & Erling, 2005). Adolescents in the moratorium status tend to display close interpersonal relationships with friends, but do not commit themselves to one partner. Their relationships with their parents are usually more ambivalent during this time (Kroger, 2003).

#### **2.3.2.4 Identity achievement**

In the status of *identity achievement*, the individual has made a commitment to a self-chosen option after exploration (Marcia, 1980). Individuals who have reached identity achievement display characteristics of strength, adaptability and creativity (Marcia, 1980) together with high levels of self-esteem and achievement-motivation (Kroger, 2003). In comparison to other identity statuses, individuals who achieve their identity are usually less anxious (Bergh & Erling, 2005), functioning better under stressful conditions (Kroger, 2003), more rational (Bergh & Erling, 2005), and use more logical decision-making strategies (Kroger, 2003). Furthermore, it has been found that secure attachment is related to identity achievement (Årseth et al., 2009). Individuals that have reached identity achievement tend to have increased levels of intimacy compared to individuals in other identity statuses (Kroger, 2003).

#### **2.3.2.5 Barriers to identity development**

Identity statuses are evaluated according to whether or not adolescents have the following: (a) contemplation of a variety of identity options; (b) commitments to goals, values and beliefs; (c) a clear self-definition; (d) behaviour and activity focused on the implementation of commitments; and (e) confidence in the future (Waterman, 1982; Yoder, 2000). However, there are certain external limitations that may influence identity development and that are out of the control of the individual. These external limitations are referred to as barriers (Yoder, 2000). Some of these barriers include the individual's socio-economic status and the family's financial support. Individuals' level of education may also be a barrier and contribute to financial problems later in their development (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2008; Yoder, 2000). Furthermore, violence and youth crime may also create a barrier in the individual's identity development (Makhubela, 2012; Yoder, 2000). Family dysfunction and the lack of role models have been seen as barriers in identity development. An example of this would be a young individual who starts a job as a cleaner without exploring other options. This would normally be considered identity foreclosure; however, this individual may not have the financial luxury to explore other options or the educational background to qualify for another job (Yoder, 2000).

Further barriers may include geographic isolation, parental domination, physical restrictions, age, gender, ethnicity, political constraints and religion (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Weisskirch, 2008).

### **2.3.3 Social identity theory – Henri Tajfel**

The social identity theory was introduced by Tajfel in 1978. Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 63). In this social-psychological theory, it is proposed that individuals tend to view themselves and others in certain social categories, whether it is religious affiliations, gender, age, group membership or race (Ashford & Mael, 1989; Ashmore et al., 2004). A group is defined according to a cognitive component, an evaluative component and an emotional component. Therefore, a group is classified when individuals are aware of, and know about, their group membership (cognitive component), have positive or negative views on belonging to the group (evaluative component) and have positive or negative emotions regarding the membership to the group or the evaluation thereof (emotional component) (Ashmore et al., 2004; Trepte, 2011).

It has been suggested that the term *social identity* should be reconsidered and rather be replaced by the term *collective identity*. Collective identity is explained by Ashmore et al. (2004) as subjective categorical membership and a sense of identity that is mutually experienced by a group sharing similar characteristics. Psychological positioning is seen as more important than physical interaction with other group members, since psychological positioning is a subjective claim and acknowledgement of belonging to this group (Ashmore et al., 2004).

To belong to a group influences social identity formation and therefore behaviour and cognitions are explained with the help of group-processes (Trepte, 2011). Tajfel proposed the concept of the minimal group paradigm, which indicated that individuals belonging to a group tend to favour their in-group and discriminate against the out-group (Ashford & Mael, 1989; Trepte, 2011). An in-group is seen as the group in which members categorise themselves, while an out-group is a comparison group against which individuals can evaluate their own group

(Buckingham et al., 2013). According to Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987), individuals internalise the qualities of their chosen group. This will influence the way individuals view themselves, the way the group members view other members of their own group or how group members view members of other groups. The two main purposes of social classification include the following: Firstly, cognitively it organises the social environment, which enhances individuals' ability to define others. Secondly, it gives individuals the opportunity to define themselves according to a social environment (Ashford & Mael, 1989). Social identification is the perception of belonging to a group, even though the strength of commitment and identification with this group may differ (Ashford & Mael, 1989).

Belonging to a group has a positive effect on physiological and psychological well-being (Buckingham, Frings, & Albery, 2013). One aspect of this is the social support given when individuals belong to a group. The social support received from group members acts as a barrier against stress-related physical and psychological illness (Buckingham et al., 2013). It has also been shown that membership to a group may reduce depression, impulsivity and alcohol use (Blonigen, Timko, Finney, Moos, & Moos, 2011; Kelly, Stout, Magill, Tonigan, & Pagano, 2010).

Based on all the above-mentioned theories, identity development is seen as the pathway to developing a concept of who one is, as initially proposed in Erikson's psychosocial theory. Marcia developed the ego-identity status theory, which more specifically describes how individuals develop their identity in terms of the absence or presence of exploration and commitment. Tajfel's social identity theory extended the concept of individual identity to social identity and focused on the part of individuals' self-concepts, which derive from their understanding of belonging to a social group.

## **2.4 Gender-related aspects of identity development**

There are many different views and arguments regarding the differences between males' and females' identity development. During the early studies of identity, gender differences of identity development were neglected because of the preference for using male participants in research



studies. Marcia's original status identity interviews, for example, were primarily conducted with men (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Marcia, 1980).

Podd, Marcia and Rubin (1970) have found no gender differences in identity statuses in general. It was later assumed that the process of identity development would be the same in both genders, but the content areas will differ (Podd et al., 1970). Marcia has found that female identity statuses are more influenced and determined by interpersonal issues (Marcia, 1980; Podd et al., 1970). It was also found that more females go through the crisis period and make commitments than males do (Josselson, 1996).

Josselson (1996) has based her work on Marcia's ego-identity status theory by testing this theory on a female population. According to Josselson (1996), female identity was originally defined by women's roles as wives, mothers and the values and social place as dictated by their husbands. However, women born in the post-World War II generation were able to create lives beyond these social expectations, due to the social rearrangement of that era. Josselson (1996) pointed out that female identity is formed by connections to others. Therefore, it is rooted in "being" rather than "doing" (p. 32).

Klimstra et al. (2010) recognised that in early to middle adolescence, girls tend to explore and commit more, therefore being ahead in identity formation. Boys explore and commit more during late adolescence, diminishing the difference between the genders. Kroger (1997) explained this phenomenon by studying the physical and cognitive development difference in genders. Girls tend to be one year ahead of boys in terms of physical and cognitive development. Girls reach puberty one to two years before boys and it is estimated that girls are a full year ahead in brain development (Crocetti, Sica, Schwartz, Serafini, & Meeus, 2013).

In the South African context, significant gender differences have been found in certain domains of identity. Females tend to place higher importance on moral values, gender role, and friendships with peers from the same gender, future careers and community matters. Males report higher priority to the domains of relationships with the opposite gender and matters regarding sex (Alberts, 2000; Alberts et al., 2003).

Mdikana, Seabi, Ntshangase and Sandlana (2008) have studied career identity in a group of isiXhosa-speaking adolescents. They have found that 75% of males were in the achieved identity status category, while only 35% of females were classified in this category. The highest percentage of females (55%) was classified in the foreclosed identity status, with only 15% of males in this category. It is suggested that the expected traditional roles of the specific genders have a great influence on identity development among the African communities (Mdikana et al., 2008). Therefore, one of the challenges of identity development among black African adolescents is gender role stereotyping.

Based on the ambivalence of the above findings, it is clear that research results regarding the differences in identity development between the different genders are still inconclusive and warrant further research.

## **2.5 Identity development in South Africa**

South African adolescents display a unique set of challenges with regard to identity development, due to the history of Apartheid in South Africa. Specific challenges related to Apartheid and ethnicity will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3, with the specific focus on ethnicity and ethnic identity development.

Alberts (1990, 2000) did several studies in South Africa regarding identity development in relation to Marcia's identity statuses. In a group of 102 students in late adolescence in the Eastern Cape, of which the majority of students were isiXhosa, Alberts (2000) has found high levels of occupational identity achievement and moratorium with low levels of occupational identity foreclosure and diffusion. This is in contrast to his findings in 1990. Furthermore, Alberts (1990; 2000) has found that, with regard to religious identity, the adolescents in his samples were mostly in the identity diffusion status, followed by adolescents in identity foreclosure. In terms of political identity, high rates of identity achievement were found with no identity foreclosure. In general, it has been found that a higher percentage of black African adolescents are in identity achievement or moratorium statuses rather than identity foreclosure or identity diffusion statuses (Alberts, 1990, 2000). Alberts et al. (2003) has found significant

differences in the identity development of different ethnic groups in South Africa, therefore highlighting the importance of studies being done on specific population groups in South Africa.

In a comparative study of identity development between university students from South Africa and university students from the United States of America (USA) conducted by Low et al. (2005), it was established that the South African group has a higher level of achieved identity than the USA group. The South African group were categorised as follows: 50% were categorised as achieved, 26% moratorium, 13% foreclosed, and 11% diffused. Furthermore, it was found that the South African students relied more on family and culture in terms of interpersonal relationships. In other studies related to general identity development in South Africa, it has been found that black African adolescents have a stronger sense of identity than white adolescents do (Peacock, 2008; Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

Several aspects have been identified as challenges to identity development. Domestic violence and abuse have been identified as one of the challenges for identity development (Makhubela, 2012). It is argued that children or adolescents who had been exposed to violence or abuse will develop an inherent negative objective, causing these children or adolescents to have a negative perception of themselves. This will impact their growing sense of self, thus influencing their identity development. Makhubela (2012) has found that adolescents exposed to domestic violence and abuse had a poorer sense of identity and this is associated with higher levels of identity foreclosure.

Another challenge found in the South African population is the experience of discrimination (Peacock, 2008). Poor levels of personal identity were found in individuals that experienced discrimination towards their physical appearance during adolescence. Furthermore, Peacock (2008) has found that discrimination regarding socio-economic status (e.g. discrimination towards the condition of clothes and the type of home the individual lives in) is associated with developing a negative identity. Poverty is therefore seen as a major challenge experienced during the time that a sense of identity is developed (Holleran & Waller, 2003; Peacock, 2008).

From the studies discussed above, it seems as if there is a general sense of identity achievement within the South African samples studied. However, these results cannot necessarily be generalised to include the rest of the South African population, because of the many different ethnic groups in South Africa. There are significant differences between the different subgroups. The South African population experiences several challenges that influence identity development, including factors such as poverty, discrimination, violence and stereotyping.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Based on the above review on identity development, it is clear that identity is a complicated concept not easily defined. In this chapter, the definition and conceptualisation of identity were highlighted. The most important theories explaining identity development, including the psychosocial theory of Erikson, the identity status theory of Marcia and the social identity theory of Tajfel were explained. Furthermore, the gender differences in identity development were discussed. Lastly, an overview of identity development within the South African context was given.

## CHAPTER 3

### ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, the concept of ethnic identity will be defined and conceptualised, followed by the theoretical explanation thereof. The gender-related aspects of ethnic identity and ethnic identity during adolescence will be discussed. Ethnic identity in South Africa will also be included in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Defining and conceptualising ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is described as a multidimensional construct that focuses mainly on ethnic knowledge, feelings, attitudes and behaviours (Cislo, 2008; Phinney, 1995). Ethnicity is a concept not yet clearly defined in research. Cokley (2007) defined ethnicity as “a characterization of a group of people who see themselves and are seen by others as having a common ancestry, shared history, shared traditions, and shared cultural traits such as language, beliefs, values, music, dress, and food” (p. 225). An ethnic group is a group of individuals who share the same characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and often language (Adams et al., 2012; Phinney & Ong, 2007). According to Cokley (2007; Yoon, 2011), three types or groups of definitions of ethnicity can be found. The first group of definitions is the broad view of ethnicity, which involves the shared biophysical traits and cultural characteristics. In this type of definition, race is used interchangeably with ethnicity. The second group of definitions is seen as intermediate definitions. In this type, the focus is on the cultural characteristics and national origin of the individual. The third group is seen as narrow definitions. This group of definitions only considers cultural characteristics (Cokley, 2007; Yoon, 2011).

The terms *ethnicity* and *race* are often used interchangeably. According to Cokley (2007), race refers to the categorisation of a group based on their physical appearance, such as skin colour, rather than on their cultural characteristics. However, Yoon (2011) stated that race should not be limited exclusively to physical characteristics and ethnicity to cultural characteristics. The

debate in the differences between ethnicity and race has been an ongoing discussion and no clear conclusion has been reached yet (Cokley, 2007; Yoon, 2011).

Ethnic identity is defined as the part of the self that stems from individuals' knowledge and commitment to their ethnic group (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; French et al., 2006; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Tajfel, 1981). Furthermore, it involves a sense of belonging, a positive evaluation of the group and self-labelling as part of the group and involvement in the group (Phinney, 1990, 1996; Cokley, 2007). Ethnic identity is more than just having knowledge about one's ethnic group. In addition, experiencing ethnicity alone cannot help one achieve ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Ethnic identity is seen as a construct that is dynamic and develops over time. It is also influenced by developmental and contextual factors (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The individual's choices and actions in these contexts also play a large role in the process of ethnic identity development (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Ethnic identity is the only form of identity that is not chosen by the individual, but rather determined by the family one is born into (Phinney & Ong, 2007). However, due to the difference in the type of definitions of ethnicity, Cokley (2007) argued that ethnicity can also be liable to change and involves more personal choice than racial identity. It may occur that an individual belongs to multiple ethnic groups, for example, when the individual's parents are from different ethnic groups. Keddell (2009) proposed that, in cases where individuals belong to multiple ethnic groups, the individuals might either see themselves as having no ethnic group (usually in cases with the combination of two white or European ancestors, such as a British and a French ancestor) or the individuals tend to belong to the minority group. Belonging to more than one ethnic group may result in a challenge for adolescent ethnic identity development seeing that individuals may have equal attachment to both ethnic groups, which may lead to confusion and isolation from ethnic groups (Isaacs-Martin, 2014).

### 3.1.1 Components of ethnic identity

Phinney and Ong (2007) have identified certain components that are important when ethnic identity is studied. These components include self-categorisation, attachment and commitment, exploration, behavioural involvement, in-group attitudes, values and beliefs, importance of group membership, and ethnic identity in relation to national identity.

Self-categorisation and labelling refer to individuals seeing themselves as part of a certain group and identifying with this group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). It also refers to the ability to name one's ethnic group correctly (Byrd, 2012). Individuals from a mixed ethnic background may experience more difficulty identifying with one specific ethnic group. This will result in difficulty labelling themselves according to one ethnic group. The difficulty in self-categorisation or labelling may therefore influence their ethnic identity development (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Commitment is a crucial component of ethnic identity formation. It is seen as one of the two dimensions on which Marcia's identity statuses are based and therefore forms an integral part of identity development in general (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Luyckx et al., 2005). Commitment is seen as the sense of belonging or strong preference towards a certain belief or option (Bilsker et al., 1988; Luyckx et al., 2005; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Attachment is seen as the affective component of commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Exploration is the process in which individuals seek information about, and experience their ethnicity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Exploration is the second dimension Marcia's identity status theory is built on (Bergh & Erling, 2005; Luyckx et al., 2005). Two types of exploration are proposed, namely *search* and *participation* (Syed et al., 2013). Search refers to indirect exploration or research activities such as reading books or talking to others. Searching does not necessarily imply that the person has gained anything from the process. Participation refers to direct experience of the culture as a form of exploration, such as attending events and participating in cultural traditions. In the case of participation as a form of exploration, the individual internalises what it means to be a member of an ethnic group, rather than just having

knowledge about an ethnic group (Syed et al., 2013). Phinney and Ong (2007) suggested that individuals should feel some form of attachment to their ethnic group for them to engage in exploration of the group (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Whitehead, Ainsworth, Wittig, & Gadino, 2009). It was found that the type of ethnic identity exploration chosen by the individual has an influence on well-being. Participation (with the presence or absence of search) is associated with positive well-being, while search (with the absence of participation) is associated with negative well-being. According to Syed et al. (2013), this phenomenon can be explained by the construct of generalised identity coherence. Identity coherence refers to the general feeling of synthesis, authenticity, purpose and satisfaction with oneself (Erikson, 1968; Syed et al., 2013). Ethnic identity exploration and commitment have beneficial effects on well-being because of its contribution to a general sense of clarity rather than confusion. Exploration by means of participation comprises engagement with concrete experiences, which may lead to identity coherence and therefore positive well-being. Exploration by means of search does not necessarily involve learning and therefore leads to confusion or raising more questions. This confusion correlates negatively with identity coherence and may therefore lead to negative well-being (Syed et al., 2013).

The following component of ethnic identity identified by Phinney and Ong (2007) is ethnic behaviour. This component refers to certain practices or social interactions associated with the ethnic group the individual may engage in. This includes speaking a specific language and eating certain foods. Behaviour is seen as an expression of internal identity. Therefore, the component of behaviour is used to measure ethnic identity. The knowledge and use of language is often used in measures of ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Evaluation and in-group attitudes are the components that refer to individuals' attitude towards the group they belong to (Phinney & Ong, 2007), based on the beliefs they have about the characteristics of the group (Byrd, 2012). It is assumed that, if individuals experience a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group, they will have a positive attitude towards their group and feel comfortable belonging to it. A positive attitude regarding one's ethnic identity is particularly important in minority groups, seeing that these groups experience a great deal of discrimination, which may lead to negative feelings (Tajfel, 1978). When individuals reach the



stage of achieved ethnic identity and make a commitment to their group after adequate exploration, individuals tend to reject any negative or stereotyped views of their ethnic group (Phinney, 1989). The positive or negative evaluation of the ethnic group one belongs to is an independent component of ethnic identity. Even though it is less likely for individuals who have achieved ethnic identity to have a negative attitude towards their group, it does occur (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The component of values and beliefs correlates strongly with commitment to a group and can be used as an indicator of the individual's closeness to a group. However, the values of any group are difficult to define, due to a lack of consensus about specific values (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Ethnic identity and national identity are the last important components (Phinney & Ong, 2007). National identity refers to individuals' sense of belonging and identification with their cultural setting or country (Dimitrova et al., 2013; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The correlation between national identity and ethnic identity has been debated by many scholars, and while some assume that these two identities are negatively correlated, some argue that there is no correlation. Factors such as immigration and age influence this component (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

### **3.1.2 Strength of ethnic identity**

The strength of ethnic identity refers to the degree of individuals' salient connection to their group, often associated with feelings of superiority towards other groups (Harris & Findley, 2014; Tajfel, 1981). From a social-identity theory perspective, individuals will identify more strongly with a group if the individuals feel that the group members of the particular group place more value on them than other groups do (Cislo, 2008). Furthermore, it has been shown that members who feel a strong connection with their ethnic group have the tendency to have a stronger ethnic identity, usually accompanied by the pride of belonging to the particular group. This is mostly seen in ethnic minority groups that are pressured to conform to the national culture (Dimitrova et al., 2013). Therefore, ethnic minority groups have the tendency to display higher strength of ethnic identity (Dimitrova et al., 2013). It has been suggested that an increasing awareness of marginalisation of an ethnic minority group will increase the strength of

ethnic identity within that group (Dimitrova et al., 2013). Torres and Ong (2010) have found that a strong sense of ethnic identity is a protective factor against discrimination for minority groups.

Individuals with a stronger ethnic identity tend to emphasise the positive aspects of their own ethnic group while emphasising the negative aspects of other groups (Harris & Findley, 2014). Individuals with a strong ethnic identity have more knowledge regarding other cultures and groups in order to classify them accurately (Harris & Findley, 2014). This leads to these individuals being able to identify other groups easily. The motivation for this is for individuals not to include members of other ethnicities in their own group wrongly (Harris & Findley, 2014). A grave danger for individuals with a strong ethnic identity is that their information about groups may be based on stereotypes or a false representation of a certain ethnic group. This may result in individuals basing their own ethnic identity development on these stereotypes. Furthermore, they might be more susceptible to being deceived by others (Harris & Findley, 2014).

Stronger ethnic identity is related to improved psychological health, less behavioural problems, less substance use and less risky sexual behaviours (such as using a condom and monogamy, which in turn decreases the risk of HIV/AIDS) (Corneille, Fife, Belgrave, & Sims, 2012; Grieg, 2003; Torres & Ong, 2010). An individual with a strong ethnic identity tends to have a higher self-esteem and therefore strength of ethnic identity can serve as a predictor of later self-esteem (Cislo, 2008; Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Grieg, 2003; Torres & Ong, 2010). Furthermore, strong ethnic identity is also related to effective coping styles, positive self-concepts and self-efficacy (Grieg, 2003).

Dimitrova et al. (2013) found that in a Turkish minority group in Bulgaria individuals displaying a stronger sense of ethnic identity has a higher tendency to continue practising their culture of origin after emigration to a new country. They also show better socio-cultural adjustment to the new culture. The strength of the ethnic identity of children or adolescents who do not grow up in their own ethnic environment is greatly influenced by their parents' encouragement, attitude and knowledge. If the stories, characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and language of their ethnic group are not shared and practised by their

parents after emigrating, the lack of knowledge and experimentation will result in a weak ethnic identity (Dimitrova et al., 2013).

In summary, this section has focused on defining ethnicity and investigating the different types of definitions of ethnicity. Different views on the terms ethnicity and race were explored. Ethnic identity was explained followed by the different components of ethnic identity. This section concluded with a discussion regarding the strength of ethnic identity.

### **3.2 Theories explaining ethnic identity development**

As discussed in Chapter 2, identity development has a rich theoretical background, starting with Erikson's psychosocial theory of development, with Marcia's theory on identity statuses building on Erikson's theory. Tajfel's social identity theory focuses more on the part of an individual's identity that forms when he/she is part of a group. Ethnic identity is considered one aspect of social identity development (French et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 1998). Several theories have been proposed for ethnic identity development (and related concepts), including the ethnic identity development theory proposed by Jean Phinney (Phinney, 1990), the theory of Hispanic identity development of Vasti Torres (Torres, 2003), the developmental theory of intercultural sensitivity of Milton Bennett (Bennet, 1986), ethnic and racial identity development as proposed by Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014), the multidimensional theory of racial identity as proposed by Sellers et al. (1998) and the two-factor theory of ethnic identity exploration (Syed et al., 2013). For the purposes of this study, the theories of Phinney and Torres will be discussed.

#### **3.2.1 Ethnic identity development according to Jean S. Phinney**

Erikson's conceptualisation of identity relates to the feeling of sameness and continuity that causes the individual to develop a stable sense of self (Phinney & Ong, 2007). As with identity formation, ethnic identity development starts in childhood. However, the most prominent and major development occurs during adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The development of ethnic identity is comparable to the identity statuses proposed by Marcia (1980). The individual is expected to move through three identity statuses in the process of

developing an ethnic identity. This includes unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search and ethnic identity achievement (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Individuals are placed in a category in response to the presence or absence of exploration of and commitment to their ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Unexamined ethnic identity is similar to Marcia's ethnic identity status of diffusion and is seen as the time when individuals have not yet been exposed to issues related to their ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). At this stage, individuals have no positive or negative view of their ethnic group (French et al., 2006). The lack of exploration of ethnicity may be explained by the possible acceptance of the major culture, a positive attitude of parents towards a minority culture or a disinterest in ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). Therefore, individuals who do not have a clear sense of their ethnic identity have made little effort or given little thought to committing to an ethnic identity (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Phinney & Ong, 2007). During this stage, which is usually present in childhood, the individual's ethnicity is unexamined, unexplored and no commitment has been made (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Phinney, 1989; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001).

The second stage of Phinney's ethnic identity development theory is ethnic identity search, which is similar to Marcia's moratorium status. During this stage, individuals start exploring their ethnicity and the meaning of being part of a group (Phinney, 1990; French et al., 2006). This stage is usually triggered by a significant experience, which forces individuals to become aware of their ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). A deeper appreciation and understanding of their ethnicity are created (Phinney, 1990). However, this process may also lead to the rejection of the dominant culture. The exploration may be done by reading, visiting museums, speaking to people and attending cultural practices (Phinney, 1990; Phinney, 2007).

Finally, after sufficient exploration and understanding of one's ethnicity, an individual is expected to reach ethnic identity achievement. In this status, individuals firmly commit to their ethnicity (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Two major challenges will be resolved in this stage. The first is the acceptance of the differences between the major or dominant culture and the individual's culture. The second challenge for minority groups is the

acceptance of a lower status in comparison to the dominant culture (Phinney, 1990; Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990). Ethnic identity achievement is usually reached by the end of adolescence or adulthood; however, exploration may continue into adulthood (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

### **3.2.2 Theory of Hispanic identity development according to Vasti Torres**

Torres has focused her work on how ethnicity influenced identity development in the Latino culture, which is seen as the minority ethnic group in the USA (Torres, 2003; Torres & Hernandez, 2007; Torres, Martinez, Wallace, Medrano, Robledo, & Hernandez, 2012). Instead of focusing on the culture of origin to establish the individual's ethnic identity status, Torres has focused on the choices that students make between the majority culture of their living context and their culture of origin (Torres, 2003). Torres has used the framework provided by Phinney and developed a theory for Latino ethnic identity development with four cultural orientations, namely a Bicultural orientation, a Latino/Hispanic orientation, an Anglo orientation and a Marginal orientation (Torres, 2003). Individuals are placed in a specific orientation in the theory, based on their acculturation towards the majority culture (Torres, 2003). Acculturation refers to the choices made about the majority culture. Acculturation refers to different form ethnic identity, because ethnic identity focuses on the maintenance of the culture of origin, while acculturation focuses specifically on the majority culture (Torres, 2003).

The Bicultural orientation refers to individuals feeling comfortable with their culture of origin as well as the majority culture. Three types of students are more inclined to display this type of orientation. The first type is students who come from diverse environments to new environments that accept diversity. The second type comprises students who do not criticise the diversity of the environment because they usually do not value the majority culture or their culture of origin. The second type of student is similar to Phinney's unexamined ethnic identity. The third type comprises students who grew up in the majority culture and did not have much exposure to their culture of origin (Torres, 2003). Individuals with a Latino/Hispanic orientation display higher levels of comfort with their culture of origin. Individuals who come from a diverse environment to an environment that does not accept diversity tend to display characteristics of the Latino

orientation. In the case of an Anglo orientation, individuals display higher levels of comfort with the majority culture. The type of student who tends to identify with this orientation is a student who grew up in the majority culture and did not have a lot of exposure to his or her culture of origin. Individuals with a Marginal orientation display low levels of comfort with both cultures, which Torres suggested, may reflect conflict within the individual (Torres, 2003).

### **3.2.3 Barriers to ethnic identity development**

Ethnic identity development is influenced by numerous external factors. These factors may include discrimination, domestic violence and abuse. Torres and Ong (2010) have found that individuals in the exploration phase of ethnic identity are vulnerable to discrimination. Vulnerability towards discrimination predisposes individuals for the development of depression. Discrimination can also influence the individual's sense of belonging (Torres & Ong, 2010) and may therefore have an influence the individual's ethnic identity. Makhubela (2012) suggested that domestic violence and abuse are challenges for identity development in general, seeing that individuals develop an inherent, negative objective. Therefore, it might be argued that individuals exposed to domestic violence will also perceive their ethnic group as negative, influencing ethnic identity development.

In conclusion, in this section, different ethnic identity theories have been discussed. This includes Phinney's ethnic identity development theory that is based on three statuses, namely unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search and ethnic identity achievement. This was followed by the ethnic identity development theory as proposed by Torres. The barriers in ethnic identity development have also been discussed.

### **3.3 Gender-related aspects of ethnic identity**

According to research, gender differences in ethnic identity development are only minimal; if at all present (French et al., 2006; Wissink, Deković, Yağmur, Stams, & De Haan, 2008). For example, in a study amongst a Dutch population, no gender differences were found (Wissink et al., 2008). However, these results are limited to a Dutch population and cannot be transferred to

other populations without further research. Phinney (1990) suggested that gender differences will be more profound in ethnic groups where the expectations of men and women are significantly different, such as in situations where men are favoured over women in work employment or when a certain gender group is traditionally seen as the carrier of cultural traditions. Phinney (1989) further noted that, among black adolescents, male adolescents tend to endorse ethnic attitudes more than females. However, no definite conclusions about gender differences can be made due to fragmentary results (Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001).

### **3.4 Ethnic identity in adolescence**

As with identity development in general, ethnic identity development starts in childhood and continues into adulthood, reaching its peak during adolescence (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This can be explained by developmental theories such as cognitive developmental theory.

Children's ability to understand themselves and others is influenced by the increase in concrete operational thought. It also has an influence on the manner in which adolescents collect information about their ethnic group and engage in the behaviour thereof (Aboud, 1988; Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Kohlberg, 1966). Increased concrete operational thought assists in identifying the different behaviours and traits of the different ethnic groups in order to distinguish between them (Aboud & Amato, 2001; Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012). Cognitive development itself is not necessarily related to ethnic identity development, but rather cognitive maturity. Cognitive maturity is associated with the ability to identify the similarities and differences between groups, as well as the differences and similarities between oneself and other groups (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012).

On a social level, interpersonal relationships change over time. Firstly, adolescents' relationships with their parents become less important, while their relationships with friends increase in importance. During this time, romantic relationships also become more prominent (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). Hamm (2000) notes that adolescents are more likely to form friendships with peers observably similar to them, for instance, coming from the same ethnic background. It is also stated that the social group (or clique) that adolescents belong to in school

reflects their personality traits, abilities and values in some way, which helps shape the future of the adolescent (Giordano, 2003). In order for adolescents to group themselves, they first have to become more aware about the differences between them. It was found that in minority groups, or in the African American group, ethnicity plays a greater role in choosing friends that academic orientations or hobbies. This may be due to a greater influence of ethnicity on these adolescents' self-definition (Hamm, 2000).

### **3.5 Ethnic identity in South Africa**

South Africa, known as the rainbow nation, has a multi-cultural context. According to the 2011 census, there are four main racial groups in South Africa, namely black African (79.6%), Coloured (9%), Indian/Asian (2.5%) and White (8.9%) people (StatsSA, 2012). Each of these umbrella terms can be further divided into different ethnic groups, each with their own set of characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Adams et al., 2012). The white population is from Afrikaans (Dutch), European or British decent, while the coloured population have mixed ancestry. The black African population, this study's group of interest, is divided into nine different ethnic groups, namely Xitsonga, Sepedi, Tshivenda, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, isiXhosa, isiZulu and isiNdebele (StatsSA, 2004).

The black African group has some pronounced challenges in the South African context. The history of this group includes oppression and discrimination during the Apartheid era in the form of separate development, the segregation of races, economic exploitation and the abuse of political power (Abdi, 1999; Adams et al., 2012; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). With the transition into a democratic government during the 1990s, a strong drive towards national transformation started. Segregation was banned and policies of affirmative action were implemented to speed up the involvement of black Africans in the economic and public sectors (Adams, 2014; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). This process of transformation has a dual focus for South Africa. Firstly, transformation aims to promote the advancement of individuals in the previously disadvantaged ethnic groups. Secondly, transformation aims to encourage positive intergroup relations (Adams, 2014). Positive relations between the different ethnic groups in South Africa will inspire the



development of identities and attitudes of new generations to be more flexible and open to the opinions and cultures of other groups (Adams, 2014).

During the post-Apartheid era, affirmative action is implemented to restore equality among the different race groups. However, only a small number of individuals have established themselves in governmental, entrepreneurial or middle-class professions (Adams et al., 2012). Many black Africans are still employed as unskilled or semi-skilled labourers (as during the apartheid years) and earn a minimum wage or less (Adams et al., 2012; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). Due to this, as well as unemployment because of the lack of education during the time of Apartheid (Adams et al., 2012), a large percentage of black Africans are currently still experiencing low socio-economic status. Furthermore, the integration and desegregation of schools and institutions in South Africa are hampered by, among others, a lack of resources. Tihanyi (2007) argued that racial segregation has declined after the abolishment of Apartheid, but has been replaced by socio-economic status segregation. This has led to the majority of schools still being mono-racial because parents of low socio-economic status cannot afford to send their children to former white schools with higher fees (Tihanyi, 2007).

All these changes have a direct influence on the adolescents of today (Adams et al., 2012; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). Due to more integration in neighbourhoods, schools and universities, adolescents are exposed to a greater variety of ethnic groups. With the current socio-political transformation and integration that occur, it is argued that adolescents in South Africa not only experience an individual identity crisis, but also a national identity crisis (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Adolescents experience their individual identity crisis along with the national or cultural identity crisis at this time, therefore leading to a dual identity crisis. It is suggested that the ideal for this dual identity crisis would be for adolescents to form a synthesis between the western culture and their traditional culture (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). This is also the pattern seen among black African adolescents. Even though they still strongly identify with members of their own race, they show a tendency to integrate with Western and African cultures (Moosa, Moonsamy, & Fridjhon, 1997; Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

Even though South Africa has been a democratic country for 20 years, racial differences remain an emphasised concept. According to Gaganakis (2006), the strength of racial difference discourses is seen in black African girls reporting that Blacks are at the "bottom of the pile" (p. 367). The loss of power and class boundaries experienced by black Africans during Apartheid has remained engrained into their lives. This has led to ambiguous feelings towards the social and political changes in South Africa (Gaganakis, 2006). Therefore, it can be assumed that the ambiguous feelings surrounding ethnicity and race, ingrained with a sense of black Africans being a lower class, may be some of the challenges that black African adolescents experience during the development of their ethnic identity. Challenges with the acceptance of one's culture as a lower status group and the acceptance of the differences within one's group are also mentioned by Phinney (1990; Phinney et al., 1990) as common challenges in ethnic identity development among minority groups.

Gaganakis (2006) has found that during 1990, the most salient social category in which learners defined themselves, was being black. This might be the result of racial segregation during Apartheid (Gaganakis, 2006). In 2006, Gaganakis found that among black African girls, being black is the second-most salient category in which these girls defined themselves, while girls from white cultures rarely defined themselves according to their race. Black African girls defined themselves more often by referencing their racial group than their specific ethnic group. This indicates the greater emphasis on race and culture among the black African population.

With regard to identification with a specific ethnic group, Pretorius et al. (2013) have found that in an isiZulu sample they studied, 69.2% individuals identified themselves according to their ethnic group rather than the categories *African*, *South African* or *other*. However, the subjective identification of belonging to a specific group does not necessarily align with individuals' biologically determined ethnic group (Pretorius et al., 2013). This relates to the different types of definitions proposed by Cokley (2007), as discussed earlier in this chapter. It is therefore important for the ethnic identity development of individuals who do not have the biological traits of the ethnic group they identify with to be accepted by the particular group (Pretorius et al., 2013).

The black African population is considered a collectivistic culture (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Collectivism refers to the tendency of a group to be gregarious and orientated towards the group rather than the individual (Eaton & Louw, 2000). The core and extended families of a collectivistic group are important and they tend to place special emphasis on traditional values (Adams et al., 2012). This might have an impact on individuals' perception of their ethnic identity. Adams et al. (2012) have found that the black African group places more importance on ideology, religion, spirituality and ethnic reference during self-descriptions than any other group in South Africa does (Adams et al., 2012; Norris et al., 2008). Furthermore, it was established that this group tends to have more collectivistic responses and in-group descriptions in their self-description than other ethnic groups do (Adams et al., 2012; Norris et al., 2008). Pretorius et al. (2013) indicate that the majority of participants in their study preferred a modern view rather than traditional values, practices and beliefs (Pretorius et al., 2013). This indicates a strong movement from a traditional culture to a more westernised culture.

Each of the ethnic groups in South Africa has a different set of traditions, values, behaviour, etc. (Adams et al., 2012). Within an isiZulu population, Pretorius et al. (2013) have found that most participants described the traditions of the isiZulu culture in a concrete, physical and literal manner, such as identifying the traditional clothes, food and dances. This might be because of cultural preference or an unexplored identity (Pretorius et al., 2013). The only two traditions practised by more than 50% of the participants were ancestor reverence (64%) and lobola (77%). Ancestral reverence refers to identifying with traditional spiritual characteristics of the isiZulu culture, indicating an interconnectedness across space and time (Parlett & Lee, 2005; Pretorius et al., 2013). Lobola refers to a marriage transaction between a bride's father and his future son-in-law for the man to be able to marry the father's daughter. The currency for this transaction is usually cattle (Pretorius et al., 2013).

Traditional gender roles and views are still prominent in South Africa. In most black African groups, men have greater or absolute power (Nyembezi et al., 2012). Traditionally, boys go through an initiation process to become a man. This initiation process includes circumcision school, where boys are traditionally circumcised and educated in the traditions of their ethnicity. The boys are also equipped for their adult roles by learning about sexual behaviour and their

familial and community duties. This is an important rite of passage towards becoming a man and contributes to the development of their ethnic identity (Le Roux, Niehaus, Koen, Seller, Lochner, & Emsley, 2007; Nyembezi et al., 2012). It was found that initiation might lead to stronger commitment in an ethnic group (Nyembezi et al., 2012).

Harris and Findley (2014) have studied strength of ethnic identity in the Mayibuya township, Eastern Cape. It was found that, on average, the capability to identify the ethnicity of others was very low among participants. Within the isiXhosa group, only 45% of the participants could identify another member of the isiXhosa culture. In the Sesotho culture, only 22% of the Sesotho sample could identify another person from the Sesotho culture.

Adams (2014) has found that ethnic identity was more salient amongst black and white South Africans compared to other population groups such as in the USA, Cameroon, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Adams (2014) argues that this phenomenon may be due the history of ethno-cultural divide in South Africa, which leads to increased awareness and emphasis on group membership. It was found that ethnic identity is more salient in culturally diverse contexts. Furthermore, Adams (2014) has found that younger adolescents experience higher salience in their ethnic identities.

In conclusion, South Africa is a multicultural context with multiple ethnic groups, each with their own values, beliefs and practices. Rapid transformation, integration and socio-political change (and, in some instances, the lack thereof) have brought about many challenges with regard to ethnic identity development in South Africa. Racial differences and racial identity remain emphasised concepts and traditional gender roles are still prominent. However, some South African adolescents are more integrating Western views with their traditional ethnic identities.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the term *ethnicity* was defined. A distinction between *ethnicity* and *race* was made, followed by a discussion of definitions of *ethnic identity*. The different components of

ethnic identity and the strength of ethnic identity were discussed. Theories related to ethnic identity development were explained, as well as the barriers that may be experienced during ethnic identity development. The gender-related aspects of ethnic identity and ethnic identity during adolescence were discussed. Lastly, ethnic identity development in the South African context was investigated.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of ethnic identity of black African adolescents. The research aim and methods used for this study will be described in this chapter. The chapter will proceed as follows: Firstly, the research rationale, purpose and aim of the research will be provided. Thereafter, the research design and approach, as well as the participants and sampling procedures will be explained. A description of the procedures of data collection and data analysis will be given. Lastly, the ethical considerations, the issues of trustworthiness and a chapter summary will be provided.

#### **4.1 Research rationale, purpose and aims**

The field of ethnic identity development was studied widely amongst different populations and ethnic groups across the world (Corenbrum & Armstrong, 2012; Nezelek, Schaafsma, Safron, & Krejtz, 2012; Phinney, 2008; Yoon, 2011). However, in the South African context, research on ethnic identity development has been minimal. The researchers in the field refer to the importance of more studies that focus on primary data collection (Norris et al., 2008). Furthermore, they suggest focusing on the different social, language, economic and ethnic backgrounds (e. g. Sesotho, isiXhosa) of the South African youth (Adams et al., 2012; Norris et al., 2008).

Throughout history, race has been a dominant divider of the South African population (Bornman, 2011). There are differences in the identity patterns of the different ethnic and racial groups (Smith & Stones, 1999; Smith, Stratton, Stones, & Naidoo, 2003). Because of these differences, it was decided to focus this study on one ethnic/racial group, rather than on the South African population in general. Traditionally, the black African population is considered more collectivistic, with a greater emphasis on family unit, community and traditional values (Adams et al., 2012; Eaton & Louw, 2000). However, this group has also started to become more Westernised (Adams et al., 2012). For these reasons, the black African population group, specifically in the Motheo district of central South Africa, was chosen for this study.

According to Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, identity is developed in the identity versus role confusion task of adolescence. This includes the development of ethnic development. According to Marcia (1980), late adolescence is the time in which adolescents' physical development, cognitive development and social expectations coincide in order for the young persons to review their past identifications and construct a new identity for adulthood. Therefore, middle to late adolescents was the focus of this study.

A gender component was included in this study because of the inconclusive findings about gender differences in ethnic identity development (Phinney et al., 2001) and the suggestion for further investigation by Phinney and Ong (2007), Torres et al. (2010) and Yoon (2011).

The aim of this study was thus to explore ethnic identity development among black African adolescents in the Motheo district of central South Africa.

The following research questions were investigated:

1. To which degree do exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity strength manifest in black African adolescents of various gender, ethnic and age groups?
2. What are the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups?
3. How do adolescents respond to the challenges of developing a black African identity?

## **4.2 Research design and approach**

The research was exploratory by nature. To answer the research questions stated above, a mixed methods research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Yu, 2007) was used.

Exploratory designs are used to observe topics that are of new interest to the researcher, or relatively new topics (Babbie, 2007). Exploratory research is typically used for three purposes: Firstly, exploratory research is used to gratify the researcher's curiosity about a certain topic, and also for the researcher to improve understanding of the topic. Secondly, it is used to test the

feasibility of a broader study. Thirdly, it is used to develop methods to be employed in successive studies (Babbie, 2007). The purpose of using the exploratory design in this study was to enhance understanding of the topic of ethnic identity development in a population group that has not sufficiently been researched.

A mixed methods research design was used to answer the research questions (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). A mixed methods research design refers to a research design that combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. This includes methods to collect, analyse, integrate and interpret the data (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). This design is further described as a design that does not limit the researcher, and is seen as a more expansive, creative, inclusive, complementary and pluralistic form of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The strengths of this design include the increased generalisability of the results because of more complete knowledge that is created by combining quantitative and qualitative research. It also facilitates deepened understanding and insight, in comparison to a single method of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The disadvantages of this design are that a researcher should acquire the skills of multiple methods and approaches in order to complete mixed methods research successfully. Furthermore, it is also more expensive and time consuming than a single method of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). With the development of the mixed methods research design, certain paradigm wars arose around the compatibility of quantitative and qualitative designs (Denzin, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Debates included arguments that quantitative and qualitative research are fundamentally different, and that the interpretive and positivist paradigms cannot be combined (Denzin, 2010).

Quantitative research refers to measuring and comparing variables, investigating relationships between variables and making inferences from a sample to a population (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The advantage of quantitative research is that it adds an objective, statistical component to a study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In comparison, qualitative research focuses on the understanding of the context, process and meaning of the research topic for the participants. The benefit of qualitative research is that it enriches the study by including the voice of the “knower” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14).



In this study a mixed methods research design was chosen with the intention of gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of the topic (Johnson et al., 2007). The quantitative section of the study was used to determine the precise measurement of the exploration, commitment and strength of the adolescents' ethnic identity development. The qualitative section of the study was used to gain contextual information on the development of ethnic identity and the challenges the adolescents experience in this regard.

### **4.3 Research participants and sampling procedures**

Participants included in the study were from the black African adolescent population in the Motheo district of central South Africa.

Black African adolescents from four secondary schools in the Motheo district participated in the study. Participants who were included in this study were participants who identified with one of the nine official ethnic groups that form part of the black African race of South Africa. Participants from the White, Coloured or Indian/Asian ethnic groups were excluded, as well as participants who are not in middle to late adolescence.

For the quantitative section of the research, convenience sampling was used to compile a sample of participants (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Convenience sampling is a form of non-probability sampling (Maree & Pieterse, 2009), and therefore the participants were not randomly selected. Convenience sampling refers to compiling a sample by approaching participants that are easily accessible to the researcher (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The advantage of this method is that participants are found easily, and it is time and cost effective (Maree & Pieterse, 2009). The disadvantage of this method of sampling is that the population does not always give the most appropriate answers and are not truly representative of the population group. This may result in false conclusions (Maree & Pieterse, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The final sample (after incomplete questionnaires had been excluded) consisted of 388 participants. The biographical characteristics of the sample are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2***Biographical characteristics of the sample*

<b>Characteristic</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	131	33.8
	Female	257	66.2
<b>Age</b>	13	59	15.2
	14	56	14.4
	15	24	6.2
	16	35	9.0
	17	66	17.0
	18	49	12.6
	19	52	13.4
	20	28	7.2
	21	19	4.9
<b>Ethnic group</b>	Setswana	87	22.4
	Sesotho	237	61.1
	isiXhosa	64	16.5

The sample consisted of 131 male (33.8%) and 257 female participants (66.2%). The participants' ages ranged from 13 to 21, with most participants aged 17. Three ethnic groups were represented in the sample, namely Setswana (23.0%), Sesotho (60.5%) and isiXhosa (16.2%).

The final sample for the qualitative section of this study was compiled using convenience sampling (Maree & Pieterse, 2009) and consisted of 17 participants: two female focus groups and one male focus group. The biographical characteristics of the focus group participants are represented in Table 3.

**Table 3***Biographical characteristics of the focus groups*

<b>Characteristic</b>		<b>Focus group 1</b>	<b>Focus group 2</b>	<b>Focus group 3</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	0	0	5	5	29.41
	Female	7	5	0	12	70.59
<b>Age</b>						
	16	1	3	2	6	35.29
	17	4	0	1	5	29.42
	18	2	2	2	6	35.29
<b>Ethnic group</b>						
	Setswana	2	0	1	3	17.65
	Sesotho	1	5	1	7	41.18
	isiXhosa	1	0	3	4	23.53
	isiZulu	1	0	0	1	5.88
	Coloured	1	0	0	1	5.88
	Xhoi-San	1	0	0	1	5.88

The age of participants of the qualitative section of this study ranged from 16 to 18 years and mainly consisted of members from the Sesotho, isiXhosa and Setswana groups, with single members of the Coloured, Xhoi-San and isiZulu groups. The participants of the Xhoi-San and Coloured population do not form part of the core sample of this study. However, these two groups identify with black ethnic groups and were therefore included during the first focus group. The participation of these two individuals will be regarded as part of the limitations of this study. In total, five male participants and twelve female participants participated in the focus groups.

#### **4.4 Procedures of data collection**

With the aim of answering the research questions, data were collected using quantitative and qualitative methods. The data collection for the quantitative section of the study was done by means of measuring instruments (namely the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised and the Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure) and a biographical questionnaire. The data collection for the qualitative section of the study was done by means of focus groups. In the following sections, the data collection procedures of both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study will be explained.

##### **4.4.1 Quantitative data collection procedures**

The data collection for the quantitative section of the research was done by means of a biographical questionnaire and two standardised self-report measures.

Biographical information was acquired by means of a biographical questionnaire. This questionnaire included information regarding the gender, age, race, home language and ethnic group of the participant.

A self-report method is the approach of asking participants direct questions (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2003). One type of self-report method is the questionnaire where individuals respond to posed questions (Barker et al., 2003; Stangor, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). For the purposes of this study, fixed-format self-report measures (Stangor, 2011) were used, presenting individuals with a set of questions. The advantages of using a fixed-format self-report measure are that it is a structured measure with a set of response formats and statistical procedures that can determine the efficacy of the scale (Stangor, 2011). Furthermore, it is standardised and therefore all participants complete the same set of questions (Barker et al., 2003). The disadvantage of this type of measure is that participants could unknowingly misinterpret or misunderstand some questions, or may not complete some of the questions (Barker et al., 2003).

The self-report measures used for this study were the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R) (Phinney & Ong, 2007) and the Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM) (Cislo, 2008).

**a) The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R)**

The MEIM-R is based on Erikson's (1968) ego identity theory, Marcia's (1980) ego-identity status theory and Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory. The MEIM-R includes the aspects of identity development that are expected to be shared between different ethnic groups, including the feeling of belonging and attachment, as proposed by Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory, and the development of identity, as proposed by Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980). According to Yoon (2011), the MEIM-R is the most widely used ethnic identity measure.

This scale has two subscales, measuring exploration and commitment, and consists of six items, assessed by a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Phinney & Ong, 2007). A high score indicates a high exploration and commitment towards a group and a low score indicates a low exploration and commitment towards a group. Three of the items (1, 4 and 5) relate to the subscale exploration and three items (2, 3 and 6) to commitment. The combined scale (total score including both the subscales) can also be used to gain a general idea of the exploration and commitment of the participants (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Yoon, 2011).

The validity of this measure was confirmed by multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Reliability analysis, amongst an American population of university students, showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81 for the total scale, with alpha coefficients of 0.76 for exploration and 0.78 for commitment (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Yoon (2011) has conducted the MEIM-R in a study including a European-American population and a minority population. For the European-American population, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the exploration-subscale, commitment subscale and combined six-item scale were 0.91, 0.84 and 0.89, respectively, while for the minority population, it was 0.87, 0.88 and 0.88, respectively. In another study done with an American population of Grade six to eight learners, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.84 for the combined scale (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, &

Romero, 1999). In a South African study conducted by Smith et al. (2003), the alpha coefficient for the combined scale was 0.87.

In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the sample of participants were found to be 0.52 for the exploration subscale, 0.63 for the commitment subscale and 0.70 for the combined scale. When these results are compared to the reliability of the subscales of the MEIM-R in Yoon's (2011) study, it can be observed that the reliability for the population of this study is much lower. This might be explained by the participants' limited understanding of the concepts used in the measuring instrument as well as their level of English proficiency.

#### **b) The Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM)**

The Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure (SEIM) (Cislo, 2008) was used to measure the strength of ethnic identity. This measure is based on Phinney's (1995) definition of ethnic identity, involving perspectives and emotions regarding one's ethnic group. The SEIM, originally developed for a study on ethnic identity and self-esteem, is regarded as an attitudinal dimension of ethnic identity (Cislo, 2008). The SEIM consists of 10 items, assessed by a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. A high score indicates a strong ethnic identity and a low score a weak ethnic identity. Items in this measure include, for example, the preference for socialising with members of one's own ethnic group. The internal reliability for this scale, in a study conducted amongst a Cuban and Nicaraguan population of young adults, was 0.83 (Cislo, 2008). No evidence could be found for the use of the SEIM in the South African context.

The Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.69.

Both the MEIM-R and the SEIM are based on general theories of identity development and components of ethnic identity shared between ethnic groups. Therefore, the MEIM-R and SEIM were not designed to measure exploration, commitment and strength regarding a specific ethnic group, but rather to measure the construct of exploration, commitment and strength regarding any ethnic group. An example of the measures can be found in Appendix A.

#### 4.4.2 Qualitative data collection procedures

The qualitative data collection was done by means of focus groups. A focus group is a small group, about 6 to 12 people, of relatively homogeneous participants focused on discussing a research topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). A group moderator is included to facilitate the discussion by using predetermined open-ended questions. The group moderator also keeps the discussion focused on the research topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The advantages of focus groups include gaining and exploring high quality, in-depth information about the research topic in a short period of time (Acocella, 2012; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This is possible because of the combination of participants with different experiences and perceptions (Grønkjær et al., 2011). Interaction between participants can inspire communication and emphasise the perceptions, attitudes, thinking and understanding of the participants (Grønkjær et al., 2011), and therefore enhances the quality of the data (Patton, 2002). There are also disadvantages to this approach. Focus groups may have reactive and investigator effects if the participants feel watched. This includes the participants giving socially appropriate responses, or what they think the researcher is looking for, rather than their true opinion of the topic. Acocella (2012) referred to the risk of conformity within the group when participants would rather conform to the idea of the group than state their true opinion. This is a great disadvantage of this method of data collection (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Furthermore, it may be difficult to generalise the results if the sample is not a true representation of the population in which the study is done (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Furthermore, focus group questions are not completely standardised and the composition of each focus may differ (Vicsek, 2010). The moderator may also be biased during the focus group, influencing the way the participants react to the topic (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

In this research study, focus groups were used to explore how adolescents respond to the challenges of developing a black African identity. For this study, six to eight participants were selected for each group. Smaller groups were chosen to avoid instances where certain participants do not get the opportunity to speak due to too many participants in the group. Participants were compiled for each focus group according to their age group, gender, willingness to participate and availability during school hours. Each focus group was 45 to 60

minutes in length, depending on the availability of learners in the school setting. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used. These questions focused on ethnic identity (e. g. What is ethnic identity?), exploration and commitment (e. g. From whom did you learn your ethnic traditions?), strength of ethnic identity (e. g. How strongly do you agree with your ethnic group?), and challenges in ethnic identity development (e. g. What do you feel is challenging of belonging to your ethnic group?). All the focus-group data were transcribed verbatim for further analysis. An example of the transcriptions can be seen in Appendix B.

## **4.5 Data analysis**

The data analysis for the quantitative section of this study was done using multivariate analysis of variance. The data analysis for the qualitative section of the study was done using thematic analysis. In the following paragraphs, the data analysis for both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study will be described.

### **4.5.1 Quantitative data analysis**

The reliability of the measuring instruments for this specific sample was determined by means of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). The Cronbach formula is an internal consistency analysis used to determine the reliability of a measure (Cronbach, 1951; Cronbach, 2004).

The statistical analysis that was used for the quantitative section of the study firstly focused on reporting the descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength in this research sample. Secondly, to determine the differences between various gender and ethnic groups, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was done. MANOVA is an extension of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique, which is a flexible statistical method that investigates the differences between two or more groups (Bray & Maxwell, 1985; Hadzi-Pavlovic, 2010). A MANOVA is used when more than one dependent variable is investigated (Hadzi-Pavlovic, 2010). In this study, the independent variables included



the participants' age, gender and ethnic group. The dependent variables included the exploration, commitment and strength of ethnic identity development.

Significant results on the MANOVA were followed by one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs). This was done to determine which dependent variables showed significant differences. In cases where more than two groups were used (as, for example, with ethnic groups), significant results were followed by post-hoc *t*-tests. The Scheffé procedure was utilised to determine which of the three groups differed significantly from the other groups. The practical significance of the results was investigated by determining the effect sizes. A value of 0.2 indicates a small effect, a value of 0.25 indicates a medium effect and a value of 0.4 indicates a large effect (Steyn, 1999).

#### **4.5.2 Qualitative data analysis**

The data analysis for the qualitative section of this study was done by means of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis refers to a method of data analysis that identifies, analyses and reports patterns or themes within data. A theme refers to a specific pattern of meaning (Joffe, 2011). Thematic analysis is a process of reading and re-reading the data until patterns are recognised and themes emerge (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). One advantage of thematic analysis is its flexibility while still providing rich, complex and detailed data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, it is suitable for large groups and research teams (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). The disadvantages of, or critique on, the thematic analysis approach are the absence of clear guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A researcher may also miss some data (Guest et al., 2011).

Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed a six-step guide in response to the critique on thematic analysis. These six phases are (1) familiarising the researcher with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes and (6) producing the report. Each of these six phases was followed in the qualitative data analysis of this study.

In phase one, familiarising the researcher with the data, the researcher has to get to know the depth and breadth of the data by repeatedly having active contact with the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the analysis of this study, the researcher facilitated all focus groups, and read and re-read the transcribed data set, while noting down initial ideas.

After researchers had familiarised themselves with the data and noted initial ideas, phase two of thematic analysis could continue (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, initial codes are generated in order to identify the aspects of the data set that are relevant and meaningful to the research aim. The process of initial coding entails organising the data set into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). It is suggested that a code manual be written before coding commences. This code manual should include the code label, the definition of the theme concerned and an explanation of how to identify when a theme arises (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The coding for this study was done firstly by identifying how codes will be labelled and tagged, followed by working systematically through the complete data set, while identifying and tagging each aspect of the data.

During the third phase of thematic analysis, the search for themes is initiated. The aim of this phase is to find the relationships between the codes in order to organise the codes into broader categories, or potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher has identified potential themes by organising codes with similar ideas into tables. Each table of codes was then analysed to identify a possible theme.

In the fourth phase of thematic analysis, reviewing themes, the researcher has to refine themes. This phase has two levels. The first level involves reviewing the coded data extracts in order to verify a clear pattern. The second level explores the validity of the themes when compared to the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the analysis of this study, the researcher read all the data for each theme and reworked the data until coherent patterns were formed. Thereafter the researcher tested whether the themes worked in comparison to the complete set of data. This was done by using a thematic map.

After reviewing the themes, phase five, defining and naming themes, could be started. During this phase, each theme was refined and further defined in order to identify the essence of the theme. Subthemes could also be identified during this phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2011). In order to achieve this, the researcher continued with the analysis and refinement of each specific theme until clear definitions for each theme could be given.

Phase six, producing the report, refers to the final write up of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this study, the production of the report refers to chapter five, the results and discussion of the study.

#### **4.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Research Committee of the Department of Psychology, the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of the Free State (Appendix C) and the Free State Department of Education (Appendix D).

According to Allan (2008), the researcher must respect the dignity of the participants and the participant's right to autonomy. Both of these principles can be honoured by fully informing the participants of the purpose of the research, the risks of participating and the limits to confidentiality. To ensure the ethical nature of the study, the ethical guidelines required by the Department of Health (2006) and guidelines proposed by Allan (2008) were followed.

For the quantitative section of the study, informed consent was received from each participant by means of an information and informed consent form. This document clearly stated the nature of the research, assured confidentiality and emphasised voluntarily participation with the option to withdraw at any stage. Each participant gave informed consent by means of signing the consent form prior to participating. By signing the consent form, the participants also gave permission that the data may be used for any current or future studies in this area of study.

For the qualitative section of the study, each focus group started with a discussion on the purpose of the study, as well as the voluntary nature of participation, with the option to withdraw at any stage. Confidentiality and the limitations thereof were discussed and the participants were asked to keep information shared during the focus group confidential. At the onset of the focus groups, participants were informed that the discussion was recorded. The participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent document stating all the information mentioned above. An example of the informed consent form can be seen in Appendix E.

Confidentiality was achieved by ensuring that the collected data were kept and stored privately and securely. Furthermore, no identifying information was included in the research report.

#### **4.7 Trustworthiness**

To assure that the findings that resulted from this study are trustworthy, the criteria for trustworthiness were taken into consideration. This includes the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the qualitative section of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

Credibility demonstrates the internal validity of the data, thus the truth-value of the data (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). When credibility is achieved, it implies that the data will represent the correct and honest reality of the participants, which can be verified by the participants (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1982). In order to achieve credibility, the data were transcribed verbatim, ensuring that the participants' realities were represented honestly, clearly and accurately.

Transferability is a method for demonstrating the external validity or generalisation of the data (Guba, 1981). Generalisation refers to the data not being reliant on situational or chronological variations, and therefore the data will be relevant to other contexts (Guba, 1981). This also implies that data will not change over time (Guba, 1981). Therefore, transferability refers to the ability to transfer the findings of the study to other contexts. Within this study, the goal was not to achieve generalisation exclusively, but rather to give a true representation of the

context of the research. To achieve this, it is suggested that a thick description of the context and data should be given (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Patton, 2002). For this study, a thick description was given by creating a rich, detailed and concrete narrative of the context and participants.

Dependability refers to the ability to replicate the study under similar circumstances in another time and place (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). This will assure the stability of the study after unpredictable and conscious changes (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). To ensure dependability, data triangulation was used. This refers to combining methods or data (Patton, 2002). For this study, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection was used. This is called data triangulation, which refers to specifically using an assortment of data sources in a study (Patton, 2002). Thus, by combining two questionnaires and three focus groups, a variety of data sources is available to ensure that the data are dependable.

Confirmability refers to how objective the reported data are. This was achieved by keeping an audit trail of the original documentation (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; White et al., 2012). An audit trail entails keeping an accurate and comprehensive record of the approaches and activities during the data collection and data analysis of the study, including the highlights and shortcomings thereof (Guba, 1981; White et al., 2012). The advantage of this is that it provides opportunity for reflection, reasoning and criticism for the researcher and a methodological reference for the reader (White et al., 2012). To enhance confirmability of this study, the audit trail was reviewed by the research supervisor.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, an overview of the methodology that was used to answer the research questions of this study was provided. The research rationale, purpose and aim were discussed followed by the research design and approach of the study. An exploratory mixed methods research design was used. The research participants and sampling procedures were explained followed by data collection procedures. To collect the data for the quantitative section of the study, participants were chosen using convenience sampling. The measures used included the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised, the Strength of Ethnic Identity Measure, and a biographical questionnaire. For the qualitative section of the study, data were collected by means

of focus groups. Next, the data analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study was described. The data analysis for the quantitative section of the study was done by means of the multivariate analysis of variance, while thematic analysis was used for the qualitative section of the study. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

In this chapter, the results of this study will be presented and discussed. In the quantitative section of this chapter, the degree to which black African adolescents explore and commit to an ethnic identity, as well as the strength of black African adolescents' ethnic identity will be presented. In the qualitative section, adolescents' response to the challenges of developing a black African identity will be presented. This will be followed by an integrated discussion of the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative sections, compared to literature and previous studies in the field.

#### **5.1 Quantitative results**

The quantitative section of the study was employed to investigate the following research questions:

1. To which degree do exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity strength manifest in black African adolescents of various gender, ethnic and age groups?
2. What are the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups?

##### **5.1.1 Descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength**

In the following section, the descriptive statistics (mean total scores and standard deviations) regarding the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength in the participants of this study will be presented.

In Table 4 the means and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment (both the subscales and the total scale of the MEIM-R), and strength (as obtained on the SEIM) are reported for the total group of participants.

**Table 4**

*Mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength for the total group of participants*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>
Exploration (subscale)	388	11.04	2.88
Commitment (subscale)	388	12.02	2.91
Exploration/commitment (total scale)	388	23.06	4.95
Strength	388	51.29	10.25

For the exploration and commitment subscales, the participants could obtain a minimum score of 3, a maximum score of 15, with a neutral score at 9. For the purpose of this study, a score higher than 9 will be regarded as a stronger degree of exploration and commitment and a score below 9 will be regarded as a weaker degree of exploration and commitment. Regarding combined exploration/commitment, the participants could obtain a minimum score of 6 and a maximum score of 30, with a neutral score of 15. For the purpose of this study, a score higher than 15 will be seen as stronger exploration/commitment and a score below 15 will be seen as weaker exploration/commitment. In Table 4 it can be observed that the total group obtained a mean total score of 11.04 for exploration and 12.02 for commitment, with 23.06 for the combined scale. This indicates the group's tendency towards stronger exploration and commitment.

For strength, participants could obtain a minimum score of 7 and a maximum score of 70, with a neutral score of 40. For the purposes of this study, a score above 40 will be interpreted as a tendency towards stronger ethnic identity strength and a score below 40 will be seen as a tendency towards weaker ethnic identity strength. As seen in Table 4, the total group obtained a mean total score of 51.29, which indicates a tendency towards strong ethnic identity strength.



In Table 5, the mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment (both the subscales and the total scale of the MEIM-R) and strength (as obtained on the SEIM) are reported for the male and female groups participating in this study.

**Table 5**

*Mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength for male and female participants*

	Gender	N	M	s
Exploration (subscale)	Male	131	10.30	3.02
	Female	257	11.42	2.73
Commitment (subscale)	Male	131	11.44	3.24
	Female	257	12.32	2.69
Exploration/commitment (total scale)	Male	131	21.73	5.48
	Female	257	23.74	4.52
Strength	Male	131	48.58	11.07
	Female	257	52.67	9.53

As seen in Table 5, both the male and female groups' mean total scores were in the higher ranges. The female group portrayed a consistent tendency towards higher mean total scores than the males in each of the four measured aspects (e.g. 23.74, compared to the male group's mean total score of 21.73 for exploration/commitment and 52.67, compared to the male group's mean total score of 48.58 for strength).

In Table 6, the mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment (both the subscales and the total scale of the MEIM-R) and strength (as obtained on the SEIM) are reported for the three ethnic groups participating in this study, namely Setswana, Sesotho and isiXhosa.

**Table 6**

*Mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment, combined exploration/commitment and strength in different ethnic groups*

	<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>
<b>Exploration (subscale)</b>	Setswana	87	10.48	3.38
	Sesotho	237	11.22	2.67
	isiXhosa	64	11.14	2.82
<b>Commitment (subscale)</b>	Setswana	87	11.11	3.34
	Sesotho	237	12.18	2.66
	isiXhosa	64	12.64	2.98
<b>Exploration/commitment (total scale)</b>	Setswana	87	21.60	6.03
	Sesotho	237	23.41	4.45
	isiXhosa	64	23.78	4.80
<b>Strength</b>	Setswana	87	48.18	12.50
	Sesotho	237	51.98	9.05
	isiXhosa	64	52.94	10.36

As seen in Table 6, all three ethnic groups' mean total scores were in the higher ranges. From the mean total scores, it seems as if the Setswana group consistently tended towards lower mean total scores than the other two ethnic groups.

In Table 7, the mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment (both the subscales and the total scale of the MEIM-R) and strength (as obtained on the SEIM) are reported for the different age groups. The participants were divided into three age groups, namely 13–14 years, 15–17 years and 18–21 years.

**Table 7**

*Mean total scores and standard deviations regarding ethnic identity exploration, commitment, combined exploration/commitment and strength for different age groups*

	<b>Age group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>
<b>Exploration (subscale)</b>	13–14 years	115	11.75	2.602
	15–17 years	125	10.66	2.865
	18–21 years	148	10.82	3.008
<b>Commitment (subscale)</b>	13–14 years	115	12.47	2.549
	15–17 years	125	11.53	3.099
	18–21 years	148	12.08	2.975
<b>Exploration/ commitment (total scale)</b>	13–14 years	115	24.22	4.054
	15–17 years	125	22.19	5.065
	18–21 years	148	22.90	5.336
<b>Strength</b>	13–14 years	115	50.88	8.612
	15–17 years	125	50.23	9.919
	18–21 years	148	52.49	11.546

As seen in Table 7, all three age groups' mean total scores were in the higher ranges. No clear tendencies in mean total scores were evident.

In the following section, the results of the statistical investigation into the significance of the differences between the various groups are reported.

### 5.1.2. Differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups

To determine whether statistically significant differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength exist between various gender, ethnic and age groups, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was completed. The dependant variables were *exploration*, *commitment* (as separate subscales and combined), and *strength*. The independent variables were *gender* (two groups; male and female), *ethnic group* (three groups; Setswana, Sesotho and isiXhosa.) and *age* (three groups; 13–14 years, 15–17 years and 18–21 years).

Initial assumption testing was done to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and multicollinearity, after which the MANOVA was done. The results of this procedure are summarised in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*MANOVA F-values for the testing of difference between gender, ethnic and age groups*

Independent variable	F-value	<i>v</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial eta-squared
<b>Gender group</b>	4.39**	3; 368	0.005	0.035
<b>Ethnic group:</b>	2.59*	6; 736	0.017	0.02
<b>Age group</b>	1.79	6;736	0.099	0.01

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  \*  $p \leq 0.05$

From Table 8 it is clear that statistically significant differences exist for the gender and ethnic groups. For the gender groups, the difference was significant on the 1% level of significance and for ethnic group, on the 5% level of significance. No statistically significant differences were found between the age groups.

Since significant results were found regarding gender and ethnic group, the MANOVA was followed with ANOVAs. This was done to determine which dependent variables showed

significant differences between the two gender and three ethnic groups. For ethnic groups, the Scheffé procedure was utilised to determine which of the three groups differed significantly from the other groups. The practical significance of the results was investigated by determining the effect sizes.

The results pertaining to the mean total scores, standard deviations and *F*-values relating to the ANOVA for gender group are summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Mean total scores, standard deviations and F-values relating to the ANOVA for gender group*

	Male (n=131)		Female (n=257)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial eta- squared
	<i>M</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>s</i>			
Exploration (subscale)	10.30	3.02	11.42	2.73	10.00**	0.002	0.026
Commitment (subscale)	11.44	3.24	12.32	2.69	4.76*	0.03	0.013
Exploration/ commitment (total scale)	21.73	5.48	23.74	4.52	9.88**	0.002	0.026
Strength	48.58	11.07	52.67	9.53	8.36**	0.004	0.022

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  \*  $p \leq 0.05$

As seen in Table 9, when considering the dependent variables separately for the gender groups, statistical significant differences were found for exploration (on the 1% level of significance), commitment (on the 5% level of significance), for the combined scale exploration/commitment (on the 1% level of significance), and for strength (on the 1% level of significance). From the mean total scores it can be seen that the female group consistently obtained higher scores than the males in each of the four measured aspects. The partial eta-

squared scores for all four variables (ranging from 0.013 to 0.026) can be considered as an indication of small effect size.

The results pertaining to the mean total scores, standard deviations and *F*-values relating to the ANOVA for ethnic group are summarised in Table 10.

**Table 10**

*Mean total scores, standard deviations and F-values relating to the ANOVA for ethnic group*

	Setswana (n=87)		Sesotho (n=237)		IsiXhosa (n=64)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<b>Partial eta- squared</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>s</b>			
Exploration (subscale)	10.48	3.38	11.22	2.67	11.14	2.82	1.19	0.307	0.006
Commitment (subscale)	11.11	3.34	12.18	2.66	12.64	2.98	3.78*	0.024	0.020
Exploration/ commitment (total scale)	21.60	6.03	23.41	4.45	23.78	4.80	3.13*	0.045	0.017
Strength	48.18	12.50	51.98	9.05	52.94	10.36	7.42**	0.001	0.039

\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  \*  $p \leq 0.05$

From Table 10 it is clear that, when considering the dependent variables separately for the ethnic groups, differences regarding exploration were not statistically significant. Statistically significant differences were found for commitment (on the 5% level of significance), for the combined scale exploration/commitment (on the 5% level of significance), and for strength (on the 1% level of significance). The Scheffé procedure was utilised to determine which of the three groups differed significantly from the other groups. For all three variables where significant differences were found (commitment, exploration/commitment and strength) the Setswana group differed significantly (on the 5% level of significance) from both the Sesotho and isiXhosa

groups. From the mean total scores, it can be seen that the Setswana group obtained consistently lower scores than the other two ethnic groups. The partial eta-squared scores for all the variables can be considered as an indication of small effect size.

### **5.1.3 Key quantitative findings**

Based on the results reported above, the black African sample used in this research study obtained scores indicating a tendency towards higher degrees of exploration and commitment, as well as a strong ethnic identity. Statistically significant differences between males and females were found with regard to exploration/commitment and strength, with female participants indicating higher rates of exploration/commitment and strength. With regard to ethnic group, significant differences were found in terms of the some aspects of exploration/commitment (more relating to commitment than to exploration), as well as strength, with the Setswana group obtaining consistently lower scores than the other two ethnic groups. No statistically significant differences were found between the different age groups.

## **5.2 Qualitative results**

The main aim of the qualitative section of this study was to gain contextual information regarding the development of ethnic identity and adolescents' responses to the challenges of developing a black African identity. The main themes that emerged from the thematic analysis included: "Finding my place of belonging", "My path to knowing where I belong", "Aspects preventing me from being me" and "Finding myself within a changing environment". A summary of the themes and subthemes is provided in Table 11.

**Table 11**

*Themes and subthemes regarding the development of ethnic identity and adolescents' responses to the challenges of developing a black African identity*

<b>Main themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
<b>Theme 1: Finding my place of belonging</b> – The manner that ethnicity is seen and determined by adolescents	Factors determining my group My birthright to belonging Choosing my ethnic group
<b>Theme 2: My path to knowing where I belong</b> – Methods and resources used by adolescents to gain information about their ethnic group	The sources of knowing where I belong What I can do to find myself
<b>Theme 3: Aspects preventing me from being me</b> – factors that adolescents find challenging in the traditional culture	My struggle with all the rules My fear of punishment
<b>Theme 4: Finding myself within a changing environment</b> – a change from the more traditional culture to a more westernised culture	Changes occurring in my environment Reasons for my culture changing My feelings regarding my changing environment?

### **5.2.1 Finding my place of belonging**

The first theme of “Finding my place of belonging” refers to the manner in which ethnicity is seen and determined by black African adolescents. This theme consists of three subthemes namely, “Factors determining my group”, “My birthright to belonging” and “Choosing my ethnic group”

#### **Factors determining my group**

According to the participants, the ethnic group that one belongs to can be based on multiple factors. In a discussion on the differences among ethnic groups, one participant stated: “*I think it differ[s] in terms of attitude ... and norms, because we don't believe in the same things*” (Female



participant, focus group two). The most prominent factors that the participants considered when determining their ethnic group included the beliefs one has, the rules and rituals one follows, one's attitude, the language one speaks, biological heritage, and the name and surname one has. An example of a ritual was given by the following male participant: "... *for me a ceremony to thanks the god ... when they thank the ancestors*" (Male participant, focus group three).

### **My birthright to belonging**

The most important factor that determines one's ethnic group is the group one is born into. One participant stated: "*Our parents, they are born like that and our grandparents, they are born like that, so we just have to go with it*" (Male participant, focus group three). Therefore, when one comes from a family with two parents from the same ethnic group, biological heritage is the factor that determines the ethnic group one belongs to.

### **Choosing my ethnic group**

There was consensus among all the participants that they were not allowed to belong to any other ethnic group than their parents' ethnic group. They feel that they are not allowed to choose to belong to another ethnic group, even if they do not agree with the practices of their ethnic group. A male participant mentioned:

*I just believe that everything that we are practising, is what we should practise – you cannot go against them. You have to like it whether it is bad or good, because just as in life, there will be good moments and bad moments and you just have to carry on with what you did.* (Male participant, focus group three)

Even though the participants felt that they did not have the freedom to choose to which ethnic group they belong, male and female participants expressed different opinions regarding the choice of an ethnic group. The male participants strongly expressed that they could not choose their ethnic group because they felt it as their responsibility to continue the legacy and traditions of the ethnic group they had been were born into. A male participant reported:

*I think this generation is the one that has to carry the culture ... in our genes we have to carry on the culture so it is you that have to be situated. It has to flow until the world ends.* (Male participant, focus group three)

Another male participant stated: “*Because when I grow up to be an old man, I must pass those words on to my grandchildren*” (Male participant, focus group three). From these two statements, it is clear that the male participants felt that they had the responsibility to carry on the legacy of their ethnic group in two ways. Firstly, they felt responsible for the genetic and biological continuation of their ethnic group in such a way that their ethnic group would continue to have similar biological and genetic traits. Secondly, they felt the responsibility carry on the legacy of their ethnic group by passing on the traditions, values and rituals to their children and grandchildren, in the same way that it had been passed on to them.

Female participants did not seem to have the same sense of responsibility as was seen among the male participants. This opinion was shared by both the male and female participants. A male participant stated: “*... because girls, if they don't follow rules, they will get life without following the rules and they will enjoy what they want to do*” (Male participant, focus group three). This indicates a notion towards more flexible expectations regarding the responsibilities that females have towards the preservation of the ethnic groups' norms and rituals. This flexibility provides female participants with the opportunity to explore other ethnic groups and even expresses the preference to belong to another ethnic group. Still, their biological heritage prevents them from choosing the ethnic group they belong to. One female participant stated: “*Some other times I like to be Xhosa group, neh, but I can't*” (Female participant, focus group two). Another female participant stated:

*I am going to have to follow them and believe in them. There is no other way. As I told you before, there is other way I can just choose to be an Indian. I was born a Sotho, so I just can't.* (Female participant, focus group two)

From the statements, it is evident that even though female participants have a greater sense of freedom and expresses great interest in other ethnic groups, they are still not allowed to choose

their ethnic group. As with male participants, the biological heritage of the female participants is the factor that determines their ethnic group.

From the discussions, it was evident that the only time when it was acceptable to choose to which ethnic group one wants to belong was in cases of individuals born into a families with parents from different ethnic groups. The participants born into families with parents from different ethnic groups reported that they could choose their ethnic group. One participant stated: *“My mother is Sotho and my father is Xhosa, so I speak two languages... I grew up speaking Sotho, so I decided that I am going into the Sotho. Xhosa is just; ... I just speak it at home”* (Female participant, focus group two).

Again, different decision-making processes for males and females from families with parents from different ethnic groups were observed. The male participants born into families with parents from different ethnic groups indicated that they had to belong to the group their father belongs to. One participant explained it as: *“I think it is because [if] you do not practice the roots of your father, the ancestors they will avoid you in the future”* (Male participant, focus group three). Another participant stated: *“... but you have to go according to your roots. If you started to choose it means you are not in your identity ... Abandoning your identity”* (Male participant, focus group three). The male participants displayed less freedom in choosing their ethnic group than the female participants. Male participants felt obligated to choose the ethnic group their father belonged to. If they did not choose their father’s ethnic group, they believed that they would abandon either their identity or be punished by the ancestors.

Female participants born into families with parents from different ethnic groups displayed two forms of decision-making. The first form, on which most female participants based their decision, was language. One female participant stated: *“I grew up speaking Sotho, so I decided that I am going into the Sotho”* (Female participant, focus group two). The second consideration is the participant’s emotional response towards the different ethnic groups. One participant said the following: *“I first look at the groups and the one that makes me happy”* (Female participant, focus group two). This form of decision-making was only reported by one of the participants.

## 5.2.2 My path to knowing where I belong

The second theme of “How do I come to know where I belong?” refers to the resources and methods used by adolescents to gain information about their ethnic group. Two subthemes will be discussed. The first subtheme, “The sources of knowing where I belong”, refers to the resources from whom the participants gain information. The second subtheme, “What I can do to find myself”, refers to the methods used by the participants to gain information.

### The sources of knowing where I belong

In the process of exploring their ethnic identity, the participants all stated that they learn about their traditions and culture from their grandparents, parents and the elders. A male participant stated: *“Our elders at home, they tell us”* (Male participant, focus group three). Another participant stated: *“My parents ... they told me like ... you guys are this young and therefore the thing I have to teach you is mutual respect for your elders and stuff”* (Female participant, focus group two).

Another source of information was circumcision school, also known as initiation school. While it is expected of male participants to attend circumcision school, female participants have the option to attend and mostly choose not to go. Therefore, males have an additional form of cultural education. One female participant explained: *“Also ma’am, initiation school ... because in our culture, again we are Xhosa, so it is a must that our brothers must go there ...”* (Female participant, focus group one). When asked if the female participants went to initiation school, they responded as follows: *“No, we are girls ... Some girls are initiated”* (Female participant, focus group one). According to the male participants, the main aim of circumcision school is to learn how to be a man and to learn respect. One male participant explained the purpose of circumcision school as follows: *“The thing is not about going to be circumcised; it is about being a man. They are going to teach you to be a man, how to treat your female and how to treat other people around the community”* (Male participant, focus group three).

## What I can do to find myself

Participants reported different methods of exploration. One participant stated: “... *in some situations they show me. In some situations they tell me*” (Female participant, focus group two). These different methods can be grouped into four forms of exploration, namely reading books, hearing of traditions, participating in traditions and questioning. The first method that was reported is learning from books. A female participant reported: “*I think the information it is out of books, it is out of books of cultures, the Sotho culture, the Xhosa culture, all of those cultures. That is where you can get that information ...*” (Female participant, focus group two).

The second method of exploration relates to information gained through word of mouth. One participant reported: “*No, when you are growing up, it is just in the conversation with your grandparents ... and your parents*” (Male participant, focus group three). Another participant reported: “*My grand-grandmother told me a story about our family, actually*” (Female participant, focus group two).

The third method participants reported in exploring their ethnic identity is participation in traditional activities. A participant reported:

*In our culture they make family meetings ... In our culture we speak to our ancestors too. When we meet as family, we do a ceremony to show us the traditional lekgotla [assemblies or meetings where male elders discuss matters of the village].* (Male participant, focus group three)

Participation in ceremonies and family meetings facilitates the exploration of ethnic groups, and an understanding of the traditions.

The fourth method of exploration is direct questioning. An example of a common question that would be asked, is: “*What does Sotho mean and where does it come from?*” (Female participant, focus group two). Gender differences were evident regarding questioning. The male participants reported that they are allowed to ask questions about their ethnic group. By contrast,

female participants were adamant that they were not allowed to ask questions about their ethnic group. A female participant stated:

*I can't ask questions because in our culture we are not allowed to ask questions like that. If I am told something, I am not allowed to ask questions. It is a way of being disrespectful, so I couldn't ask those questions.* (Female participant, focus group two)

Another participant stated: *"Some of our parents beat us for asking questions"* (Female participant, focus group one). Questioning by females is seen as disrespectful and may be punished. Even though the female participants were not allowed to ask questions, they displayed a desire to ask questions about their ethnic group. A female participant voiced her questions: *"... Why do they have to follow those rules? Is it a must that you choose doing the way of showing respect or what?"* (Female participant, focus group two). Another participant stated: *"I would ask: 'If I didn't follow the culture, will I die or not?'"* (Female participant, focus group two). Female participants have the need to explore their ethnic group; however, because it is seen as disrespectful to ask questions about their group and its meaning, they continue with their traditions without knowing the purpose of it.

### **5.2.3 Aspects preventing me from being me**

The third theme, "Aspects preventing me from being me" refers to the factors that adolescents find challenging in the traditional culture. Two subthemes will be discussed. The first subtheme, "My struggle with all the rules", refers to difficulty experienced in following the traditional rules. The second subtheme, "My fear of punishment", refers to the fear of the consequences of breaking from the cultural traditions.

## **My struggle with all the rules**

All participants experienced some cultural tasks difficult to perform, “*And Tswana you must always know your clan, but I don’t follow it because it is very difficult*” (Female participant, focus group one).

Discussing the challenges of following cultural norms, practicality and convenience were also mentioned. A male participant responded to a question on challenges in belonging to an ethnic group with the following: “*You know some rules ... ja the rules, sometimes we are used to a lifestyle where we don’t have to cut hair, but then we have to cut hair in a situation*” (Male participant, focus group three). A female participant stated: “*... Challenges like maybe my culture beliefs I should wear a long dress. How am I going to come to school? I can’t wear a long dress when I come to school*” (Female participant, focus group two). From these statements, it can be seen that both male and female participants experienced practical difficulties in following traditional rules and traditions in a more modern society.

The female participants voiced an additional concern about practicing their traditions in their current context. This concern is related to their social status or image. One participant stated: “*There are the other ladies and what are they going to say. I can’t ...*” (Female participant, focus group two). This participant raised the concern about scrutiny from others about practising traditions and rules set by an ethnic group. Female participants anticipated being ridiculed by their peers for practicing certain traditions. This might indicate that participants experienced certain traditions as no longer socially acceptable.

## **My fear of punishment**

Fear of punishment was a prominent theme, especially among the male participants. A male participant disclosed the following: “*I think it is because of my traditions teach me that, if I don’t follow the rules, the ancestors will punish me*” (Male participant, focus group three). Another male participant reported: “*They make ceremony for me to be welcomed and they tell me that: if you are not going with this, you are going to be punished by the ancestors. So, it is a must. It is a*

*must*” (Male participant, focus group three). Another male participant explained: “*My father says: ‘If you are not valuing the ethnic group the gods will punish us’*” (Male participant, focus group three). Upon asking why rules should be followed, a male participant reported: *It is because there are certain issues that they will destroy in your family. When you do it once, ... she will come to them at night with their Tokoloshe*” (Male participant, focus group three). From the above quotes, it is evident that the male participants feared being punished by the ancestors, gods or Tokoloshe (a mythical evil spirit known for being mischievous and harmful) if they did not follow the traditions and norms of their father’s ethnic group.

This theme did not appear in any of the female groups. A male participant explained it as follows: “*I don’t think girls are more traditional because girls, if they don’t follow the rules, they will get life without following the rules and they will enjoy what they want to do*” (Male participant, focus group three). A male participant also reported, “*Yes, it is easier for girls*” (Male participant, focus group three). It seems that, because the male participants felt pressured by their society to be responsible for the legacy of their culture, they were more afraid to be punished if they broke the traditions.

#### **5.2.4 Finding myself within a changing environment**

This theme relates to participants’ experiences regarding the changing of their environment from a more traditional to a more westernised culture. Three subthemes will be discussed. The first subtheme, “Changes occurring in my environment”, refers to the type of changes occurring. The second subtheme, “Reasons for my culture changing”, explores possible reasons why this change is occurring. The third subtheme, “My feelings regarding my changing environment”, refers to the emotions and perceptions of the participants about the movement from a traditional culture to a more westernised culture.

##### **Changes occurring in my environment**

Participants expressed a shift from traditional culture to a more westernised culture. One female participant stated:



*... When I grew up, about 11 years, I always asked my grandmother: “Why in the days of today can’t we go out without dress, because of our grandmothers used to wear traditional clothes?” So, they wear these shirts and then they always didn’t wear bra’s or shirts. So they used to play with Leshokwane, that is what we used to cook our porridge, and they used to go in groups ... They go to a far house and ask for water and if they see a Leshwane, they grab it and play with it. They play catch with it and then they will come around with it to where kids they stay and then they will throw it in a river and then the rain will come. So I used to ask her, “But why don’t those morals apply to our nowadays ...?” (Female participant, focus group one)*

This participant highlighted some of the traditions amongst females that were no longer practised, including traditional clothing and games. Another participant highlighted the change in clothing: *“It is very challenging because of in our days, we don’t wear seshweshwes and all that. We wear modern clothes ...”* (Female participant, focus group one). Seshweshwes refers to the traditional clothing made from printed, dyed cotton fabric often worn by newlywed females and mothers.

### **Reasons for my culture changing**

Participants provided two possible explanations for the changes in their traditional culture. The first explanation relates to the increased danger in practicing traditions. One participant stated: *“So I used to ask her [grandmother], ‘Why don’t those morals apply to our nowadays?’. Then she said to me, ‘It doesn’t happen because the adults rape the children now and we can’t do that anymore’”* (Female participant, focus group one). From this statement, it can be seen that some traditional practices started to be misused for personal gain rather than for the purposes of initiation into the ethnic group. The abuse and danger in practicing some traditions are of such a nature that they are no longer practised.

The second possible explanation relates to geographical changes. A participant stated: *“... Because even if you can try, it is not going to rain anymore, because there is no rivers around where we stay anymore also”* (Female participant, focus group one). It is clear from the

statement that certain traditions are not practised anymore because the ethnic group no longer lives in the same geographical areas.

The challenges that were mentioned earlier (the difficulty, impracticality and inconvenience related to certain cultural traditions) might also facilitate the move from traditional customs to more westernised practices.

### **My feelings regarding my changing environment**

Male and female participants experienced the decline in the traditional practices of their ethnic group differently. The male participants displayed a stronger preference towards their traditions. A male participant commented: *“I actually believe in my tradition because we only speak one language, we are family”* (Male participant, focus group three). Another participant commented: *“Some people they don’t follow their tradition, the ancestors will punish them after years and maybe they will say they have been witched”* (Male participant, focus group three). The male participants did acknowledge that there were certain people that who no longer followed their traditions, but the result of that was punishment and therefore the male participants were more prone to following their traditional ways rather than the more westernised culture.

The increase in westernised practices was more evident among the female participants. A female participant, speaking about belonging to an ethnic group, stated: *“... For me it is just a name ... because these days we all do the same thing actually”* (Female participant, focus group two). Another participant responded felt about cultural practices: *“It is keeping me back”* (Female participant, focus group two). The female participants mentioned that they preferred modern or westernised practices to traditional practices, especially regarding to clothing, dancing and music:

*Ja, because nowadays life is challenging and you know all teens like to be stylish and stuff ... So how are they, like me, just saying I am still following my group and in other times I am following my friends?* (Female participant, focus group two)

### 5.2.6 Key qualitative findings

In summarising the qualitative results, some key findings can be highlighted. Firstly, all participants agreed that ethnic belonging was determined by biological heritage and that individuals had no choice about the ethnic group they belonged to. The only exception to this was when one had parents from two different ethnic groups. Although participants indicated an interest in exploring other ethnic groups, they feared betraying their ethnicity and punishment if they practised the traditions of another ethnic group.

Secondly, a variety of sources and forms of exploration was identified by the participants. Sources included parents, grandparent and elders, as well as circumcision school for males. The methods that participants used include reading books, hearing of traditions by means of word of mouth, participating in traditional activities and questioning.

Thirdly, participants articulated a variety of challenges in finding and practising their ethnic identity. These challenges included the difficulty of following certain practices and rules; the impracticality and inconvenience of following traditions in a more westernised society; and the fear of scrutiny from peers. Furthermore, participants also displayed a fear of punishment when traditions are not followed.

The fourth key qualitative finding relates to the context of a changing environment. All participants were aware of these changes and regarded danger, geographical moves and the difficulty, impracticality and inconvenience related to certain cultural traditions as possible reasons for the change. Participants' ambivalence regarding the change from a more traditional culture towards becoming more westernised was clear. Some participants (mostly males) displayed an eagerness to continue with traditional practices and carry forward legacy of their ethnic group, while others (mostly females) preferred modern or westernised practices, especially with regard to clothing, dancing and music

The last key qualitative finding relates to the differences observed between male and female participants. Male participants prioritised their responsibility to continue with the legacy of their

ethnic group, and to attend circumcision school to learn the traditions of their culture. They displayed views that were more rigid regarding following their fathers' ethnic practices and preferred views that were more traditional. The fear of punishment was also more prominent amongst males. The female participants displayed more flexibility in exploring various ethnic practices and a preference for a more westernised view. They preferred not to attend circumcision school and they were not allowed to ask questions about their ethnic group. Still, strong similarities could be seen between male and female participants. Both genders agreed that one was born into a specific ethnic group and that one was not allowed to choose another. Furthermore, there were similarities between the methods they used to explore their ethnic identity, including word of mouth and participation in traditions.

### **5.3 Discussion of the quantitative and qualitative results**

In the following section, the main findings of this research study will be discussed and interpreted, using the theoretical frameworks previously discussed, as well as the existing research findings in the field.

#### **5.3.1 The manifestation of exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity, as well as ethnic identity strength in black African adolescents**

The participants of this study reported a tendency towards higher degrees of exploration and commitment, as well as a strong ethnic identity. This concurs with a variety of other studies investigating ethnic identity in South African and other minority contexts.

The high levels of exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity in this sample are similar to high levels of exploration and commitment to an ethnic identity in the minority groups (African Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, multiracial Americans and other minority individuals) of Yoon's study (2011). Roberts et al. (1999) have also found that ethnic minority groups (Mexican American and African Americans) scored significantly higher on exploration and commitment than the majority groups did (European Americans).

When the results regarding exploration and commitment are compared to South African studies regarding identity, three studies can be considered. Firstly, as found in this study, Alberts (1990; 2000) has found that black African adolescents were mostly in the identity achievement or moratorium statuses (rather than foreclosure or diffusion statuses), thus indicating a higher level of exploration. Secondly, Low et al. (2005) have found that 50% of the South African population were classified as in the achieved identity development category and 26% were classified in the moratorium category, also indicating higher levels of exploration. Furthermore, Low et al. (2005) have found high levels of commitment in general identity development, which might be related to high levels of commitment in ethnic identity development. Thirdly, Adams (2014) has found that the black South African population scored the highest of all groups on the MEIM, indicating that the black South African population has high levels of exploration and commitment, as in the sample of this study.

The participants of this study also portrayed a strong ethnic identity. The results of this study are supported by Peacock (2008) and Thom and Coetzee (2004), who have found that black African adolescents have a stronger ethnic identity than both white South Africans and a USA sample. However, in contrast to this finding, Harris and Findley (2014) report weak ethnic identity in their South African sample.

The high scores on ethnic exploration, commitment and strength that were reported by the participants of this study can be explained by Phinney's (1990) argument that exploration is triggered by a significant experience that forces individuals to become aware of their ethnicity. In the South African context, ethnic membership and awareness are prominent due to a history of ethnic divide in South Africa (Adams, 2014). The ethnic awareness in South Africa is still prominent in the current context because of the importance of ethnic membership in government implementations to restore racial and ethnic equality in South Africa, such as the implementation of affirmative action, integration policies and national transformation (Adams, 2014; Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). Because of the focus on ethnic membership in South Africa, adolescents may also feel pressured to become more aware of their ethnic membership and what it means to be part of their ethnic group; thus triggering the exploration of ethnicity. Furthermore, the

marginalisation of, or discrimination against, an ethnic minority group will increase the strength of ethnic identity within that group (Dimitrova et al., 2013). Therefore, the high levels of strength of ethnic identity among the sample of this study may be explained by the history of discrimination and oppression of the black African race as well as the discrimination among races that persist in South Africa.

### **5.3.2 The differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups**

In this study, significant differences between males and females were found with regard to exploration/commitment and strength, with female participants indicating higher rates of exploration/commitment and strength. According to Cislo (2008), a stronger ethnic identity in females was also found among a Cuban and Nicaraguan population of young adults. Klimstra et al. (2010) have also found that female adolescents in early to middle adolescence tend to explore and commit more than male adolescents. This is further supported by Josselson (1996) who has found that more females than males go through the crisis period and make commitments. In contrast to this, Mdikana et al. (2008) have found a low degree of identity achievement and high degrees of identity foreclosure among females in an isiXhosa sample. In this isiXhosa sample, male participants indicated a higher degree of exploration. Furthermore, Mdikana et al. (2008) have found a similar degree of commitment between male and female participants in a South African sample, contradicting the results found in this study.

The significant gender differences found in this study may be explained by physical and cognitive development differences. Kroger (1997) explained that girls tend to be one year ahead of boys in terms of physical and cognitive development. Girls reach puberty one to two years before boys and it is estimated that the girls are a full year ahead in brain development (Crocetti et al., 2013). Therefore, girls will reach the developmental milestones needed for exploration and commitment before boys, thus starting to explore and commit before boys do. According to Phinney (1990), the phenomenon of female participants that display higher levels of exploration and commitment than males is usually seen in populations where the expectations of men and women are significantly different. The traditional view of gender roles is still prominent in South

Africa. In most black African groups, men have greater and absolute power (Nyembezi et al., 2012). It can therefore be assumed that the gender difference may also be due to the significant difference in gender roles. The significant differences among male and female participants were also observed in the qualitative results. This will be discussed in the next section.

With regard to ethnic group, significant differences were found in terms of the some aspects of exploration/commitment (more relating to commitment than to exploration), as well as strength with the Setswana group obtaining consistently lower scores than the other two ethnic groups. In general, it is often found that there are significant differences in exploration, commitment and strength of ethnic identity between different cultural groups. This is most often seen in the American population with significant differences between European Americans, African Americans, Latin Americans, Mexican Americans and Asian Americans (Roberts et al., 1999; Yoon, 2011). Low et al. (2005) also indicated that the participants in their South African sample displayed a significantly higher degree of strength of ethnic identity than a sample from the USA, with black African adolescents obtaining the highest score. Furthermore, Adams (2014) has found significant differences among samples from the USA, Cameroon, Zimbabwe and Kenya. These studies all indicate that difference is a common phenomenon among different cultural groups. The significant differences among the different ethnic groups of the sample of this study are also similar to the results found by Alberts et al. (2003) who have found significant differences in the identity development of different ethnic groups in South Africa. Certain hypotheses have been made by researchers to explain the differences among different cultural groups, such as that discrimination against a certain group can cause an increased awareness of ethnic membership (Adams, 2014).

No statistically significant differences were found between the different age groups. Considering a developmental perspective (Klimstra et al., 2010), it would be expected that identity exploration and commitment will increase with age. This was, however, not this case in this study. Adams (2014) might provide a possible explanation. He has found that younger adolescents experience higher salience in their ethnic identities. Therefore, while adolescents might be exploring their commitments in a more active manner as their age increases, younger

adolescents' high salience and interest in their ethnic group may bring balance to the findings among the different age groups.

### **5.3.3 Responses to the challenges of developing a black African identity**

Five key findings can be highlighted regarding the challenges of developing a black African identity. These findings include responses regarding the choosing an ethnic identity, sources and forms of exploration, challenges in committing to an ethnic identity, living in a changing environment and gender differences. The responses will be discussed in the following section.

#### **5.3.3.1 Responses regarding choosing an ethnic identity**

The first overarching theme that could be observed was the participants' strong feelings regarding the (absence of) choice regarding their ethnic identity. It was agreed upon by all participants that one did not have a choice about which ethnic group one belonged to and ethnic membership was determined by the ethnic membership of one's parents. According to Cokley's (2007) types of definitions for ethnicity, biological heritage as a determining factor is seen as the intermediate definition of ethnicity where the focus is on the cultural characteristics and national origin of the individual. Due to the high number of ethnic groups in South Africa, national origin will not be considered as in other countries, but rather ethnic origin. This corresponds with the responses of the participants. The view of ethnicity being determined by the group one is born into also relates to Phinney and Ong's (2007) view that ethnic identity is the only form of identity that is not chosen by the individual, but determined by the family one is born into.

According to the participants, the only exception to their ethnic membership being determined by biological heritage was when one had parents from two different ethnic groups. When an individual was born into a family with parents from different ethnic groups, the individual had to find other ways of choosing their ethnic membership. According to Keddell (2009), individuals belonging to multiple ethnic groups usually tend to fall into two categories. Either they have no ethnic group or they tend to belong to the minority group. These two categories did not manifest in the participants of this study. In this study, the participants with parents from two different



ethnic groups indicated alternative methods of choosing their ethnic identity, including a consideration of: 1) the language group they were most comfortable with, 2) the emotional response towards the particular ethnic group and 3) paternal ethnicity.

Firstly, language is seen as an ethnic behaviour. It constitutes one of the components of ethnic identity, as identified by Phinney and Ong (2007). According to Phinney and Ong (2007), ethnic behaviour refers to certain practices or social interactions associated with the ethnic group the individual engages with. Furthermore, ethnic behaviour is seen as an expression of internal identity and is often used to measure ethnic identity. Therefore, adolescents who choose their ethnic membership based on the language they speak express the ethnic identity they have internalised.

Secondly, Cislo (2008) explained that, from a social identity theory perspective, individuals will identify more strongly with a group if group membership has more value for the individual. Furthermore, if individuals experience a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group, they will have a positive attitude towards their group and feel comfortable belonging to it (Tajfel, 1978). This possibly explains why the participants made their decisions as to which ethnic group to belong to, based on positive emotional responses to the group.

Thirdly, some participants (mostly males) reported that they had to belong to the ethnic group their father belonged to. This is a phenomenon not clearly observed in literature, but may be considered as a traditional practice seen among ethnic groups in the black African race. According to Eaton and Louw (2000), groups following an African tradition are more collectivistic and family orientated. They also tend to place more focus on traditional values (Adams et al., 2012). It can therefore be assumed that the participants that identified with the ethnic group of their father, did so because it is a tradition and seen as in the best interest of the ethnic group. Not belonging to the ethnic group of the father will be seen as not honouring the traditions of the ethnic group.

### 5.3.3.2 Sources and forms of exploration

Definite sources and forms of exploration were mentioned by the participants. The main sources of information were parents, grandparents, elders and circumcision school. Dimitrova et al. (2013) highlighted the influence parents have on the ethnic identity of their children. When parents' encouragement, attitude and knowledge of the ethnic group are poor, it will result in weak ethnic identity in adolescents. If parents encourage their children to practise the traditions of the culture in a positive way, and they display good knowledge about their ethnic group, their children will experience a stronger ethnic identity. Furthermore, when attachment theory is considered, the role a parent plays during the exploration process itself is greater than just being a source of knowledge. According to Årseth et al., (2009) identity foreclosure (with low levels of exploration) is associated with a secure attachment style. It has been found that female adolescents with overprotective or overinvolved mothers tend to mirror their parents' values without exploration (Kroger, 2003, p.213). In contrast to this, secure attachment with a parent may also lead to identity achievement since the child has a secure base to explore from (Årseth et al., 2009). The source of knowledge as well as the relationship to this source plays an important role in the exploration process.

Another source of information mentioned by the participants in this study is circumcision school. Black African adolescents attend circumcision school, or initiation school, during middle to late adolescence (Le Roux et al., 2007). This is a tradition practised by all males; however, it is optional for females. According to Le Roux et al. (2007), boys are traditionally circumcised and educated in the traditions of their ethnicity during their attendance of circumcision school. Furthermore, it is an important rite of passage to becoming a man and contributes to ethnic identity development (Le Roux et al., 2007; Nyembezi et al., 2012). Nyembezi et al. (2012) have found that initiation may lead to stronger commitment to an ethnic group. It can therefore be assumed that participants who have attended circumcision school will display a stronger ethnic identity. Since a much greater number of males attend circumcision school, it could be hypothesised that the males in this study will display a stronger ethnic identity. However, considering the quantitative results regarding identity strength, the female participants displayed a statistically significantly stronger ethnic identity than male participants did. This finding is thus

in contrast with the argument proposed by Nyembezi et al. (2012) that circumcision school strengthens ethnic identity. This alludes to the possibility that many other aspects may have an impact on ethnic identity strength.

Four types of methods of exploration were reported by the participants, namely reading books, hearing traditions by word of mouth, participating in traditional events and asking questions. These four methods are strongly associated with the two types of exploration proposed by Syed et al. (2013), namely *search* and *participation*. Search refers to indirect exploration or research activities such as reading books or talking to others (Syed et al., 2013). The participants displayed indirect exploration by means of reading books, hearing of traditions by word of mouth and questioning. Participation refers to the direct experience of the culture as a form of exploration, such as attending events and participating in cultural traditions (Syed et al., 2013). In this study, this took place by participating in traditional activities, such as attending ceremonies and family meetings.

### **5.3.3.3 Challenges in committing to an ethnic identity**

The third finding relates to the challenges that adolescents experience with practising their traditions. The participants reported that some of the traditional rules were difficult and impractical to follow in a modern society. They also referred to the possible scrutiny by others when following their traditions. Still, participants displayed a fear of punishment when traditions were not followed. Challenges identified by other researchers include the individual's socio-economic status and the family's financial support, the individuals' level of education (Luyckx et al., 2008; Yoder, 2000), violence, youth crime (Makhubela, 2012; Yoder, 2000), family dysfunction, the lack of role models (Yoder, 2000), geographic isolation, parental domination, physical restrictions, age, gender, political constraints and religion (Schwartz et al., 2008). These were not mentioned by the participants of this study. The challenges mentioned in this study can thus rather be ascribed to participants' developmental stage. During the formal operational stage, adolescents still portray egocentrism and have difficulty differentiating their own thoughts and feelings from those of others (Elkind, 1967). Related to this egocentrism, adolescents often confuse their own thoughts with those of an imaginary audience (Elkind, 1967). Therefore, it can

be hypothesised that adolescents imagine that their peers will perceive their traditions as embarrassing or unacceptable because of the belief that everyone's attention and focus are on them. Furthermore, adolescents experience transition in their social roles regarding their relationship with their peers and family. During adolescence, the amount of time spent with family or parents decreases and the time spent with their peers increases. Adolescents also become less emotionally attached to their parents, with an increase in conflict between parents and adolescents (Collins & Laursen, 2006). Therefore, the acceptance of peers becomes increasingly important during adolescence resulting in adolescents experiencing traditions as challenging, because their peers' acceptance is in jeopardy.

The theme of punishment was one that emerged mainly from the male participants. The fear of punishment involved staying in the ethnic group of their father, following the traditions of the ethnic group and continuing with the legacy of the ethnic group. The punishment will be done by the ancestors, gods or the Tokoloshe. According to Kohlberg's (1971) stages of moral development, the type of moral reasoning seen among these adolescents is considered stage one (obedience and punishment driven) on the level of pre-conventional. The level of pre-conventional moral reasoning refers to individuals who base their moral decision on the direct consequences they will experience. The first stage refers to individuals who want to avoid punishment (Kohlberg, 1971). Furthermore, the type of punishment that is feared by the participants relates to traditions often seen in black African groups. According to Pretorius, Jacobs and van Reenen (2013), ancestor reverence is one of the two traditions still practised in modern society, with 64% of the participants in their sample still practising it. Seeing that it is a tradition still believed in by many people in the black African group, it was not unusual that the male participants displayed a fear of the ancestors.

#### **5.3.3.4 Living in a changing environment**

Most of the participants in this study had a strong awareness of the changes from a more traditional to a more westernised culture. They regarded danger and geographical moves, as well as the difficulty, impracticality and inconvenience related to certain cultural traditions as possible reasons for the change. Danger and geographical move correlate with barriers in identity

development within the South African context. Makhubela (2012) and Yoder (2000) named violence and youth crime to be barriers in the individual's identity development, while Schwartz et al. (2008) mentioned geographic isolation as a barrier.

Participants' ambivalence regarding the change from a more traditional culture towards becoming more westernised was clear. Some participants (mostly males) displayed an eagerness to continue with traditional practices and carry forward the legacy of their ethnic group, while others (mostly females) preferred modern or westernised practices, especially regarding clothing, dancing and music. The male participants displayed a prominent theme of feeling responsible for the legacy of their ethnic group. A possible explanation might be the traditional gender roles and views, which are still prominent in South Africa. In most black African groups, men have greater and absolute power (Nyembezi et al., 2012). Therefore, males are traditionally seen as the leaders of the ethnic groups. This is enforced by attending circumcision school. According to Le Roux et al. (2007), males are educated in the traditions of their ethnicity. The boys are also equipped for their adult roles by learning their familial and community duties (Le Roux et al., 2007; Nyembezi et al., 2012). It can be hypothesised that the necessity for males to carry on the legacy of the culture will be part of the education and initiation of the males and may contribute to the strong feelings regarding continuing with their legacy. The male participants also displayed a fear of punishment if they did not continue this legacy.

The female participants displayed a stronger preference for more westernised practices. Thom and Coetzee (2004) suggested that it can be expected that adolescents experience a dual identity crisis in South Africa due to the current socio-political transformation and integration occurring in South Africa. Furthermore, Thom and Coetzee (2004) suggested that a form of synthesis between the modern culture and their traditional culture would be the ideal solution of the changing of the traditional culture. This synthesis can be seen among the female participants who embrace their own traditions as well as some of the westernised practices. Moosa et al. (1997) and Thom and Coetzee (2004) also mentioned that even though adolescents still strongly identify with members of their own race, they show a tendency to integrate the Western and African cultures corresponding with the findings of this study.

### 5.3.3.5 Gender differences

Although some of the differences between male and female participants in this study were mentioned in the discussion above. The prominent gender differences observed in both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study are considered in this section. In the quantitative section of the study, female participants obtained statistically significantly higher scores for exploration, commitment and strength of ethnic identity. In the qualitative section of the study, male participants displayed a more rigid view regarding their ethnic group while the female participants displayed more flexibility regarding their ethnic group. According to Phinney (1990), gender differences will be more profound in ethnic groups where the roles and expectations of men and women are significantly different, such as in situations where men is favoured over women. This phenomenon is still seen among the black African ethnic groups in South Africa. In most black African groups, men have greater and absolute power (Nyembezi et al., 2012).

Based on the qualitative results, further differences in expectations between male and female participants can be observed. Firstly, although some of the methods for exploration are similar between the different genders two major differences can be observed. Firstly, male participants had a more rigid view regarding their ethnic group because of the feeling of responsibility towards their ethnic group and the fear of punishment. Secondly, the male participants attended circumcision school, while most female participants chose not to attend. This means that male participants had more exposure to participation in cultural events. According to Syed et al. (2013), participation (with the presence or absence of search) is associated with positive well-being. Participation also enhances the learning experience and leads to decreased levels of confusion (Syed et al., 2013). Therefore, it may be assumed that male participants should experience less confusion regarding ethnicity and ethnic identity development. Female participants are still exposed to participation as a method of exploration. However, one of the methods of exploration mentioned most often among participants is not part of the female exploration process. Furthermore, female participants are not allowed to ask questions. This causes female participants to rely more strongly on methods of exploration that would be defined

by Syed et al. (2013) as search. Exploration by means of search does not necessarily involve learning and therefore leads to confusion or raising more questions.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, both the quantitative and qualitative results of this mixed methods study were presented and discussed. The quantitative results included the descriptive qualities of the manifestation of ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength, and the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups. The qualitative results were presented according to four main themes: namely “Finding my place of belonging”, “My path to knowing where I belong”, “Aspects preventing me from being me” and “Finding myself within a changing environment”. This was followed by a discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative results in relation to literature and previous studies in the field.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MOST SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, the research study will be concluded by reviewing the most significant findings of this study. Furthermore, the limitations of the current study will be mentioned and discussed. Recommendations for further research regarding ethnic identity will be given.

#### **6.1 Summary of most significant findings**

In summarising the findings of this study, some key findings can be highlighted. Firstly, it was determined that the sample of black African adolescents from the Motheo district obtained scores indicating a tendency towards higher degrees of exploration and commitment, as well as a strong ethnic identity. This answers the first research question for this study, which refers to the degree to which black African adolescents of various genders, ethnic and age groups explore and commit to an ethnic identity as well as ethnic identity strength. Secondly, it was found that female participants statistically obtained significantly higher results for exploration/commitment and strength, while the Setswana group obtained consistently lower scores for exploration/commitment and strength. No statistically significant differences were found between different age groups. The second research question, referring to the differences in ethnic identity exploration, commitment and strength between various gender, ethnic and age groups, has therefore been explored.

The findings stated above were supported by the investigation of the third research question that referred to the response of adolescents to the challenges of developing a black African identity. It was found that all the participants agreed that ethnic belonging is determined by biological heritage and that individuals have no choice about the ethnic group they belong to. One exception to this view is individuals with parents from different ethnic groups. Among the participants, there was some interest in exploring other ethnic groups; however, their fear of punishment kept them from actively pursuing another ethnic group.



Another key finding was the sources and methods used for exploration identified by the participants. The sources included parents, grandparents, elders and circumcision school. The methods that the participants used include reading books, being informed of traditions by means of word of mouth, participation in traditional activities and questioning. These methods are strongly associated with the two types of exploration proposed by Syed et al. (2013), namely search and participation.

The participants expressed a variety of challenges in finding and practising their ethnic identity. The main challenges include difficulty following certain practices and rules; the impracticality and inconvenience of following traditions in a more westernised society; the fear of scrutiny from peers; and the fear of punishment when traditions are not practiced. These are not the typical challenges for identity development seen in literature and relate more to their developmental stage, more specifically to their cognitive development, social role transition and moral developmental stage.

Another key finding refers to the change from traditional culture to a more westernised society. The changing environment was ascribed to danger and geographical moves, as well as the difficulty, impracticality and inconvenience related to certain cultural traditions. The participants displayed ambivalence regarding the preference for westernised practices. Some participants displayed a more flexible view towards embracing westernised practices, especially regarding clothing, music and dance, while other participants displayed a more rigid view towards carrying forward the legacy of the ethnic group. A synthesis between the traditional culture and westernised practices occurs among some of the participants, as proposed by Thom and Coetzee (2004).

As seen in the quantitative results, gender differences are also observed in the qualitative results. The male participants prioritised their responsibility to continue with the legacy of their ethnic group and to attend circumcision school to learn the traditions of their culture. They displayed and preferred more rigid and traditional views regarding the pursuit of their fathers' ethnic practices. Fear of punishment was also more prominent amongst males. Still, the quantitative results indicate that female participants statistically obtained a significantly higher

degree of exploration/commitment and strength of ethnic identity. The female participants displayed more flexibility in exploring various ethnic practices and a preference for a more westernised view. They preferred not to attend circumcision school. They were also not allowed to ask questions about their ethnic group. These gender differences occur because of profound differences in the roles and expectations of men and women, as suggested by Phinney (1990).

This study contributes to the body of literature on ethnic identity in South Africa by determining the degree of ethnic identity development among the adolescents of the Motheo district. This population could not be found in the body of work on ethnic identity development in South Africa. However, this study not only contributes statistically to the body of research, but also gives voice to the participants. The qualitative contributions of this study clarify why adolescents from the Motheo district develop their ethnic identity in a particular manner. Furthermore, the results gained from this study can be a useful aid for education and developmental practitioners. Practitioners, in particular practitioners from other racial groups, working with this population will gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by black African individuals and therefore they will not only be able to understand the population better, but they will also be able to adjust their programmes to be more effective.

## **6.2 Limitations of the study**

The findings of this study may be influenced by several factors, which will be discussed in this section. Firstly, the theories on identity development as proposed by Marcia (1980), and ethnic identity as proposed by Phinney (1990) and Torres (2003) were based on an American population where there is a strong majority group (European Americans) compared to minority groups such as the African American group or Latin American group. In the South African context, a majority race is present, but not a majority ethnic group; therefore, the theories should be generalised to the South African context with caution.

Secondly, all measuring instruments and focus groups were conducted in English. Even though most of the participants were able to express themselves in English, it is not their mother tongue. The participants' fluency in English could therefore have had an impact on the

interpretation and understanding of the questions. The researcher determined that not all the concepts were familiar to the participants and therefore they struggled to understand some questions. The researcher tried to minimize this limitation by clarifying the concepts as far as possible. However, the misinterpretation of the measuring instruments and questions may have an impact on the results of this study. The reliability of this study (Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.69$ ) indicates that there may be some degree of uncertainty about what was measured, which may be accounted for by the language limitations.

Thirdly, during the first focus group, two participants were included who were not part of the black African population. These participants represented the Xhosi-San culture and Coloured culture. The participation of these participants in the group was monitored by the researcher and it was found that these participants only participated when a question was asked to them directly. Therefore, the impact of ethnic groups not included in this study could be minimised by the researcher.

Fourthly, convenience sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) was used to compile a sample of participants for both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the study. The samples used were therefore not randomised. It might therefore not be truly representative of the population and always provide the most appropriate answers. This may result in false conclusions (Maree & Pieterse, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Fifthly, in the qualitative sections of the study, the researcher did the questioning in the focus groups. Therefore, interviewer bias might have influenced the process of questioning by asking leading questions. Furthermore, seeing that the researcher is a white female, the researcher's own ethnicity might have caused possible subjectivity in questioning and understanding of the participants' answers. It is also possible that participants might have omitted certain traditional aspects because of discomfort with a white interviewer, or because these traditions are sacred to the ethnic group and may not be revealed to others.

### **6.3 Recommendations for future research**

Several recommendations for future research in ethnic identity can be considered. The first recommendation is to consider measuring instruments that have been translated into the participants' mother tongue. Secondly, the concepts used in the questionnaire and focus groups, such as ethnicity, identity, ethnic identity and ethnic groups, should be explained clearly. Furthermore, it will enhance the quality of the qualitative section of the study if the participants are able to express themselves in their mother tongue. Therefore, the interviewer should be able to speak the language of the participants fluently or a translator should be used.

It is further recommended that only one ethnic group per focus group should be considered, due to the language differences and the differences in cultural practices. It might enhance the data if the qualitative data of the different ethnic groups could be compared, seeing that a significant difference between the different ethnic groups was found in the quantitative section of the study.

Furthermore, it is recommended that purposive sampling should be used for qualitative groups. The groups should be ethnic-group specific, gender specific and age specific. It should be considered to place participants in early to middle adolescence in the same group and participants in late adolescence in another group. This is suggested because of the statistically significant difference in age in both exploration and commitment.

Due to the possible impact of circumcision school on male adolescents' ethnic identity development it is recommended for future research to investigate exploration, commitment and strength of ethnic identity before and after male adolescents have attended circumcision school in order to determine the degree that circumcision school has an impact on the ethnic identity development of this group.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on concluding the study by giving an overview of the most prominent findings, research limitations and recommendations. The aim of this study was to explore ethnic identity development in black African adolescents. A mixed methods research design was chosen in order to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. From the results, it was seen that the black African adolescents from the Motheo district face unique challenges, compared to other populations. These challenges have an impact on both ethnic identity and general identity development. The greatest threat to ethnic identity development within this population, and within South Africa, is the traditions of ethnic groups that are replaced with western or modern views, therefore causing ethnic groups to become homogenous and losing their uniqueness. It is therefore important to capture and study ethnic groups and ethnic identity now while it is still possible.

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**Appendix A:**  
**Ethnic Identity Survey Battery**

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## ***ETHNIC IDENTITY SURVEY***

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The following survey will be used in a study on ethnic identity development of black African adolescents. An **ethnic group** is a group of people who share the same characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. **Ethnic identity** is the part of who you are that comes from what you know about your ethnic group.

Please note that participation in this survey is voluntary and therefore you have the option to withdraw your participation at any time. The data collected from these surveys may be used for any current or future research in the area of ethnic identity. All surveys will be kept confidential, which means that no identifying information (such as names) will be used during the study.

Thank you for your participation.

**Name of learner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of school:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female
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<b>Age</b>	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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**Race** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home language** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnic group** \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which option best represents your opinion at each question, using a cross (X).	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral / Undecided	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree		
1) I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.							
2) I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.							
3) I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.							
4) I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.							
5) I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.							
6) I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.							
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral / Undecided	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1) I have a strong sense of myself as a member of my ethnic group.							
2) I identify with other people from my ethnic group.							
3) Most of my close friends are from my own ethnic group.							
4) My ethnic heritage is important in my life.							
5) I am more comfortable in social situations where others from my ethnic group are present.							
6) I am proud of my ethnic heritage.							
7) My ethnic group had a lot to do with who I am today.							
8) My ethnic background plays a big part in the way I interact with others.							
9) I prefer to date people from my ethnic group.							
10) My values, attitudes and behaviours are shared by most members of my ethnic group.							

**Appendix B:**  
**Focus Group Transcription**

### **Focus group 1 (female group)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so I am here as part of the Study Buddy programme. Do you know the Study Buddy program?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes Ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you know we sometimes speak about identity and stuff like that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok so this is a, I want to hear your opinions on identities, but specifically ethnic identity, ok? So first I have to do the admin stuff, is that fine with you?

**PARTICIPANT:** The what?

**INTERVIEWER:** The admin, like the forms we have to fill in and so on.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok, ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, I need each of you to sign this form for me, so I am gonna go...uhm...through it with you. Uhm....so let's just read together. So this is a document...uhm...ok, to get your consent that you say that you are here volunt....volunta....

**PARTICIPANT:** Voluntarily.

**INTERVIEWER:** That one.

*Laughing*

**INTERVIEWER:** That you understand everything that is going on and so on. So, this is going to form part of a study which is going to be approved and ethically it is fine if I do this and I have all my permissions from everyone. So it is only going to be...it is suppose to be an hour, but because you have lunch at eleven, we will finish at eleven. Ok?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So this is a focus group....*(long silence)*....this is a focus group, not an interview as it says there, but if at anytime during this interview, or focus group you feel uncomfortable or if you feel that there comes things up that you need professional help with, or more help, or more guidance, you can just speak to me afterwards and then I can help you. Ok?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Then...if you experience the need to speak to a professional about your feelings, such a service will be provided. When your...when your participation is complete, you will give, you will be given an opportunity to learn about the research which may be useful in your...to you in your course or in understanding yourself and others. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to Psychological Science by participating in this research. When your parti...bleh...part...bleh...participation is complete, you will be able to evaluate your own development with regards to ethnic identity. The data collected from these focus groups will be used for any current or future research in the area of ethnic identity. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you may decline to participate without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. So if you feel along the line this is getting to heavy for you, you don't want to participate you are free to get up and just walk out, ok. I am not going to force you to be here, this is your own free will, ok?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uhm...if you decide to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Recordings will be made of the focus group discussions; you will not receive any compensation. I can't pay you unfortunately. You will be assigned of...a code number which protects your identity so your confidentiality and anonymity...anonymity...will be protected. So, no one out there is ever going to know that it was you. I am not even going to ask your names, so no one will ever know that it is you that said it except the people in this room. I ask that you also respect each other, so if someone shares something that you don't go tell the whole school about it...neh...

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** If you have any questions you can contact me. I am going to take the forms back, but the other one with my contact details on, you can just ask me for one.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So if you sign below you agree that you have read and understood all the information that I gave you, that your questions about participation in this study has been answered satisfactorily and that you are aware of the potential risks. There are not much risks to this study, because it is only about identity, so it is maybe revealing something about yourself, but that is about it. And that you are taking part in the research study

voluntary without me forcing you into it. So, if you don't want to be here, you are more than welcome to go, but I hope that you all participate. Ok, so you can just sign and just fill in some information on the back.

*Silence while they are signing and filling in*

**PARTICIPANT:** Ask something is Sotho.

What is ethic group?

**INTERVIEWER:** Ha, that is what we are going to discuss today. An ethnic group is a group of people who share the same charac...charis....

**PARTICIPANT:** Characteristics.

**INTERVIEWER:** That one. Where are my words today? Norms, values, believes, attitudes, behaviours. So, I can't tell you what your ethnic group is, but it is the one that you feel you share all your beliefs and values and...uhm... characteristics, norms, attitudes, behaviours with. Ok?

If you are uncertain now, maybe afterwards you can just complete.

Can we start?

**PARTICIPANT:** Where do we sign here?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes...uhm...you can just sign there where it says participants name, unfortunately you have to write your name there otherwise it is not of any value. This is the only place where it will be and then you can just sign next to it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** I want my English name or my Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

*Participants speak to each other cant make out everything*

**PARTICIPANT:** I just made my initials, I didn't know how to scratch.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sign.

**INTERVIEWER:** Even if you just write your name again it is fine.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Do you want the date?

**INTERVIEWER:** Huh?

**PARTICIPANT:** Do you want the date?

**INTERVIEWER:** The date is the 25<sup>th</sup> of October.



**PARTICIPANT:** 2013.

**PARTICIPANT:** 25? (*whistles*)

**INTERVIEWER:** Is everybody ok with speaking English?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** We don't know how to speak English.

**PARTICIPANT:** But we will try.

**INTERVIEWER:** If you are uncertain, it is fine.

**PARTICIPANT:** This one, yoh, she is so precious (*cannot make out what they are saying*).

**INTERVIEWER:** Really?

Right, now firstly I want to hear what do you understand as identity? What is identity to you?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it is how you view the way you are, like the saying, the way you are socially, or the way that you have like, the way that you are.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok?

**PARTICIPANT:** I could say, the way that you are.

**INTERVIEWER:** So it is the way that you are, who you are.

Is there anyone else want to say what they think identity means.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yoh, I think it is how you look.

**INTERVIEWER:** How you?

**PARTICIPANT:** How you look.

**INTERVIEWER:** Look?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** It is how you look someone, or...how you look someone...or how you look other person.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you want to explain that?

So I hear it is who you are, it is how you look...

Anything else?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is how you appear in your society.

**INTERVIEWER:** How you appear in your society.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

Now if I say ethnicity or ethnic, what does that mean?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm....I think the beliefs that you have, let's say ritually...uhm...the way you believe the, as a black person maybe at home my religion is....to go to church, I have to go to church, Christianity...or....

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anyone else? Ethnic, ethnicity?

Right, so if we put those two words together, ethnic identity. What do you understand under ethnic identity? You told me what identity is and ethnic, what are they together?

*Long silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** The beliefs that you should follow as yourself, as an individual. Cause I have my own identity and my uniqueness. So, as a person, we are different, as people we are different. Yes ma'am. We don't have...the same identities. As Miss Leseho say, we don't have the same....what is this...uhm....

**INTERVIEWER:** Fingerprints?

**PARTICIPANT:** Fingerprints. So it is like.....

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, and how does ethnic identity come into play?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm...the way that I believe is like, when I, when I put my fingerprint on my ID and you come and put yours on my ID it is not gonna be the same. Yes ma'am. So I have my own identity and you have your own identity. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Now, let's look a bit about what the clever people say ethnic identity is. Now, they say ethnic identity, and not just your normal identity, but your ethnic identity is the part of you that comes from what you know about your ethnic group. So we have to see what ethnic group you are. Have you ever heard people speak about ethnic groups, or ethnic things, or ethnicity or things like that? Do you know the word ethnic?

**PARTICIPANT:** No ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So maybe we should start there ne?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So ethnicity is what culture, not culture necessarily, but it can have an impact. But what...group do you belong to. So I am a...white Afrikaans speaking female, so I belong to, my ethnic group is uhm...how can I say it in English? Is to be a Boer.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** If you can say it like that. Or to be an Afrikaans woman, you know that is my ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Oh ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** Are we gonna go back? What would you say is your ethnic identity? What is your ethnic group, let's start there. Because I am sure not all of you have the same ethnic group.

*Long silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** I am a Sotho girl.

**INTERVIEWER:** You are a Sotho girl, yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** I am a Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** I can't say that nicely, I will just say Xhosa. So we have Sotho, Xhosa, what else?

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana! Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Coloured.

**INTERVIEWER:** Coloured, that is also an ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Zulu.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you?

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana also. So we have some Tswana ladies here, we have some Sotho, some Xhosa, coloured.

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhoi-san.

**INTERVIEWER:** So now that you know what your ethnic group is, if I say ethnic identity. So, the part of who you are as a person that comes from this group that you belong to, what is that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Come again?

**INTERVIEWER:** So what part of you, the way you grew up, the way you are today, comes from your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm....it is the same as saying, knowing the language, the home language?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes the language.

**PARTICIPANT:** Knowing my roots.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, what are your roots, where do you come from?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am. As in like my parents comes from Lesotho. Actually my father comes from Lesotho, my mother grew up in Bloemfontein. So I can also say that my roots comes from Lesotho because I have that genes from my father.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so genes?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think you guys are born into an ethnic group or do you go find an ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** We are born...

**INTERVIEWER:** You are born into it. Who says they are born into it? And who says they went out to find their ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** I'm born.

**INTERVIEWER:** You are born, who says they are born into the group? You are born, you say born and you guys? Do you go out and look for the best ethnic group and then decide, I want to be Tswana?

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** So were you all born into your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**PARTICIPANT:** Can I ask a question?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Like there are different ethnic groups, so if you talk different home languages. Let's say I know English, Afrikaans, Pedi, Xhosa, a bit of Zulu, do you fall under those or...

**INTERVIEWER:** Which one do you identify with? Forget about language. Think about culture, traditions, what behaviour, do you identify with?

**PARTICIPANT:** Then I think I am Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you guys, do you agree with what your culture says, what your ethnic group says?

**PARTICIPANT:** Not much, only sometimes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Say?

**PARTICIPANT:** Not much.

**INTERVIEWER:** Not much? Do you want to explain that to us? I am very interested in that?

*A lot of giggling from the participants*

**INTERVIEWER:** Please try.

**PARTICIPANT:** O eh eh.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sometimes my father would say girls are not going to eat there, it is for our culture, but I don't think it is really happened.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so there are things that your father says is in your culture, or in your ethnic group, but you don't agree with that.

**PARTICIPANT:** Mmm.

**INTERVIEWER:** You don't think it should be like that. Anyone else who wants to say something about that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ma'am I fall under my ethnic group because of when I grew up, about 11 years, I always ask my grandmother: "Why are the days of today can't we go out without dress, because of our grandmothers use to wear cultural clothes?". So they wear these skirts and then they always didn't wear bra's or shirts. So they use to play with Leshokwane, that is what we used to cook our porridge, and they used to go in groups and steal it somewhere in the house. They go to a far house and ask for water and if they see a Leshokwane, they grab it and play with it. They play catch with it and then they will come around with it to where kids they stay and then they will through it in a river and then the rain will come. So I used to ask her: "But why don't those morals apply to our now days?" then she said to me: "It doesn't happen because the adults rape the children now and we can't do that anymore. Because even if you can try, it is not going to rain anymore, because there is no rivers around where we stay anymore also". So that is how I know my roots also.

**INTERVIEWER:** So it sounds like you have asked a few questions about your group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Has someone else asked questions to their parents or grandparents about your ethnic group? Where you come from?

Who else has asked questions? Traditions?

You girls have you asked some questions about your traditions and your ethnic group?

Ok, so if I understand correctly, you were born into this group. Because of your genes, because of your parents, you have this specific ethnic group which is Tswana, Coloured, Xhosa, Koi-koi, Sotho. Do I have it?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Now I hear that you have started to ask questions, but the rest of you haven't started to ask questions about your ethnic group, right? So you just accepted the group for what it is and you belong to it because you were born into it, full stop.

**PARTICIPANT:** Some of our parents beat us for asking questions.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, ok. So, it is unacceptable to ask questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** That is a challenge, hey?

**PARTICIPANT:** Would you like to know more about your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Does anyone want to know more about their ethnic group?

Who does not care about what their ethnic group does? Is there someone like that here?

**PARTICIPANT:** No ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** So everyone wants to know, but most of you can't because of the restrictions, because of the fear about asking about your group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Very interesting. Do you see that as one of the challenges as developing your ethnic identity? Because you may not ask questions, so how do you know what you belong to? Do you agree?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have you explored other ethnic groups? Like have you heard from them what Tswana people do and have you heard from them what Koi-Koi people do? Have you explored each others cultural groups?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**PARTICIPANT:** She has told me what the Koi Koi-San do.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Depends, ma'am. Like they don't, their porridge is a bit weird...Pedi....and they also eat sand and.....then they like doing cultural events. Yes ma'am. They went to King Shoeshoe.

*Talk to each other in Sotho (think it roughly translates to no that is the Sotho people)*

They wear cultural clothes, but then it differs a bit from Sesotho's, but it almost looks alike. Then they wear those shoes that have a bit of tar....

*Again there is some talking in Sotho, they are correcting each other.*

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so ask each other a bit about the traditions and the clothing and so on.

Now I want to hear if someone asks you what ethnic group you identify with, what is your ethnic group? Can you say for sure I am this?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how strongly do you identify with that group? Is it something that you feel like oh well okay... I was born into it so I must be Tswana, or is it like I am a strong Tswana woman that is it, Tswana is my thing. You know which part...I want to hear from each of you.

**PARTICIPANT:** I want that part that say I am proud of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you are proud of it and you strongly identify with it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes and I am proud of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** I am a strong women of the Southern Sotho because I can speak my language and know my roots and can eat my what I always eat. I can't always say I don't eat that I eat this or what.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who else? Who is strong? Who strongly identify with it? If someone asks you, you say yes?

**PARTICIPANT:** I am strong....

**PARTICIPANT:** I am strong.

**PARTICIPANT:** ...Because in Xhosa it...(says something in Xhosa) and I am proud of being (Xhosa word).

**INTERVIEWER:** And who says I am this part, I was born into it. It is just because I am there, I don't really follow traditions or the values or the traditional expectations. Who is like that?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think this one.

**PARTICIPANT:** She is a little against the Koi-Koi dance.

**INTERVIEWER:** So we have some people here who strongly identify and some people who says...

I have heard from the strong people, now the people who rather go to the other side, who says you know this is my culture, and I am fine with it but it is not really what I live out? I want to hear from you.

**PARTICIPANT:** In Tswana some dances I am not following, I am Tswana girl it is my culture I am fine with it, but I do not follow all the things that I must follow, like dance. I don't know how to dance the dance for Tswana's dance, I don't follow that. And Tswana you must always know your clan, but I don't follow it because it is very difficult.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is it difficult? Why do you say it is difficult?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, it....

**INTERVIEWER:** What is difficult?

**PARTICIPANT:** You must always know it, like when you have events or rituals, you must always say it. They always say, the others want you to know who you are, for them they believe that if you know your clan name, you know where is your culture. You are the real Tswana lady or Sotho lady or Xhosa lady or it is like that.

**INTERVIEWER:** So the better you know your clan....

**PARTICIPANT:** It is the better you know your culture.

**INTERVIEWER:** The better, or the stronger you identify with that culture. Ok.

Now, I want to hear what is the challenges, what are the challenges, we...of having an ethnic identity or ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Music.



**INTERVIEWER:** Music? Is that a challenge to you? Why do you say that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because, so we are in competition Tswana dance more than Sotho we are part of doing Patha-Patha with our music and Sotho is doing Thlogeng so we are doing the competition.

**INTERVIEWER:** Now, except now for food and dance and music and all that, what other expectations that the culture has, or the expectations of the traditions of your parents, from your friends, from your community? What is challenging in following or identifying with your culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it is language because we speak Sotho with Palesa, but I am not a Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Also ma'am, initiation school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Initiation school.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, because in our culture, again we are Xhosa, so it is a must that our brothers must go there and some of them, they don't, they do not attend they are lying.

**INTERVIEWER:** That is a great challenge. Have you been to initiation school?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, we are girls.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah ok just the boys. But I have heard about girl initiation schools.

**PARTICIPANT:** Some girls are initiated.

**PARTICIPANT:** Some, members.

**INTERVIEWER:** But for you it is not something you have to do.

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**PARTICIPANT:** And we don't like it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Let's talk about the boys. What do you think the challenges are for them?

**PARTICIPANT:** They get involved in criminals and crime groups and they get pressurised by their friends to do things that they don't want to do. For example, if we are friends, you gonna tell ourselves lies and let's say let's form a gang and we call ourselves this name and then we do things that are as in, we are like that. They don't match what we are so that is very hectic for them.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok. And in terms of your ethnicity, and developing your ethnic identity? With boys, what do you think their challenges are in the ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** They get involved in maybe things and they can be bad named, bad named as in like let's say that they go out as in like a group and then one of the friends get raped a girl. The one that is better from them all is gonna be pressurised, you did this and this and that like the cleverest one.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anyone else?

Now I want to hear...we have spoken a bit about the challenges and what it means to belong to a group and all that. But now I want to hear, who or what influences you...to be part of that ethnic group? To develop in that ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Parents.

**INTERVIEWER:** Parents?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who else says parents?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm...

**INTERVIEWER:** Who makes you do the dances? Huh? Is it something that you as a person wants to do, or is it something someone else tells you to do?

**PARTICIPANT:** I have a different one to do. The only thing that like my grandfather like says that I get involved in many languages and at school I have to do it in Sesotho, I have to pass Sesotho with high marks and all that. So it is very boring.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who else has someone who influences them?

*Long silence*

No one? Ok, we are almost done guys, 5 more minutes.

Right.

*Sigh from one of the participants*

Ok I want to hear about....more about your ethnic identity. Now that we have discussed who influences it, who does different ethnic groups and what is expected of them in this ethnic group. I want to hear now what you say about your ethnic identity development. How do you develop your identity? Because do you know that at the age that you are now, that you are developing your identity as a person. Part of that identity, you have vocational identity so what career you are going to do, you have life identity, you have uhm....all these separate kinds of identities right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So I am focussing on ethnic identity and how you are developing that. So is there anything that you want to say on how you develop your ethnic identity? Not just your school identity, or your career identity or what else?

**PARTICIPANT:** As I can say, how to develop your identity is really knowing who you are and what you do and understanding the purpose of your identity. And....like they say....occasional identities they are also involved in life identities, the way in ok, I know my language, I know my dances, if I don't know something I get to teach myself. Not to pursue because of somebody knows that just to teach myself.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so you think that to develop your ethnic identity is to explore a bit and to go see, to teach yourself the traditions and so on?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok. Who identifies more with the westernised culture? You know that which you see on TV and in the movies and that? Who thinks ok let's go away from the ethnic group identity, let's do it like the westernised people do it?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is the coloured girl. He likes dancing....hip-hop....

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you feel that it is something that you are confronted with? Whether you have to choose the traditions or the westernised culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am. It is very challenging because of in our days, we don't wear sheshweshwes and all that. We wear modern clothes and our elders want us to go back to those things. Time flies.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who would like to go back and wear the traditional clothing?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uh huh!

**INTERVIEWER:** You?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh the Koi-san you would like to go back to your roots.

**INTERVIEWER:** Only one of you? Who would prefer going and like getting the newest fashion?

Ah! A lot of you, more of those. Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok ma'am, maybe I can say that maybe I can wear my cultural clothes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you don't mind?

**PARTICIPANT:** No ma'am. And doing cultural things with my family.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, and you guys, you are so quiet in the front. Are you a bit tired?

**PARTICIPANT:** The Tswana's they are a bit afraid of people.

**INTERVIEWER:** I see that the Tswana ladies are quiet. Would you like to add something?  
Tswana ladies?

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok before we end, any last comments about ethnic groups or ethnicity or ethnic identity that you want to share?

Any questions that you have about ethnicity or ethnic identity or anything about that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ma'am you know I have a question to ask?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes because our culture is the seshweshwes, so what is your culture?

**INTERVIEWER:** Unfortunately my culture has been very westernised already so we don't have a lot of traditional things anymore. But traditional for us would be...uhm....you know it has been westernised to watching the rugby and braaiing. What else can I say....our traditions are like the Volkspele, I don't know that that is in English, but also traditional dancing, our traditional dancing and uhm and we have Afrikaans music. Our values are more conservative. Like Afrikaans values are things like no sex before marriage, children should be below their parents but not as extreme as with you guys right? We are still allowed to ask questions to our parents where you feel more threatened. Things like that.

**PARTICIPANT:** Do your elders still wear those green shorts and long socks?

**INTERVIEWER:** You actually do find some of them still, but not many. We are very westernised, okay? So a lot of has just become one culture like that what you see in America and in the movies.

**PARTICIPANT:** At primary I had a teacher called Mr de Beer and he was also a Boer and he was not necessarily as other people. He was always talking about cultural events plus he was teaching us about arts and culture then he was in the, then I always ask myself how do you entitle on us, I am not focussed on the old times of Apartheid I am about living today.

*Bell goes*

**INTERVIEWER:** I want to thank you for sitting here for 45 min.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much I really appreciate it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Thank you ma'am.

**PARTICIPANT:** We love you ma'am.

## **Focus group 2 (female group)**

**INTERVIEWER:** So right, we will be busy for about 30minutes, or 30-45 minutes or until we are done. Okay?

So let's start by discussing this. I am going to hand each of you a form like this....now the topic we are discussing is identity, and more specifically, ethnic identity development in black African adolescents. So are you all black Africans?

**PARTICIPANT:** *Agree with statement.*

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, so I am just going to read this with you and make sure that you all understand this, so if there is questions be.....please ask me okay? So please read this document carefully, your signature is required for participation. If you desire a copy of this consent form, you may request one and it will be provided. This study has been approved by a research committee of the University of the Free State, there will be asked of you to participate in a focus group for one hour. When you are participating in a focus group....

*Someone enters the room*

Male who entered: Morning, how are you?

**INTERVIEWER:** Good and you?

Male who entered: Fine, fine...uh.... (cannot make out what he is saying)

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, yes, thank you very much.

Right where were we.... when you participate in a focus group and interview, you may come across, or be reminded of an experience that may evoke unpleasant emotions that could possibly upset you. If you experience the need to speak to a professional person to express these feelings, such a services will be provided. So if we speak about something here this morning that makes you feel very sad, or upsets you a lot, please come and tell me afterwards so that I can help you and that we can find you someone to just deal with those emotions. Okay? Uhm....when your participation is complete you will be given the opportunity to learn about the research which may be useful to you in your course or understanding yourself and others. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to Psychological Science by participating in this research. When your participation is complete you will be able to evaluate your own development with regards to ethnic

identity. The data collected from these focus groups may be used for any current or future research in the area of ethnic identity. Your participation in the study is voluntary. That means that it is your decision and if you don't want to participate you can just tell me and we can get someone else in your place or while we are busy if you get uncomfortable and you do not wish to continue, you are also free to leave so I am not going to force any of you to...to....to do this if you don't want to. Uhm....and there is no penalty if you leave. Recordings will be made of the focus group discussions; you will not receive any compensation in return for your participation. That just means that I cant pay you for participating here today, unfortunately. Okay, you will be assigned a code number which will take your identity. Anom...anoni.....ah that word will be assured. Okay, so that is why I am not asking your names today, I am just going to give you a number okay? Because that way no one will ever know that it was you who said that. Uhm....okay if you have any questions about the study or the procedure, you may contact the principle investigator, that is me, Jolandie, and there are my contact details. By signing below you are agreeing that you have read and understood the above information, questions about your participation in the study have been answered satisfactory, that you are aware of the potential risks, and that you take part in this study volo...voluntary without me forcing you. Anyone have any questions about this? Anything that you are unsure of because it is a long thing with a lot of difficult stuff in....anyone unsure about something?

*Long silence*

Okay, if you are done you can just.....uhm....your name and your surname, your signature.....and that is it. And then here at the back you can just write your school, your gender, you're all female, your age, your race, your home language and if you know your ethnic group please write that in. Your ethnic group will be something like....uhm....your black African but you are Sotho, so Sotho that may be your ethnic group....Okay? I have one pen. Let's start here.

*Silence while they are completing consent forms*

Oh, there is another pen here.

*Silence while they are completing consent forms*

Oh right you have another pen, that is great.

*Silence while they are completing consent forms*

Thank you.....

Okay....so....let us start, I am going to give each of you a number and then you can just say your age, okay so number 1?

**PARTICIPANT:** 16.

**INTERVIEWER:** 16?

**PARTICIPANT:** 16.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2, 16.

**PARTICIPANT:** 18.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 3 is 18.

**PARTICIPANT:** 16.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 4 is 16.

**PARTICIPANT:** 18.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 5 is 18. You guys must speak nice and loudly okay so let's start.

What do you understand as identity?

*Long silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm..... I understand, I am not sure what I understand, identity is, I mean who you are...is it?

**INTERVIEWER:** Who you are?

**PARTICIPANT:** Who you are

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. What else do you think identity is, it is definitely who you are, but what else?

**PARTICIPANT:** Inside you and what is inside you.

**INTERVIEWER:** What is inside you. Okay?

**PARTICIPANT:** How you see and feel about yourself.

**INTERVIEWER:** How you see and feel about yourself... So what would you say is your identity?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sorry ma'am?

**INTERVIEWER:** What is your identity?

*Long Silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** I think humanity.



**INTERVIEWER:** Humanity? Ok let's make it easier. What do you think ethnic or ethnicity is? Have you heard that word ethnicity or ethnic something?

Never?

**PARTICIPANT:** Huh uh.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any ideas? Do you want to guess?

**PARTICIPANT:** I want to guess.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes?

**PARTICIPANT:** You said uhm what...you said that uhm....that you are Africa or Black or is it....is it diversity?

**INTERVIEWER:** Diversity?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Diversity. What kind of diversity? Because male and female is also diverse.

**PARTICIPANT:** Diversity according to religion, cultures.

**INTERVIEWER:** Cultures?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes. So ethnic group would be what? Do one of you other people want to try? If she said that ethnicity is you know the diversity of culture, what would be an ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** People with different cultures.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, people of different cultures.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, but how is that grouped?

**PARTICIPANT:** African group?

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, Black African. Do you think it is only Black African, White, Coloured or is there something else to ethnic groups?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it is different and it will depend in which group you are.

**INTERVIEWER:** How do you mean?

**PARTICIPANT:** Like....our, group is a....ethnic group is like African like okay because we are Black (cannot make out what she says)

*Laughing*

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, but we are just speaking about you now.

**PARTICIPANT:** Okay.

**INTERVIEWER:** So they say an ethnic group is a group of people who share the same characteristics, norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Okay. So it is that group that believes the same things.

Participants: Ahhhhh ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, if I say that all Black African people share the same beliefs, norms, characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, is that right? Do all black people believe the same?

**PARTICIPANT:** No

**INTERVIEWER:** Where do they differ?

*Silence*

Who....How do they differ?

*Silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** It...I think it differ[s] in terms of attitude...

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, but...

**PARTICIPANT:** ...and norms, because we don't believe in the same things.

**INTERVIEWER:** The same as who?

**PARTICIPANT:** Like I can believe this and she can believe this and our attitude will not be the same.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes that is true, but I am wondering about uhm.....do Xhosa and Sotho people believe the same things?

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do Zulu and Xhosa people believe the same things?

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**PARTICIPANT:** Because of our tradition.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tradition....okay....so maybe we can say that ethnic groups in South Africa within the Black population can include Sotho, that is an ethnic group, Xhosa is an ethnic group, Zulu is an ethnic group, Tswana is an ethnic group....how many are there? There are many ne?

*Laughing*

We can't name them all, hey?

So do you understand what an ethnic group is? An ethnic group will be like all the Sotho people, having the same traditions, the same behaviours, the same attitudes, the norms, the beliefs. Even within the Sotho culture we can get different things right? But an ethnic group, as you said, the diverse, the different cultures. Sotho will be one culture so that is one ethnic group. Xhosa is one ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** So to which ethnic group do you belong?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** All of you Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, so can I ask you a bit about your Sotho culture? Your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. Do you think you have an ethnic group, or is it just something we are saying? Is it just a name? Or is it really an ethnic group where you have the same things, the same norms, characteristics, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours? Or is it just a name? A label?

**PARTICIPANT:** For me it is just a name cause, ok I have (cannot make out what she is saying) because these days we all do the same thing actually.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you girls think?

*Silence*

Do you agree with her? Do you differ from her?

*Silence*

Uhm...how do you know that you belong to an ethnic group? Are you born into it? Can you decide to what ethnic group you want to belong to? Can you go and test all of them and then decide to which one is the best? How do you know that you belong to an ethnic group?

*Silence*

What do you think? There are no right or wrong answers here. You can just say what you think.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think cause of this (cannot hear what she says)...it is those uhm...I don't have to follow those...the cultures. There are those cultures, those occasions like say like they can't accept like maybe in this age you have to do this and this and this. So in that case then it gives me the thing of under which thing I fall under.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so you say you are born into it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** And then you live...

**PARTICIPANT:** All the culture ja...all the stamps of it.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you? Let's start with number 1. Are you born into it or can you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** You weren't born into it, you just choose.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how would you choose a culture group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm...I make friends with lots of people and then I decide which one I will take as my friend

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, and your family? What culture group are they?

**PARTICIPANT:** My mother is Sotho and my father is Xhosa, so I speak two languages.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, okay. And how did you decide if you are going to belong to Sotho or Xhosa culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** I grew up speaking Sotho, so I decided that I am going to into the Sotho. Xhosa is just; I just speak it at home.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2? Were you born into your culture or did you decide which ethnic group you want to belong to?

*Bell rings for end of period*

Let's just wait for the bell.

**PARTICIPANT:** You are born into a culture.

**INTERVIEWER:** You are born into it. And would you change it if you could?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sorry?

**INTERVIEWER:** Would you change it? Would you pick a different one if you could? Not. Number 3, were you born into it or did you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** I choose.

**INTERVIEWER:** You chose. How did you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** I first look at the groups and the one that makes me happy.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your family, which groups are they?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok so also like her you have the two parents from the two different groups and then you decided which one.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho. I didn't want to speak Xhosa.

*laughing*

**INTERVIEWER:** So you also said number 4, that you are born into a culture. Number 5?

**PARTICIPANT:** I am born into Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** Born Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So now we have two different uhm.....uhm....origins here. Some of you feel that you were born into your culture and some of you had the privilege to decide which culture. Okay. So I want to know, did you ever explore your ethnic group and then decided "I agree with this, or no I don't agree with this"? Or did you just, for those of you who say that you are born into the culture, did you just say: "But you know, I was born into this so I have to be here, no questions about that?". So what do you think?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ah, sometimes I think, (cannot hear what she is saying) I am like that feeling of (cannot hear what she is saying) that I have no choice.

**INTERVIEWER:** Just say that again please?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ah sometimes I might have that feeling of.....

*Knocking on the door and someone enters and some talking I can't make out*

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, where were we.

**PARTICIPANT:** I just say that sometimes I might have that feeling of following Indian culture....

**INTERVIEWER:** Indian culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** I chose. I can't just come into that culture and say that: "Oh now I am an Indian girl".

**INTERVIEWER:** So if you had a choice, you would prefer the Indian culture but according to your ethnic group you are not allowed to change? Anyone else who ask questions about their culture? Let's start with the two people who, it is only you two neh? Who could choose their culture. What did you do when you decided? Did you explore both groups and then decided I like this one more? Or is it because of the language that you chose it?

**PARTICIPANT:** I grew up speaking Sotho, so it was easy for me to choose Sotho....and Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** So it is the language that made you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay and you?

**PARTICIPANT:** Also the language, but I really like Xhosa ne, but because I don't know how to speak Xhosa, I chose Sotho. Some other times I like to be Xhosa group, neh, but I can't.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok. And if language wasn't an option and you, if you just look that the values, the traditions, the norms, would you still choose Sotho or would you rather choose Xhosa?

**PARTICIPANT:** I would rather choose Xhosa.

**PARTICIPANT:** I would choose Sotho (*she says this with a laugh*).

*Laughing*

**INTERVIEWER:** Is there any specific reasons that you will choose Xhosa or Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa, I don't know it very well so when I speak it my father laugh at me and my little sister help me to speak Xhosa so I don't prefer it as my language.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Mmmm.... people who speak Xhosa, they just live their culture neh.... Sotho ones they just leave and they don't say what they used to do.

**INTERVIEWER:** Now the people who were born into it, we have spoke to you but number 2 and 5, what do you say? Did you ask questions about your culture? Did you ever though

maybe I should try a different culture? Did you ask about the traditions and decided no I don't agree with this or yes I agree with this? Or did you just accept it?

**PARTICIPANT:** I just accept it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

*Someone enters the room and says something*

**INTERVIEWER:** So you just accepted it, and you also.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why did you just accept it? Why didn't you ask questions? Or is it not appropriate for you to ask questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** I have accepted because of my parents and my other families they are Sotho's and they speak Sothos. I don't have other families that speak Xhosa or other languages.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, it is because your family is Sotho that you feel that you are Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, I just accepted it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja me too. Because my family speak Sotho so no one can speak Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. So let's speak about ethnic identity. Now what will ethnic identity mean? We know what ethnic is now, and ethnic group, we know what identity is. So ethnic group is your culture that you belong to and identity is who you are. So what would ethnic identity mean?

*Long silence*

Any guesses?

*Silence*

Can I tell you?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, ethnic identity is the part of who you are that was formed and comes from the group that you belong in. So what of you as a person comes from your ethnic group? It may be something you believe in. It may be a tradition that you follow. It may be the way you behave. It may be the way you speak, not just language, but the way you speak to someone. It may be, I know in some cultures it is inappropriate to look someone in the eye because it is disrespectful. That is something that comes from your ethnic group. It may be a tradition that you follow, dances that you do. What part of you,

your hobbies, your personality, anything comes from your ethnic group? That is ethnic identity. What of you comes from your ethnic group? Do you understand?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Everyone understand?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Good. Now, let's see....uhm....right, now in order with you to identify with your ethnic group, to have an ethnic identity, you need to know more about your ethnic group right? So how did you learn about your ethnic group?

*Silence*

Who told you? How did you learn the traditions, the beliefs, the behaviours, all that?

**PARTICIPANT:** In some, in some situations they show me. In some situations they tell me.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who told you? Who showed you?

**PARTICIPANT:** My parents.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your parents?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, when maybe they...like you said in other groups there is this thing about when I talk to you I look you in the eyes, neh? Actually they told me like, I just come here and let's see, uhm....you guys are this young and therefore the first thing I have to teach you is mutual respect for your elders and stuff.

**INTERVIEWER:** So mostly from your parents then?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Let's start here.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok, my mother taught me that when visitors are there, I have to greet them and make them some tea and stuff.

**INTERVIEWER:** So your mother told you?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** My mother taught me.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your mother?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** My grandfather told me that even if others are sitting in the sitting room with your mother, you must not stay there and listen to what they say.

**PARTICIPANT:** My parents.



**INTERVIEWER:** Your parents. So most of you learned the traditions from your parents, either your mother or your father or both of them. Okay. Where do you learn about your culture? You know the history of your culture. Not just what you should and shouldn't do, but you know the stories and all of that? Where did you learn that? Also from your parents or someone else?

**PARTICIPANT:** My grand, grand-grandmother (*laughing*). My grand-grandmother told me a story about our family, actually.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Anyone else also from grandparents.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, my grandparents also told me that they like....they told me about the family from the start and stuff and stuff and stuff. And they also told me to follow that also so that I can be a real Sotho girl.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, so he told you to follow it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you can be a real Sotho girl.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, you know that thing I can feel it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So do you feel that you explored your ethnic group? Did you ask questions? Did anyone ask questions about you know why do we do this? Why do we have to do this in our culture?

*Silence*

Your parents told you certain things. Did you just accept that as the truth and as the norm and as you have to do that? Or did you ask them: "But why? Where does it come from? Why are we doing this?"

**PARTICIPANT:** Okay. I can't ask questions because in our culture we are not allowed to ask questions like that. If I am told something, I am not allowed to ask questions. It is a way of being disrespectful, so I couldn't ask those questions. But I just like other people.

**INTERVIEWER:** You...

**PARTICIPANT:** I just like other people.

**INTERVIEWER:** So did any of you ask your parents or do you agree with her that it is disrespectful?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes we agree with her.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who disagrees with her? In whose house is it different?

*Silence*

No-one?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you are not allowed to ask questions about your ethnic group or things in your ethnic group. Would you like to ask questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of questions would you like to ask them?

**PARTICIPANT:** I'll ask them... I'll ask them: "Why we are doing this and that?". Like we have different...many things we do at our homes. Like cultures...when your families or other died, we must...we must...we must cut our hairs and we don't know why so I would ask them.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So that is one of the questions that you will ask?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Because you don't want to loose your hair?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What other questions would you like to ask?

**PARTICIPANT:** Like about culture. Like me I am Sotho, what does Sotho mean and where does it come from? And why do they have to follow those rules? Is it a must that you choose doing the way of showing respect or what?

**INTERVIEWER:** What would you guys ask?

**PARTICIPANT:** I would ask: "If I didn't follow the culture will I die or not?"

*Laughing*

**INTERVIEWER:** You mean that it so rigid, it so fixed that maybe you will die if you don't follow it?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**PARTICIPANT:** I want to know the Sotho roots, where do they come from and why do they follow this cultures?

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything that you'll ask?

*Silence*

Or not specifically?

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** So do you think you will ever get the answers to those questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, I think the information it is out of books, it is this out of books of cultures, the Sotho culture, the Xhosa culture, all of those cultures. That is where you can get that information, because we can't, as I told you before, it is disrespectful.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So you may not ask but there are books available?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** And have any of you read those books?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, I have one.

**INTERVIEWER:** you have one. Did it help you or do you still have a lot of questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, it did help me because it shows everything about Basotho and Sotho cultures and where it comes from.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any of the others read those books?

Participants: No.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think you will learn, you will get your questions answered through books like that?

Not really?

Okay.

Right...uhm....have you ever explored different culture groups? Not just language, but their traditions, their....the things they do?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Which one did you explore?

**PARTICIPANT:** I explored Tswana dance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana dance?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok. Anyone else explored another part of some other culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Xhosa?

**PARTICIPANT:** How they dress and dancing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Dressing and dancing, okay

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, and also in the Indian dressing and dancing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Indian dressing and dancing.

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana.

**PARTICIPANT:** And then the lady who (claps her hands).

**PARTICIPANT:** Setswana music.

**INTERVIEWER:** Huh?

**PARTICIPANT:** Music.

**INTERVIEWER:** Music. Of which culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho and Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay but did you ever explore from another culture that was not Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, Tswana dance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana dance. A lot of Tswana that I hear.

Uhm...if you had a choice and they said to you there are 20 cultures in South Africa and you can choose which one you want to belong to, would change?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja (answered immediately).

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, you would definitely change. You also said you want to change right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 5. Number 1 would you change?

**PARTICIPANT:** I want to learn Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2?

**PARTICIPANT:** To me also Tswana.

**PARTICIPANT:** I really like Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you like Xhosa. Do you think you will maybe change? Who thinks that they would maybe change their culture one day?

*Silence*

No one.....okay.

How strongly do you agree with your culture group, with your ethnic group? Do you just do it because ah you were born Sotho, or you speak Sotho? Or do you go all out, every tradition, every function, every dance? You learn everything because you are so into your culture. How strongly do you identify with it?

Let's say on a scale of 0 to 10. 0, you don't follow any of the traditions of your culture 10 is you go all out. You know every dance, every tradition, every song, you eat only eat Sotho food. You go all out and do everything Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think a 0

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 1 0?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, because I have to follow two cultures when there is a funeral in my mother's who is Sotho then I have to do Sotho stuff and I don't know it. When my father is a funeral I have to do Xhosa stuff and I don't know it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you feel you don't know anything of either culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2 where would you put yourself?

*Long silence*

On a scale from 0 to 10 where would you put yourself?

**PARTICIPANT:** 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 10? You go all out. You do everything your culture says?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Great. And you agree with everything?

Right, good you agree with everything.

Number 3?

**PARTICIPANT:** 5.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 5, do you want to explain why a 5?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because I do some of Sotho's and some of Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** So which traditions do you follow?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** You don't look happy with that.

**PARTICIPANT:** Mmmm....I want to be Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** You want to be Xhosa. Number 4?

**PARTICIPANT:** I can easily say a 5.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 5.

**PARTICIPANT:** Is, ok...I speak Sotho and I follow some traditions but in some cases like... I can attend other occasions I can eat only the Sotho food, I eat whatever I want to eat.

**INTERVIEWER:** Mmmm, ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 5?

**PARTICIPANT:** A 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 10, you go all out?

**PARTICIPANT:** There is a lot more that I want to learn about it.

**INTERVIEWER:** You want to learn more about it. So you do everything that you can to learn about your culture?

Okay.

Anyone else who does that? Go all out to follow their culture and to learn more about it?

Ok so it is only number 5?

Great...okay...now...tututu...what are the advantages of belonging to an ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it usually helps you to know who you are, your identity.

**INTERVIEWER:** It helps your identity?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, because okay I have my culture, she has her culture, what if there was no cultures I mean how will I know who am I.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok so you think that who you are is a great deal thanks to your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Does someone have another advantage...of belonging to an ethnic group? What do you like about your ethnic group? What is good about belonging to an ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because it teach you somethings about your culture.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok so it teaches you things.

**PARTICIPANT:** And to know where you come from and where you are going.

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow! Do you want to explain that? Where you come from and where you are going?

**PARTICIPANT:** I mean there are roots that they teach you and you have to follow it and go with it.

**INTERVIEWER:** So they teach you some of the roots and that is what helps you to go on.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Anyone else? What is good about belonging to an ethnic group?

*Silence*

Nothing else?

So if I understand correctly one of the great advantages to you to belong to an ethnic group it is almost like a guide. It helps you to develop who you are, but it also teaches you the roots so that you can go into the future. Do all of you agree, or do someone disagree with that? Do you feel that your identity is separate from the your group?

*Silence*

Okay let me ask it differently. How much of who you are is because of your culture and how much of who you are is because of you? On a scale from 0 to 10. 0 is nothing as you as a person is your ethnic group or 10 everything from who you are is from your ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** I'll go with 10 (*sigh*).

**INTERVIEWER:** 10. So everything that you are and everything that you believe is because of your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2?

**PARTICIPANT:** 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** 10.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 3?

**PARTICIPANT:** 9.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 9, why a 9?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because some are ethnic group and some are your own.

**INTERVIEWER:** So there is like a 1 out of 10 that is yourself?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** I will also say a 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 10.

**PARTICIPANT:** I will also say a 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 10. So everything that you are is because of your ethnic group?

Participants: Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sjoe, so ethnic group is a powerful thing ne?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**PARTICIPANT:** Only if you let it.

**INTERVIEWER:** What are the disadvantages of belonging to an ethnic group? Why is it not nice to belong to this one group?

**PARTICIPANT:** I just feel there there is an attack on your culture, as I say I like Indian so I have to know more about other ethnic groups, about Xhosa, about (cannot make out), about all that stuff. I cannot just concentrate on mine. Ja, I have to learn about others and know different languages, different ja... more especially different languages.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you feel that you have to know about it?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, because I want to be a lawyer so I think you have to know all of these origins so there may be a case of someone who speak Xhosa, how am I going to solve that case if I don't speak Xhosa? But, if I in turn wanna go to other groups it is there for me to find out.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you feel that your ethnic group is holding you back? From becoming a lawyer, speaking different languages, knowing different cultures...or is it helping you?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sometimes I am not saying... How do I say it?... I'm not quite sure.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok. What are the other disadvantages? What don't you like about your ethnic group?

*Silence*

Do you like everything about your ethnic group? Not one problem? Nothing?

*Silence*

Sho...you must like your ethnic groups very much?

What are the challenges...of being in an ethnic group? You know there are some the group, the culture say certain things that you have to do. How do you manage those challenges? Because everything isn't easy, like you said earlier they want you to cut your



hair off every time someone dies. How do you deal with those challenges? And what are those challenges in your group?

*Silence*

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok, one of these challenges....is the first one yes...the second one is the challenges like maybe my culture beliefs I should wear a long dress. How am I going to come to school? I can't wear a long dress when I come to school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, so a long dress is a problem?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is a problem yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how do you manage with those problems? Do you just do it or do you argue with it?

**PARTICIPANT:** I disagree with it.

**INTERVIEWER:** You disagree with it?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, because they have to understand coming to school, you cannot just wear a long dress. You know at school there is a lot of challenges. There are the other ladies and what are they going to say. I can't.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any other challenges?

*Silence*

Nothing?

Uhm.....how do you think other adolescents, other learners of your age deals with this...with these challenges of your ethnic groups? What do you think other people feel about ethnic groups? If you think about your friends, your families, people your age? Do they like being in an ethnic group? Do they dislike it?

**PARTICIPANT:** Nowadays I think they don't like it.

**INTERVIEWER:** You don't like it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, because nowadays life is challenging and you know all teens like to be stylish and stuff. All those stuff is it and everyone live in poverty. So how are they, like me, just saying I am still following my group and in other times I am following my friends? And you know, it is going to be difficult.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so there are certain things that you want to do and your culture is keeping you back?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, it is keeping me back.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think everyone feels like that? The whole school, the whole of Bloemfontein's Black Adolescents feel like that? Or do you think there are people who think that culture is good?

**PARTICIPANT:** No some people will believe that culture is good.

**INTERVIEWER:** And your friends are most of them people who would rather go for the stylish, nice things or the traditional things?

**PARTICIPANT:** Stylish.

**INTERVIEWER:** The stylish one?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who has friends who wants to be more traditional?

*Silence*

No-one? So everyone wants to be more Westernised? Where you wear pretty clothes and makeup and listen to nice music...

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** You know go to the rave rather than the traditional dancing.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, like when there is a party.

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of dances do you do at a party? Do you do the traditional Tswana or Sotho dancing or do you just go.

*Laughing*

**PARTICIPANT:** Just nice dances.

**INTERVIEWER:** So no traditional dances?

**PARTICIPANTS:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay...uhm...do you think boys experiences it differently than girls? Do you think they have other challenges? Being a Sotho speaking man? Do you think it is different than being a Sotho speaking or Sotho-girl, not speaking? But if you as a man belong to an ethnic group, you are Sotho, do you think it is differently than girls being Sotho? Do they have other challenges?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, because if are a boy neh, and your father is the king, you have to keep on that legacy because you are going to be the next king. You are a prins and you are the next king. So in some cases you cant just deny being a king, you must be a king after

your father. Because after his father pays...during his father....I mean a boy is a prins, so after his father he is going to be the king so it is much different

**INTERVIEWER:** And in school? Your friends that are boys, do you think they have it differently than you? Are there other things they have to do than what you have to do?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, this thing of circumcsions.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, circumcsions.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, because it is a must to be circumcsied.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any other challenges that you think the boys have that you don't have?

*Silence*

Right....uhm....so any last words you want to say about your ethnic identity?

*Silence*

Nothing? Do you guys think you now understand ethnic identity more now? Do you think you will be more aware of it now?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you very much for participating today....yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes....because I wasn't aware of it but after this conversation I am more aware of it

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay so you are more aware of it.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** And what are you going to do with that awareness?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm.... I am going to have to follow them and believe in them. There is no other way. As I told you before, there is other way I can just choose to be an Indian. I was born a Sotho, so I just can't.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anyone else?

Thank you very very much for.....

### **Focus group 3 (male group)**

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. So as I said I am from UOFS and we are going to do some research today and I brought each of you just an informed...uhm...page and I will read it with you and I would please like you to Just sign there. If you have any questions please ask me. Okay?

So let's just read together. Now my topic is on ethnic identity development in Black African Adolescents. That is why I asked if all of you are black African, I will explain to you what that means just now.

Now, please read this document carefully. Your signature is required for participation. If you desire a copy of this consent form, you may request one and it will be provided. This study has been approved by the research committee of the University of the Free State. There will be asked of you to participate in one focus group of one hour. When participating in the focus group, you may come across or be reminded of an experience that may evoke unpleasant emotions that could be possibly upset you. If you experience the need to speak to a professional person about these feelings, such service will be provided. So if any of the things we speak about here today, uhm...touches you very deeply and upsets you a lot, please come speak to me afterwards or take a blank page like this and you can email me or phone me and tell me that and we can arrange for you to get some help okay?

When your participation is complete you will be given an opportunity to learn about the research which may be useful to your schooling and your understanding of yourself or others. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to psychological science by participating in this research. When your participation is complete, you will be able to evaluate your own development with regards to ethnic identity. The data collected in these focus groups may be used for any current or future research in the area of ethnic identity. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline to participate without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Now that means that I am not forcing any of you to be here today. You decided to come and you are willing to participate. Okay? And if anything we say during our conversation makes

you uncomfortable or you feel that you don't want to answer something or that you would rather leave that is fine. Okay? Uhm...recordings will be made of the focus group discussions. You will not receive any compensation in return for your participation. So I cannot pay you unfortunately. You will be assigned a code number which will protect your identity and ana...anonymity will be assured. Okay? So no one will know in the research, only us sitting here will know it is you who said that. And I ask of you guys to also respect each others opinions and not go and tell everyone about it. So no one will know it is you who said that. You will be assigned a number. Okay? If you have any questions at any time of the study or the procedures, you may contact me Jolandie, and there are my contact details. By signing below you are agreeing that you have read and understood the above mentioned information and that you have asked your questions about your participation in the study and it has been answered satisfactory and that you are aware of the potential risks and lastly that you are taking part in this research study voluntarily...voluntary without me forcing you.

Any questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** First of all, I know what is ethnic heritage?

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, now ethnic identity and ethnic group...what is an ethnic group? It is the cultural group that you belong to? Sotho, Xhosa...

*Bell rings*

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana, Venda...

**INTERVIEWER:** Let's just wait for the bell.

...Tswana, Venda all those things and identity is who you are right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So ethnic identity is the part of who you are that comes from your culture group. So it is not a very personal...it is a personal topic, but you will not have to reveal any sensitive information.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ok.

**INTERVIEWER:** Everyone okay with this?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any more questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think I am fine so far.

**INTERVIEWER:** Fine so far?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** If you could just write your name and signature and on the back your school, your gender. Hopefully you are all male, your race, home language and ethnic group. So your race will be Black African, okay. There is a pen for you.

*Silence while they are completing the consent forms*

Wow! Ok you have a pencil, ok great! Oh you have a whole...

**PARTICIPANT:** What is ethnic group?

**INTERVIEWER:** Ethnic group is Xhosa, Sotho...

**PARTICIPANT:** Home Language?

**PARTICIPANT:** What you speak at home?

**INTERVIEWER:** Home language is what language you speak and group is what group do you belong to.

Thank you.

**PARTICIPANT:** So if you speak two languages at your home can you write two there?

**INTERVIEWER:** Sorry?

**PARTICIPANT:** If you speak two languages at home which one do you write there?

**INTERVIEWER:** Both.

**PARTICIPANT:** Both.

**INTERVIEWER:** Both, yes, thank you.

Thanks.

**PARTICIPANT:** I made a mistake here.

**INTERVIEWER:** It's ok.

Thank you....how old are you?

**PARTICIPANT:** 16.

**INTERVIEWER:** So if I can ask you, please speak nice and loudly. Don't be afraid. If you differ from someone else, please say that: "No I don't agree". Okay? But don't....we don't have to attack each other, you can just say that no I don't feel this way.

Okay, so I am going to give each of you a number, and then you can just give your age. Is that fine?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 1?  
**PARTICIPANT:** 16.  
**INTERVIEWER:** 16. Number 2?  
**PARTICIPANT:** 16.  
**INTERVIEWER:** 16. 3?  
**PARTICIPANT:** 18.  
**INTERVIEWER:** 18. 4?  
**PARTICIPANT:** 18.  
**INTERVIEWER:** 18.  
**PARTICIPANT:** 17.  
**INTERVIEWER:** 5, 17 okay.

So, we spoke about ethnic identity quickly now now. But what do you understand under identity?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think uhm....identity is your race.  
**INTERVIEWER:** Your race?  
**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.  
**INTERVIEWER:** But now forget about ethnic identity and just identity. Do you still feel that it is your race?  
**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.  
**INTERVIEWER:** Ok your race.  
**PARTICIPANT:** Identity is your what you are.  
**INTERVIEWER:** What you are. What do you want to say?  
**PARTICIPANT:** Identity is the same as what he said.  
**INTERVIEWER:** What you are?  
**PARTICIPANT:** For me identity is where you come from.  
**INTERVIEWER:** Where you come from. How do you mean?  
**PARTICIPANT:** Which culture group you come from.  
**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, which culture group you come from.

What do you guys say about what is identity, what is your identity?

**PARTICIPANT:** Identity is a self view, identity is what you are.  
**INTERVIEWER:** What you are?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you think there is suppose to be a class here now?

**PARTICIPANT:** No ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, anyone else?

**PARTICIPANT:** Identity is your name, your background and where you come from.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your name, your background and where you come from, okay. It seems like some of you agrees with that.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Everyone agrees with that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

Now what is ethnicity or ethnic?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think that ethnic is a base of where you come from. Your culture.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, your culture and where you come from. Give me an example of ethnic group....an ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Black Africans.

**INTERVIEWER:** Black Africans, is that it?

Now if I tell you they say that an ethnic group is a group of people who share the same values, norms, traditions...uhm....beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Will you still say that an ethnic group is just black Africans?

**PARTICIPANT:** No.

**INTERVIEWER:** What is it then?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think that it is all the people who participate.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok....for example?

**PARTICIPANT:** Like (cannot hear think) Bopelo and black people.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** Khoi-San.

**PARTICIPANT:** Khoi-San.

**INTERVIEWER:** Khoi-San, okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** Spanish.



**INTERVIEWER:** Spanish, yes. So all the Spanish people do the same thing, all the Khoi-San people do the same thing so that is why they are an ethnic group.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, now in South Africa, what ethnic groups do we get?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Zulu's.

**INTERVIEWER:** Zulu's.

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** I can't say it as nicely as you but Xhosa's.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sotho and Tswana.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Venda.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ndebele.

**INTERVIEWER:** Venda and Ndebele, so many in South Africa neh?

So which culture or ethnic group do you belong to? Let's start with number 1.

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Xhosa.

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Xhosa.

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Xhosa. Right se we have some different groups here.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes ma'am.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right so now, let's start with what do you know about your ethnic group.

*Silence*

Do you know anything about your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, I know I am part of the culture. But if you are part of a family group, we do...we do, we are we do some worship of the ancestors, in our ancestors in Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right so there is a lot of ancestral...

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** In my ethnic group we put God first and then we start following at the ancestors, because everything is possible with God.

**INTERVIEWER:** So God and the ancestors.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** In Xhosa we do worship our ancestors, but like he said that we do it afterwards when a person is (cannot hear what he says as there are a lot of other noise) when a person...then you go to the mountain and learn to be a man.

**INTERVIEWER:** So there is a lot of things that you get taught. Right.

**PARTICIPANT:** In Xhosa we believe in the ancestors and their spirits.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think he was right because when you are 18 first you must go to the mountain to learn to be a young man.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah ok. So this is quite a big thing for you all.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes. Because in anointing the thing is you will go and be circumcised you in our culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** The thing is not about going to be circumcised; it is about being a man. They are going to teach you to be a man, how to treat your female and how to treat other people around the community.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, so how to be a real man.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** But our neighbourhood we don't have to go to the mountains, we have to finish school first and then we get released from the pass you go to circumcision school.

**INTERVIEWER:** So Xhosa goes to the mountain.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, and also Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Go to the mountain.

**INTERVIEWER:** Also go to the mountain.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Which one are you again?

**PARTICIPANT:** Tswana.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tswana....do you guys go to school.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes circumcision school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Circumcision school.

**PARTICIPANT:** Circumcision sometimes can be medical circumcision.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay medical circumcision. And the mountain guys, medical or traditional?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Traditional.

**INTERVIEWER:** Traditional.

**PARTICIPANT:** But the others go to the medical before.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so you first do the medical and then you go to the mountains.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right.

**PARTICIPANT:** But first you must wait to be healed and then you go.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, so first healed and then go, neh? Okay, right we will speak a bit about that later on again.

Now I want to hear, how do you know that you are in your ethnic group? Because you are all very certain about that I am Xhosa, I am Sotho, I am Tswana. But how do you know that you belong in that group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Our elders at home, they tell us.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, so your elders told you. Let's go to you.

**PARTICIPANT:** My parents told us that they have do a ceremony for me when I was born.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you just say that again.

**PARTICIPANT:** My parents do have ceremony when I was born.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you had ceremony when you were born.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes. You are practicing your culture in this life. When you are born for the first time when you started to going (cannot hear what he says) to be meet, you just know (cannot hear what he says).

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** Your name and your surname.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sorry?

**PARTICIPANT:** Your name and your surname. Your name and your surname.

**INTERVIEWER:** Your name and your surname. That is interesting.

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm....maybe for me a ceremony to thanks the god, to give his....when they thank the ancestors and stuff for you. You make your son to be strong like, in our culture we believe there are witches around so, you make your child to be strong.

**INTERVIEWER:** So who were born into their ethnic group, and who had the privilege to choose to which ethnic group they wanted to belong to?

Who was born?

**PARTICIPANT:** I was born.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 1 was born. Number 2, choose or born?

**PARTICIPANT:** Born.

**INTERVIEWER:** Born. Number 3?

**PARTICIPANT:** I was born.

**INTERVIEWER:** Born. 4?

**PARTICIPANT:** I was born.

**PARTICIPANT:** Me too I was born into my ethnic group.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you all were born into your ethnic group and you couldn't choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** I believe if you were choose, but you have to go according to your roots. If you started to choose it means that you are not in your identity.

**INTERVIEWER:** You are?

**PARTICIPANT:** Abandoning your identity.

**INTERVIEWER:** So if you choose your ethnic identity or your ethnic group, you are abandoning your identity?

Participants: Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow.

**PARTICIPANT:** The...it may happen that your Father is a Xhosa and it may happen that your mother is a Sotho. So then you have a bit of both and then you can choose your culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** If you agree with your mother's culture, I think it is a bit unfair because you have to go after your father's culture because your father is the one that has the ability to (cannot hear the last word).

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So for example, if your father is Xhosa and your mother is Sotho but you grew up with your mother, speaking Sotho in a Sotho house with your Sotho grandparents and your father wasn't there, you can't speak Xhosa at all. Which ethnic group would you belong to?

**PARTICIPANT:** Sotho.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sotho.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it is because [if] you do not practice the roots of your father, the ancestors they will avoid you in the future.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, so even though you are fully living the Sotho life, and speak Sotho?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** You have to follow the Xhosa traditions?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Because your father is Xhosa?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And if you don't do it, you will get punished by the ancestors?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right that is interesting. Anyone who disagrees with that?

No one? That is set in stone?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Now, have you ever asked questions about your ethnic group? Like you know there are certain rules and traditions in ethnic groups. Have you ever asked someone but why, why should we be doing this?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, because our parents, they are born like that and our grandparents, they are born like that, so we just have to go with it. If it means that you have to live that way. It means that our ethnic group will continue into the future.

**INTERVIEWER:** So if you don't follow the traditions, there will be no ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** My father says: “If you are not valuing the ethnic group, the gods will punish us”.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay so if you don’t follow those traditions, you will be punished by the gods?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** By the ancestors.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes the ancestors.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. So say, I know there are certain traditions and certain behaviours. Like I know in some cultures you may not look someone in the eyes because it is disrespectful, right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So take that for example. Have you ever wondered why? Where does it come from? Why do you have to do that?

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture there is no such a thing.

**INTERVIEWER:** You don’t ask questions about that?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, you have to feel free to look someone in the eyes. It is not a crime to look someone in the eyes.

**INTERVIEWER:** So in Tswana culture it is okay?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** In Xhosa culture too?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because if you don’t look someone in the eye it means that you are trusting each other and guys.

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture when you look someone in his or her eyes you show them respect.

**INTERVIEWER:** So when you look at them it is respectful?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is respectful.

**INTERVIEWER:** But have you ever asked like why? Why are there those rules with certain things that we have to do?

**PARTICIPANT:** It is because there are certain issues that they will destroy in your family. When you do it once, when you take she will come to them at night with their Tokoloshe.

**INTERVIEWER:** So then, I will come to you now, uhm.....I forgot now.

**PARTICIPANT:** The reason why we have to do those things, that is our identity. When you have to look someone in the eyes it is what we have to go with. We have to concentrate on that something that is not good. So you have to go with what the culture doing?

**INTERVIEWER:** So where did you learn about your ethnic groups? How do you know about the traditions, and the stories, the behaviours, the attitudes and the beliefs? Where did you learn that?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, when you are growing up, it is just in the conversation with your grandparents...?

**INTERVIEWER:** Grandparents.

**PARTICIPANT:** and your parents...

**INTERVIEWER:** Parents.

**PARTICIPANT:** ...they are always trying to show you what you are going to face when you are growing up. That life is not easy but that you have to know where you come from.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ja ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture they make family meetings.

**INTERVIEWER:** Family meetings?

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture we speak to our ancestors too. When we meet as a family, we do a ceremony to show us the traditional lekgotla (think this is what he is saying).

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Where did you learn?

**PARTICIPANT:** I learn when I was in Botshabelo with my father's family. They make ceremony for me to be welcomed and they tell me that: if you are not going with this you are going to be punished by the ancestors. So it is a must. It is a must. You need to follow the....the....

**INTERVIEWER:** Traditions. Right. So let's do a little scale test. How strongly do you identify with your culture? How strongly do you agree with your ethnic group and the traditions and the things? Lets say 0 is nothing, you don't agree with anything and 10 is you go all out, you know every tradition, if you could you would go to circumcision school twice or three times if you could. You know you do everything precisely as your ethnic group says you have to do it.

Number 1, 0-10, where would you put yourself?

**PARTICIPANT:** 8.

**INTERVIEWER:** 8?

**PARTICIPANT:** 8 also.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2, 8

**PARTICIPANT:** I will say 7 because you have to practice your life also. You don't just go according to the culture, you have to know where you are going. You have to have a platform for your life.

**INTERVIEWER:** So a 7?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes a 7.

**INTERVIEWER:** To leave a little bit of room for your won things.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think a 5 because I am thinking I am traditional, but I am also Christian.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah.

**PARTICIPANT:** I will only 8.

**INTERVIEWER:** 8?

Okay. Now on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 you know nothing about your ethnic group, all you know about your ethnic group is the name and 10 being you know every single thing there is to know about your ethnic group. How would you rate your knowledge of your ethnic group?

Number 1?

**PARTICIPANT:** A 9.

**INTERVIEWER:** A 9? So you know almost everything?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 2?

**PARTICIPANT:** 8.

**INTERVIEWER:** 8. Number 3?

**PARTICIPANT:** 8.

**INTERVIEWER:** 8.

**PARTICIPANT:** Still at 5.

**INTERVIEWER:** Number 5?

**PARTICIPANT:** 10.

**INTERVIEWER:** 10? So you know everything?



**PARTICIPANT:** Everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you feel that you know your culture very well and you know your ethnic group very well. You know a bit less than the others right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you want to tell me about that.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, I will tell you but I am not going to the mountain....they are going to perform the medical circumcision. They explain to me too....I don't see any reason to do it there....but when the boys they come from the mountain they are disrespectful.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** I disagree.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay let's start with you.

**PARTICIPANT:** That thing is with your personal emotions. You have to decide for yourself when you come back what are you going to do. Are you going (cannot hear what he is saying) that thing of boys become disrespectful, that thing had to do with yourself.

**PARTICIPANT:** If it is not tradition, you will become like he says. But if it is tradition, you will become a hero because you know the roots of the mountain. You must respect the other people, they must trust you.

**INTERVIEWER:** It is very serious.

**PARTICIPANT:** This topic of disrespect and how to treat people.

**INTERVIEWER:** How to treat people.

**PARTICIPANT:** That is the fact why you have to go to the mountain to learn how to respect.

**INTERVIEWER:** You wanted to say?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, that is why because no you I hear I am a man, but I am still a teenager. There are certain things that you will be able to learn when you starting to be an adult but there are certain rules that I will have to learn.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, so there are certain ages that you will have to reach to learn everything.

And you, do you also feel that there are a certain age?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think also you must be past 20, but in our culture there are no secrets.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right so now I want to ask you. If I told you that you were not born into an ethnic group, you could pick one. Anyone that you would like, you could be....ag....anything you want. It doesn't even have to be a black culture. Would you choose the same one that you are in now or a different one?

**PARTICIPANT:** Different one.

**INTERVIEWER:** A different one. What would you choose?

**PARTICIPANT:** Spanish.

**INTERVIEWER:** Spanish?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay and if you had to choose within South Africa would you still be the same or different?

**PARTICIPANT:** Then I'll be the same.

**INTERVIEWER:** The same, but if you could you would rather be Spanish?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok let's hear from the others.

**PARTICIPANT:** I don't think I would like to choose. I would practice. It means that whether I am choosing I am going to lose my roots.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you wouldn't choose another ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, I would rather practice.

**PARTICIPANT:** I will go with the Zulu's because it relates to Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** So why would you want to change to Zulu than rather staying with Xhosa if it is so close?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because they have a lot of respect.

**INTERVIEWER:** Respect? And you feel that they respect?

**PARTICIPANT:** I will still be Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** Still be Xhosa. And you?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, I will still be Xhosa because I don't want to be punished by the ancestors.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you would prefer not to be Xhosa, what would you be?

**PARTICIPANT:** I said...

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh, you want to be Xhosa because of the ancestors.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, right....uhm.....so how do you think your ethnic identity, so the part of who you are that comes from your ethnic group, how did that develop? That is a difficult question, right? Anyone who wants to try?

**PARTICIPANT:** Can you please explain the question?

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. The part of who you are that comes from your ethnic group, how did that develop? What happened for you to say here that you know part of me is Sotho, Xhosa or Tswana and it came from here. Do you want...

**PARTICIPANT:** You know when you start to get ready for school, when you are about 5 years, you are told you are going to stay with this group. In our ethnical group as long as you are alive so you have certain respect when it comes to your ethnical group. You won't just want to decide while growing up.

**INTERVIEWER:** So part of it is school?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** What else? What helped you to develop this identity within your culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** I started when I was young, I started living in Colesberg which they are talking of then I was forced until I was 4 then I moved here to Bloemfontein then I moved back to Colesberg and they are speaking Xhosa there. Then my grandfather told me that I belong Xhosa and everything that I have to learn Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** So a part for you of developing that identity is hearing that what Xhosa is and hearing the stories and so on.....

*Silence*

Someone had to tell you that you are Xhosa?

**PARTICIPANT:** No!

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok, explain to me.

**PARTICIPANT:** In fact when he finished telling me, we started making a ceremony then my (cannot hear the word) and told me everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, okay. You also spoke about the ceremony, right? Was it the same? Do you all have a ceremony like that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, but they are different.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, according to the culture or to the family?

**PARTICIPANT:** The culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** The culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** Let me say they are different. You know sometimes you are getting to know your ethnical roots when you are old. But if you were brought staying with both parents then say since you are 10 months old you will start having a ceremony and meeting with him. But when you are not living with your same parent and you are living with your mother and then you father finally meets you at the age of 3 years then your father will....

**INTERVIEWER:** Good. So what are the advantages of being in an ethnic group? Are there anything that you really really like belonging in that group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, my ethnic group believes in education.

**INTERVIEWER:** Education?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** So if they believe in education, when they believe in education you will start to become something else. Something that is working in the future.

**PARTICIPANT:** My ethnic group believes in success.

**INTERVIEWER:** Success? Do you like that?

**PARTICIPANT:** Success in the future.

**INTERVIEWER:** The future.

**PARTICIPANT:** In the ethnic group they believe in the Christianity. They are Christians and they have respect.

**INTERVIEWER:** Respect.

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm...in the culture we believe that education is important.

**INTERVIEWER:** Education.

**PARTICIPANT:** Because, because will be something later with your education because no-one can take your education.

**INTERVIEWER:** So I hear all of you like about your ethnic group the fact that education, success, the future, everything that will help you become a better man, neh? What else, what are the other advantages of belonging to an ethnic group? Why is it good to belong to an ethnic group? Why shouldn't you just be a random person?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, ethnic groups is just working with manners.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sorry?

**PARTICIPANT:** Working with manners.

**INTERVIEWER:** Working with murderers?

**PARTICIPANT:** No, manners.

**INTERVIEWER:** Manners! Yes ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** In my ethnic group we like to believe that a children and a parent they should respect each other so when there is no respect in the ethnical group, I don't think there is someone who is going to ask for advice. If you are a parent or an elder, you have to respect the one that is going to ask for help to be able to respect you.

**PARTICIPANT:** Even in your ethnic groups.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, parents are the ones who makes the rules. If you follow the rules of the parents, when you follow the rules you will be a better person in life. Because then they will give you, then you will achieve.

**PARTICIPANT:** Mostly I like the rules of Xhosa.

**INTERVIEWER:** The rules.

**PARTICIPANT:** I don't like.

**INTERVIEWER:** You don't like.

**PARTICIPANT:** But the one that like most is the rules of Xhosa they say if you a teenage person you don't have to eat eggs, and I strongly believe in that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you just repeat that?

**PARTICIPANT:** They say a teenage girl have to eat eggs.

**INTERVIEWER:** Doesn't have to eat.

**PARTICIPANT:** Eggs.

**INTERVIEWER:** Eggs? Really?

**PARTICIPANT:** Because...uhm...it happens that you there are other things you have to eat and when you are a teenager and you eat eggs you become tired and that is why teenagers don't eat eggs.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah.

So I hear a lot of talk about respect. A lot of you have mentioned it. Not just now, but previously also, so what is this thing about men and your ethnic group and respect? Is respect a big thing in your cultures?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** A big thing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is it only under the men or is it under the ladies as well?

**PARTICIPANT:** Also under the ladies.

**PARTICIPANT:** Also.

**INTERVIEWER:** Where do you think it is the strongest? The need for respect?

**PARTICIPANT:** For me it is men, because when a man comes up to you after the mountain they will tell you what to do because after the mountain he will be the head of the family and telling his kids and wife what to do. So I believe men.

**INTERVIEWER:** So men.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** In my ethnic group, we both go to the mountain for something else, that is an advantage because then we respect each other. That is a good thing, because if there are no respect for our men, we wouldn't have been able to go through the things that we have to do. If you don't have respect you will not concentrate at school and then you are not going to finish your school and you are going to end up living a life that you are not suppose to live. But living like a street kid, or working for people for less income than you should, working for long hours not knowing when to see your wife.

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture respect shows your identity.

**INTERVIEWER:** Respect shows your identity.

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja, that is what they say.

**PARTICIPANT:** In our culture, we both respect.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right.

**PARTICIPANT:** Because they say that when you are not respecting, people will hurt you.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. So, what are the negative things of belonging to an ethnic group? What don't you like about belonging to that group?

**PARTICIPANT:** Uhm... I don't think there is anything that I don't like. I just believe that everything that we are practising, is what we should practise - you cannot go against

them. You have to like it whether it is bad or good, because just as in life, there will be good moments and bad moments and you just have to carry on with what you did.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ok.

**PARTICIPANT:** I don't follow the rituals so closely because...(cannot hear what he says)....the ancestors. Those grandmothers and grandfathers they are constantly telling you to follow them or follow them because they have the power.

**INTERVIEWER:** Is that what the church tells you or the culture?

**PARTICIPANT:** The church tells me.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you don't like the ancestral part of your culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** I like everything.

**INTERVIEWER:** You like everything.

**PARTICIPANT:** I can't be against the law of Xhosa. I cannot, it was happening even before I was born they were practicing the law.

**PARTICIPANT:** I haven't been against it.

**INTERVIEWER:** You are not against it. So do you guys see yourself as more traditional cultural people or do you see yourself as more westernised? You know like you see on TV and in movies or whatever.

**PARTICIPANT:** Eish.

**INTERVIEWER:** You know following the latest trends and listening to all the nice music from America you know or are you more traditional, you like the traditional rules.

**PARTICIPANT:** No, I like to listen to the American music. I like people to (can't hear what he says). You have to choose your own lifestyle. If you just follow some lifestyle that you life, but never forget that you have some culture that you have to practice.

**PARTICIPANT:** I enjoy Xhosa, but hip-hop I also enjoy.... I enjoy all of them.

**INTERVIEWER:** But would you say that you are more traditional or more westernised?

**PARTICIPANT:** I am more traditional.

**INTERVIEWER:** More traditional?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**PARTICIPANT:** I am not sure as to when I move my family. I actually believe in my tradition because we only speak one language, we are family.

**PARTICIPANT:** And all of our songs, when they sing they sing about tradition.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, so there is a lot of tradition that I am hearing. You guys? Traditional or westernised?

**PARTICIPANT:** I think... I think it is good traditional.

**INTERVIEWER:** Traditional. Who of you didn't answer? One of you didn't....oh you both did. So do you think this differs in girls? Do you think the girls are more traditional or more westernised?

**PARTICIPANT:** I don't think girls are more traditional because girls, if they don't follow the rules, they will get life without following the rules and they will enjoy what they want to do.

**INTERVIEWER:** So for them it is not as strict to follow a certain culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah, so do you all agree with that.

**PARTICIPANT:** I agree.

**INTERVIEWER:** So is it easier for girls?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, it is easier for girls.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you are the more traditional men, you have to carry on the tradition and they can just come and go?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**PARTICIPANT:** If they want to value, they must still follow the rules to this day.

**PARTICIPANT:** Imagine life had to practice the traditional. That is why they have to practice the tradition.

**INTERVIEWER:** So they also have to practice their tradition? Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** It in our culture both male and female must finish school first and go to the mountain and guest must be married.

**INTERVIEWER:** So what are the challenges of belonging to an ethnic group? What makes it difficult to belong to your ethnic group?

**PARTICIPANT:** You know some rules...



**INTERVIEWER:** So the rules.

**PARTICIPANT:** ...Ja the rules, sometimes we are used to a lifestyle where we don't have to cut hair, but then we have to cut hair in a situation.

**INTERVIEWER:** So the rules are difficult to follow in your lifestyle?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And who do you manage with that challenge?

**PARTICIPANT:** The challenge, you know you have to have patience.

**INTERVIEWER:** Patience.

**PARTICIPANT:** You have to have patience all the time.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay, what other challenges?

**PARTICIPANT:** Cut nails at night.

**INTERVIEWER:** Cut nails at night?

**PARTICIPANT:** You don't have to cut nails at night.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** You don't have to swear like now about the elders.

**PARTICIPANT:** You don't have to (cannot hear what he says) at night.

**INTERVIEWER:** So a lot of things change at night?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ja.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right.

**PARTICIPANT:** The other thing is when you are at the mountain, you are not suppose to be near the area of the people who live there.

**INTERVIEWER:** And how do you manage with these difficult things?

**PARTICIPANT:** You have to go according to their rules.

**PARTICIPANT:** You manage it with just patience.

**INTERVIEWER:** Just patience. What do you think is difficult?

**PARTICIPANT:** There is nothing difficult for me.

**INTERVIEWER:** Nothing! Right. What challenges do you think the girls have?

**PARTICIPANT:** I am not sure about the girls because they are not so strict at the rules. Like there are room so I don't know how they can practice their culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** But in our culture, the girls are the ones who are dancing for the elders.

**INTERVIEWER:** Who?

**PARTICIPANT:** Does the dancing.

**INTERVIEWER:** Dancing.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, they are dancing.

**PARTICIPANT:** At our culture we think that girls must do that when school is....after school when they come home, they must clean and maybe cook.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right. What influences your ethnic identity?

**PARTICIPANT:** In the Tswana we have to do (cannot hear what he says).

**INTERVIEWER:** Anyone else?

**PARTICIPANT:** I agree with him.

**INTERVIEWER:** Uhm....if you think of your friends and your family, the people of the same age as you, okay. Do you think they feel the same way as you do about ethnic, your ethnic group or your ethnic identity, or do they feel different? Let's start with you.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think now a time there is ignorance.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ignorance? What do you mean by ignorance?

**PARTICIPANT:** Some people they would rather choose their life according to the way they want where they don't see the way they visualise according to the culture.

**PARTICIPANT:** If you are a black person you have a tradition, everyone have a tradition Xhosa, Sotho, Xhosa is also a tradition and you have to follow that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay.

**PARTICIPANT:** Some people they don't follow their tradition, the ancestors will punish them after years and maybe they will say they have been witched.

**PARTICIPANT:** In our tradition if you are not a Xhosa you can not go to the mountain, but in Sotho or other Africans they go to the Sotho culture and their mountain.

**PARTICIPANT:** Do you belong to an ethnical group?

**INTERVIEWER:** Me? I am a White Afrikaans person so I am one of those Boere.

**PARTICIPANT:** Okay. What do you like about your ethnic group?

**INTERVIEWER:** About my ethnic group? Well, I think we have less cultures, or traditions that are still going on and that is why I am exploring you and your ethnic groups because you have a lot more traditions than us. We are a lot more westernised, you know we are the same as the English people, the American people, the European people so....

**PARTICIPANT:** Which one with you choose in Africa.

**INTERVIEWER:** In Africa? I don't know enough about the African traditions that is why I am doing the research.

**PARTICIPANT:** But so far which one do you think is being the way you chosen?

**INTERVIEWER:** I have learned a lot about the strong Xhosa traditions, that seems very interesting.

**PARTICIPANT:** So the Xhosa, what makes you think which makes you think I like what is the influence that makes you think that Xhosa I would like to know those traditions and this and that?

**INTERVIEWER:** That is actually what I want to hear from you.

**PARTICIPANT:** But actually that is something for you know us so far.

**PARTICIPANT:** You must answer the questions.

**INTERVIEWER:** But I ask all the questions. Can we finish here and then you can ask me all the questions?

**PARTICIPANT:** Ah that is no problem.

**INTERVIEWER:** Right, so do you think you will still be in the same ethnic group until you die, or do you think that you will change?

**PARTICIPANT:** I will be the same.

**INTERVIEWER:** The same.

**PARTICIPANT:** The same.

**PARTICIPANT:** The same.

**INTERVIEWER:** The same.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think this generation that is the one that has to carry the culture until (cannot hear what he says) in our genes we have to carry on the culture so it is you that have to be situated. It has to flow until the world ends.

**INTERVIEWER:** So it is your responsibility to keep on the Tswana, Xhosa, Sotho, neh?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Same or different one?

**PARTICIPANT:** Same.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think the same.

**INTERVIEWER:** The same.

**PARTICIPANT:** For me what I started, I must finish. Because when I grow up to be an old man, I must pass those words on to my grandchildren.

**INTERVIEWER:** Let me ask you. Are you allowed to ask questions about your ethnic group? About the traditions, about where it comes from. Or are you not allowed to ask?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes we are allowed.

**PARTICIPANT:** We are allowed.

**INTERVIEWER:** You're allowed. So you may ask one of your elders why do we do what we are doing?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes, because the Tswana's they were doing what they are doing long before we came they were, so this Africa is a mixed place we should each and every one was practicing very differently back then. In the days like now we have the (cannot hear the word think culture) that is the one and only thing the (cannot hear the word think culture). I think in West there is a lot of struggle.

**INTERVIEWER:** Anything else that you want to say about ethnic identity....before we finish?

**PARTICIPANT:** It was about (can't hear) I realised that there was nothing that I am against.

**PARTICIPANT:** It is about culture....

**INTERVIEWER:** They are making a lot of noise so can you speak very loudly.

**PARTICIPANT:** I think it is because of my traditions teach me that, if I don't follow the rules, the ancestors will punish me.

**INTERVIEWER:** So it is a done deal for all of you guys. You follow your tradition, the ancestors said that you have to, you like the rules, you like the respect, even though it is difficult sometimes, but you guys like your traditions, you like your culture and it is your responsibility to carry it on.

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And you guys are allowed to ask questions and to explore your identity right?

**PARTICIPANT:** Yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** Well thank you very much for participating. Let me stop it here.

**Appendix C:**  
**Ethical clearance (Faculty of the Humanities)**



16 May 2014

Dr L. Naudé  
Department of Psychology  
UFS

**Ethical Clearance Application: Living and learning in Central South Africa**

Dear Dr Naudé

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research. The committee discussed two issues that might be considered:

- Simplifying the informed consent form for these young participants
- Bearing in mind that some Grade 8 learners might still be 13 years of age which requires parental consent.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:


**UFS-HUM-2013-30**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

  
Katinka de Wet  
Research Ethics Committee (Faculty of the Humanities)

Copy: Ms Chamé Vercueil (Research Co-ordinator, Faculty of the Humanities)



**Appendix D:**  
**Ethical clearance (Department of Education)**

Enquiries: Motshumi KK  
Reference:  
Tel: 051 404 9290  
Fax: 086 667 8678  
E-mail: motshumikk@edu.fs.gov.za



education  
Department of  
Education  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR:  
STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY & RESEARCH**

10 March 2014

Dr Naude L

**RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement for receipt of your research request in the Free State Department of Education.
2. **Research topic:** Living and learning in Central South Africa
3. Approval is granted for you to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. This approval is subject to the following conditions:-
  - 4.1 The names of participants involved remain confidential.
  - 4.2 The structured questionnaires are completed and the **interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time or during free periods.**
  - 4.3 This letter is shown to all participating persons.
  - 4.4 A bound copy of the research document and a soft copy on a computer disc should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education (Strategic Planning, Policy & Research).
  - 4.5 You will be expected, on completion of your research study, to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - 4.6 The attached ethics document must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. The costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.
6. You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing, within seven days after receipt of this letter. Your acceptance letter should be directed to:

**DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY & RESEARCH;  
Old CNA Building, Maitland Street OR Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301**

Thank you for choosing to research with us. We wish you every success with your study.

Yours faithfully,

  
**MJ MOTHEBE (DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY & RESEARCH)**

Directorate: Strategic Planning, Policy Development & Research – Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 – Room 301, Old CNA building,

Charlotte Maxeke, Bloemfontein 9300 – Tel: 051 404 9283 / Fax: 086 6678 678 E-mail: [research@edu.fs.gov.za](mailto:research@edu.fs.gov.za)





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**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR:  
STRATEGIC PLANNING, POLICY AND RESEARCH**

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Dr. Naude L.

10 March 2014

Dear Dr. Naude

**RE: ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS: FREE STATE EDUCATION**

The scientific research enterprise is built on a foundation of trust and that the reports by others are valid. The reports should reflect an honest attempt by the researcher to describe the world accurately and without bias; this trust will endure only if the researcher devotes himself or herself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical research conduct.

There are many ethical issues to be taken into serious consideration when conducting research. The Free State Department of Education believes that the researchers conducting research in this department would, amongst others, adhere to the following ethical conduct:

**1. ETHICS: GENERAL APPLICATION:**

- Researchers need to be aware of having the responsibility to secure the actual permission and interests of all those involved in the study;
- They should not misuse any of the information discovered;
- There should be a certain moral responsibility maintained towards the participants;
- There is a duty to protect the rights of people in the study as well as their privacy and sensitivity;
- The confidentiality of those involved in the observation must be carried out, keeping their anonymity and privacy secure;

- Which institution dictated the ethical clearance guidelines
- Does research embrace Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?
- Does research create space for people development and empowerment?
- Does the research amplify/allow the voice of the participants?
- Is collective plurality enhanced?

## **2. ETHICS: INHERENT PRINCIPLES**

- Has reliability been given attention?
- Was the importance of the research made known to the Education Department and the targeted participants?
- Are the following values contained in the study: trust, fairness, integrity, obligation and confidentiality?

## **3. ETHICS: DEVELOPMENT OF VALUES.**

- Is the value of transparency considered, how?
- Is the research committing to deliver the intended promise as informed by the objectives?
- Does the research accentuate the values of reputation and respect, how?

Thank you for researching with Free State Education

Kind regards



M.J. MOTHEBE (Director: Strategic Planning, Policy & Research)

**Appendix E:**  
**Informed Consent Form**

## Ethnic identity development in black African adolescents

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please read this document carefully. Your signature is required for participation. If you desire a copy of this consent form, you may request one and it will be provided.

This study has been approved by the research committee of the University of the Free State. There will be asked of you to participate in one focus group of one hour. When participating in the focus group, you may come across or be reminded of an experience that may evoke unpleasant emotions that can possibly upset you. If you experience the need to speak to a professional person about these feelings, such service will be provided.

When your participation is complete, you will be given an opportunity to learn about this research, which may be useful to you in your course or in understanding yourself and others. You will also have an opportunity to contribute to psychological science by participating in this research. When your participation is complete, you will be able to evaluate your own development with regards to ethnic identity. The data collected from these focus groups may be used for any current or future research in the area of ethnic identity.

Your participation in the study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Recordings will be made of the focus group discussions. You will not receive any compensation in return for your participation. You will be assigned a code number which will protect your identity. Anonymity will be assured.

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the principal investigator, Jolandie du Plessis, at 083 661 0877 or at [jolandieduplessis@gmail.com](mailto:jolandieduplessis@gmail.com).

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the above mentioned information, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks, and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (Printed)\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female
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<b>Age</b>	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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Race \_\_\_\_\_

Home language \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F:**  
**Turn It In Report**

## JduPlessis Nov2014

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STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

1

[etd.uovs.ac.za](http://etd.uovs.ac.za)

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Earl S. Hishinuma. "Psychometric properties of the Hawaiian Culture Scale--Adolescent Version.", Psychological Assessment, 2000

Publication

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