CONSTRUCTIVISM, PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS AND THE CONCEPT OF DIFFERENT WORLDS

by

JAMES PATRICK HENDERSON

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR HC JANEKE

OCTOBER 2011

Abstract

Previous constructivist research was integrated with a field study to investigate the hypothesis that the subjective perceptions of the current social, security and economic situation of the high and low-income groups in South Africa differ to the extent that they could be said to be living in totally *different worlds* of phenomenological experience. The data demonstrated clear differences when coded in terms of worldviews along an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum. A number of additional processing phenomena and social dynamics able to influence these perceptions were also identified from an interpretative analysis of the data. The results were explained in terms of the cueing and activation of specific schemata constructed from income-related prior experiences associated with each group and led to the conclusion that income and living conditions could well be factors contributing to the ongoing confrontations between government and impoverished communities. A number of recommendations to improve inter-group relations were included.

Key terms: Phenomenological experience; constructivism; social cognition; socio-economic groups; living standards measure; service delivery protests; subjective perceptions; personal constructs; schemata; worldview.

I declare that **CONSTRUCTIVISM, PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS AND THE CONCEPT OF DIFFERENT WORLDS** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   DATE

(Mr J P Henderson)

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr. HC Janeke for his constant guidance, support and patience.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank my research assistant Mrs Funeka Ntshingila, as well as family and friends who also provided encouragement and support, especially those who helped with the setting up of the interviews and the printing of the documents.

Finally, I wish to give special thanks to the Financial Aid Bureau Postgraduate Research Fund administered the University of South Africa for supporting this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.1.1. Phenomenological experience

Phenomenology is the school of thought which suggests that our knowledge of the world is based on immediate subjective experiences rather than any actual objective reality (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). It is phenomenological in that it pays attention to the individual way in which people perceive their world (Corey, 2001), and implies that, when applied to any social situation, our experiences will be based more on subjective perceptions, thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and convictions than on the actual components of the situation (Corey, 2001, p.109). For the purposes of this study, phenomenological experience is represented by the cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of experience as contained in social judgements, affective responses and lifestyle choices, respectively.

1.1.2. Constructivism

Constructivism is defined as '*the belief that an individual's knowledge of reality results from his or her subjective perceiving and subsequent constructing or inventing of the world, rather than from how the world objectively exists'* [italics added](Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004, p.506). In other words, the idea that we mentally 'construct' our own view of the world which is wholly subjective and determined by past experiences relative to our personal history and social network (Kenny, 1997). In the case of constructivism, this inability to objectively perceive reality is attributed more to the structuring of the human physiological and perceptual processes than to language (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004).

1.1.3. Living standards measure (LSM)

This is a marketing research tool devised by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) to categorise the South African (SA) community according to income and living standards using an eight-point scale based on lifestyle and other income-related variables such as degree of urbanisation (type of housing), as well as ownership of cars and major appliances. It divides the population into eight groups of which category eight denotes the highest standard of living and category one the lowest, and is applied during surveys conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2002). Although the LSM categories have recently been extended to 10, during the original HSRC research as cited in this study, only eight categories were used.

1.1.4. Social cognition

Social cognition is defined by Bless, Fiedler and Strack (2004), as the field of study concerned with social knowledge and the cognitive processes that are involved when individuals construct their subjective reality (p.3). This involves a situation where the interpretation and the attribution of meaning in any given social context is not only dependent on the stimuli present, but also on factors such as prior social knowledge, personal motives and emotional content in the form of moods and feelings (Bless *et al.*, 2004).

1.1.5. Personal constructs

In terms of Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1991), constructs are mental representations or abstractions formed of any person, object or situation. Kelly describes them as being similar to concepts or percepts, having a form which is either propositional, pictorial or both, but also having a physiological basis of associative neural patterns similar to memory. Personal constructs are said to be highly subjective,

abstracted from past experience, able to govern one's thinking and actions and specifically involved in the formation of one's view of the world (Kelly, 1991, p.7).

1.1.6. Schemata

Schemata are a class of personal constructs said to specifically influence our neurobiological processes of perception, the early processing of information as well as the later interpretation of social situations (Neisser, 1976). They are able to form large associative networks containing information on every aspect of prior experience and in this way, become components in the top-down processing of all incoming information (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

1.1.7. Worldview

A worldview can be described as a personally constructed framework of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs, assumptions, convictions and conclusions through which one views the world (Corey, 2001, p.109). In terms of construct theory, a worldview could also be viewed as a mental construct, or alternatively, an associative network of constructs (Kelly, 1991). One's worldview provides an overall perspective which allows for the management of incoming information (Stoker, 1996, p.61). However, being subjective, it can include ideas which contain contradictions, inconsistencies, prejudice and bias and thus distort one's perceptions.

1.2. INTRODUCTION

The study comprised of an examination into differences in the perceptions of socio-economic groupings regarding the social, security and economic situation in South Africa using a constructivist epistemological approach.

At present, the country is witnessing substantial levels of dissatisfaction, unrest and even violence, reportedly due to government's failure to meet the needs of poverty-

stricken communities with regard to employment opportunities and the delivery of basic services such as water, electricity, housing and roads, as well as the reluctance of government departments and major companies to meet the wage demands of lowly-paid workers. This has resulted in the recent service delivery protests and strike actions.

1.2.1. Perceptions and expectations

The fact is that our society is marked by vast differences in income and it makes sense that this may have an effect on group perceptions and expectations. What is particularly interesting is that recent studies do indicate that perceptions of the economy and the environment differ between high, middle and low-income groups in South Africa (HSRC, 2002), as well as feelings of safety (Schonteich, 2001) (Institute for Security Studies). This research suggests that these differences in perceptions based on income may be a contributing factor in the inability of government and business leaders to reach agreement with low-income communities and workers on important socioeconomic and wage issues.

1.3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

The recorded differences in the perceptions of high-income and low or no-income groups with regard to the situation in the country, provide an interesting area of investigation relating to cognitive as well as social psychology, in that it shows how perceptions (and subsequently, one's worldview), can be influenced by income, or in this case, the living conditions and life-experiences associated with being rich or poor. These significant differences in perceptions, as well as the underlying psychological processes, constitute the research problem for this study.

With reference to cognitive psychology, the idea that one's phenomenological experiences are involved in the formation of perceptions is central to the constructivist approach. Constructivist research has shown the active role of the mind in the formation of perceptions as well as the role of prior experience in social cognition (Bless *et al.*,

2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Kelly, 1991; Maturana & Poerksen, 2004; Neisser, 1976). And it can thus be expected that these perceptions, in the form of thoughts and feelings about the country, will be based on personal circumstances and be highly subjective.

The study is based on the hypothesis that the perceptions of persons from opposite ends of the socio-economic spectrum differ to such an extent that they could be said to be living in totally *'different worlds'* of phenomenological experience. The study also aims to show that this could be an important factor contributing to the general lack of understanding and agreement between decision-makers in government and the private sector, and the blue-collar working class and impoverished communities.

It is interesting to note that we have always unconsciously acknowledged the existence of different *'worlds'* of experience, each with their own set of norms and behaviour, in our everyday conversation. For example, we often speak of the 'worlds' of high-finance or international modelling, or on the opposite end, the *'dark world'* of drugs, prostitution and crime. We also generally accept that persons living in these 'worlds' move in different circles and often reveal a lifestyle, attitudes and values very different from our own.

1.3.1. The aims and purpose of the research

As stated, the primary aim of the study was to show the differences in the subjective perceptions of income groups regarding the present social, security and economic situation in South Africa and secondly, to reveal how these differences may be contributing to disagreements and confrontations between high-income groups such as government and business leaders and low-income community members and blue-collar workers. From an academic viewpoint, the purpose of the study was also to add to existing theoretical knowledge on the process of social cognition by showing the effect of income-specific phenomenological experiences on the formation of subjective perceptions and worldviews, and also the role of pre-existing information (schemata) in

shaping the kind of responses to the current situation that we are seeing amongst the different income-groups. In this regard, income-specific experiences would be those arising from the differing living standards and conditions normally associated with variations in income.

1.3.2. The importance of the research

There was sufficient existing research on the current socioeconomic situation in the country, the process of social cognition, the forming of subjective perceptions and worldviews, the psychology of personal constructs and schema activation, to justify this investigation. The field study component was also feasible and the results important for social as well as cognitive psychology.

With regard to the practical application of the study, the findings would be extremely relevant to the present SA socioeconomic situation with its existing problems of group inequality and high levels of poverty and unemployment. The results of the study will also impact on current socio-political issues, such as the ongoing labour disputes and social unrest (service delivery protests).

Insofar as the legitimacy of the constructivist approach is concerned, both constructivism and schema theory are currently applied during psychotherapy in dealing with constructed realities as well as individual differences in perception (Corey, 2001; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004; Kreyenberg, 2002). Constructivist theory also relates well to systems, narrative, interpersonal and family therapy (Van Der Watt, 1993). And, as shown by Matthews (2000), it can also be applied to scientific research, training and education.

1.4. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The study is reported in six chapters. Chapter 1 provided the introduction and background to the study. Chapter 2 contains the theoretical framework, drawn from an

extensive review of relevant constructivist literature, as well as recent studies by the Human Sciences Research Council and the Institute for Security Studies. Chapter 2 also outlines the research hypothesis, contains a brief discussion of constructivist thought since its inception, and concludes with a critical evaluation of a number of theories which describe schemata and explain their role in social cognition, specifically in the formation of subjective perceptions and one's view of the world (worldview). Chapter 3 describes how the research methodology and study design were developed using constructivist, personal construct and schema theory, and how the hypothesis and theoretical framework were applied during the field-work to examine differences in the perceptions of high, middle and low-income groups with regard to the social, security and economic situation in the country. Chapter 4 provides the results from the survey and the coding of the qualitative data and presents the final list of themes, sub-themes, processing trends and social dynamics identified for analysis. Chapter 5 contains an in-depth discussion of the results of the survey and a detailed interpretative analysis of the different themes and sub-themes in terms of constructivist research and schema theory. A number of relevant individual cases are also highlighted and analysed in terms of the activation and content of specific schemata. The chapter also contains a '*research audit*' in which the validity, reliability, dependability, comprehensiveness, strengths and limitations of the study are discussed, as well as the ethics applied during the entire process. Chapter 6 discusses practical recommendations aimed at informing the different groups of the problem of subjective perceptions, the factors involved in the cycle of poverty, aggression, crime and violence, the importance of consultative decision-making processes and also includes suggestions for community-based structures designed to ensure the free flow of information, allow for joint decision-making and provide skills-building programmes.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

When applying the SAARF Living Standards Measure (LSM), a recent study by the Human Sciences Research Council (2002), showed that perceptions differed between cultural as well as socioeconomic groupings in South Africa with regard to economic conditions as well as environmental concerns. LSM categorises subjects according to an eight-point scale based on living standards, using access to basic facilities and other income-related variables such as degree of urbanisation (housing) and ownership of motor vehicles and major appliances, as criteria. In this way, it cuts across racial, cultural and language categories, and according to the HSRC, is now the most widely used marketing research tool in Southern Africa (HSRC, 2002, p.165). A number of LSM criteria were adapted for use in this study (specifically in section 3.3 of the questionnaire), to establish the living conditions of respondents and consequently the type of phenomenological experiences which could be associated with these conditions. To include differences in lifestyle, two additional categories were added, namely dining habits and travel/holiday opportunities, as it was felt that these would differ markedly between income groups.

Research relating to the 2002 HSRC report (pp.98-99) showed that persons in the high-income group (LSM 8) perceived the economy less favourably than those on lower income levels, who generally had a more positive view of economic conditions. However, persons on the lowest income scales had more negative perceptions regarding their living conditions, in terms of access to clean water and living space (land), as well as infrastructure, social development and resource distribution, which is understandable in view of their disadvantaged lifestyles (HSRC, 2002, p.122).

The Institute for Security Studies (Schonteich, 2001), in quoting an earlier 2000 HSRC survey, showed that feelings of safety also varied according to standards of living or LSM. With the exception of the highest LSM 8 category, the lower down on the scale, the safer the subjects felt. This seemed unusual in view of statistics showing that violent

crime is highest in low-income areas (Schonteich, 2001, p.3). The report also concluded by pointing out the role that perceptions play in feelings of safety, and this was kept in mind when setting up the frame of reference for the field study. Relevant questions designed to measure these perceptions, as well as the affective component involved in phenomenological experiences relating to crime, violence and unrest, were thus also included in the survey in section 3.2 of the questionnaire.

2.1. THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

With both these earlier reports showing that the subjective perceptions of respondents varied according to income and living conditions, a research hypothesis for this study was formulated that persons from opposite ends of the socioeconomic spectrum will have totally different perceptions of the current social, security and economic situation in the country, which differ to the extent that they could be said to be living in 'different worlds' of phenomenological experience. In this study context, this would be revealed as pronounced differences in their view of the world or worldview as measured along an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum.

It was further suggested that these differences in perceptions could be a factor contributing to the present lack of agreement between wealthy governmental and business leaders, and the working class and impoverished communities, over wages and socioeconomic priorities, resulting in the current strikes and service delivery protests.

2.2. THE APPLICATION OF EXISTING THEORY

2.2.1. Concept-driven versus data-driven processing

The study enters the current debate between concept-driven and data-driven information processing. Research has shown that *'top-down'* processing occurs when

prior information, which has been stored in memory, is able to influence attention, memory (recall), interpretation and judgements. This is also referred to as concept or theory-driven information processing (Bless *et al.*, 2004, p.19; Fiske, 1995, p.165). To explain this, it has been suggested that concept-driven processing in terms of pre-existing knowledge induces a sense of predictability and control by providing a framework for the easy categorisation of incoming information and the management of ambiguities (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.140). This explanation for why concept-driven processing actually takes place, thus relates to the conservation of mental resources and the more efficient and speedy processing of information.

Contrasting with this is the *'bottoms up'* approach or 'data-driven processing', in which perception is said to be based more on the actual elements of the information being presented and processing more concerned with accuracy and accountability. For instance, in those circumstances where information is regarded as highly important, self-relevant or where extreme accuracy and considered action is required (Bless *et al.*, 2004; Fiske, 1995; Nishida, 1999). The most recent conclusion is that both forms of processing, in fact, can occur, depending on the circumstances of the situation. In other words, the most likely response to an average day-to-day situation would be top-down processing, unless the situation allows for more time and consideration or simply demands more attention, accuracy or care (Fiske, 1995, p.165). The presentation of short or quick responses, and /or assumptions, generalisations or any answers which suggest heuristics, provided either during the survey or the interviews, would therefore be an indication of concept-driven processing.

2.2.2. The constructivist framework

Constructivism formed a suitable and interesting framework for this study, providing research which explains how differences in phenomenological experience can result in highly subjective perceptions able to influence one's view of the world (Kenny, 1997, p.112), and therefore of the current situation in the country. This is based on the constructivist premise that any knowledge we accumulate comes from a wholly

subjective process of perception and a mental *'constructing'* of the world (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004, p.506). What is important for this study is that the subjectivity arising from these processes permeates our thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs, convictions and conclusions (Corey, 2001, p.109) and can thus be easily measured in terms of optimism or pessimism. A second important premise in this regard is that this construction or representation is determined by past experiences relative to our own personal history and social network (Kenny, 1997, p.113). This implies that differences would also arise as the result of a person's background and living conditions, aspects which are particularly relevant to this study. Any perceptions arising from such a process of social cognition would thus be highly personal (Bless *et al.*, 2004).

Another reason why constructivism was chosen as the central approach of this study is its usefulness as a system for explaining the formation of different worldviews (Stoker, 1996). Constructivism also has many other practical applications which increase the relevance of the results of this study. For example, it can be applied in various branches of psychotherapy, such as Systems therapy (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004, p.116), Cognitive and Narrative therapy (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004), as well as Transactional Analysis (Kreyenberg, 2002). It has also been shown to have applications in science and education (Matthews, 2000).

As far as can be ascertained, this concept of *'different worlds'* as it relates to constructivism, personal constructs and schema theory, has not yet been applied in attempting to understand major differences in the subjective perceptions of groups in the present SA context. However, this study is not designed to form the basis of a new theory, but rather to provide an opportunity for a more thorough understanding of existing psychological research in the context of the country's socio-political and socioeconomic problems and diversity.

2.2.3. Schema theory

The first use of the term *schemata* in relation to cognitive psychology has been attributed to Sir George Bartlett (1932) (as cited in Goldstein, 2005). During a series of studies involving North American Indians, he noticed cultural differences in the recall of folk tales which he attributed to unconscious mental structures (schemata) containing generic knowledge about the world which were able to influence the processing of new information. Bartlett showed how these pre-existing schemata, based on the individual's culture and prior experiences, resulted in the *reconstruction* of memories and produced inferences consistent with these schemata (Learning Theory, [n.d.]). He was one of the first to show that memory is a constructive process that involves prior (stored) knowledge and his research is therefore important for the constructivist approach in psychology (Goldstein, 2005, p.236).

Unfortunately, due to the growing emphasis on behaviorism at the time, schema theory was largely ignored for many years until it was revived by R.C. Anderson and linked to learning theory. According to Anderson, knowledge is stored as a network of abstract mental representations or structures representing one's experience and understanding of the world. In this regard, he applied schema theory to provide a better understanding of the process of reading and comprehension by suggesting that schemata are key elements in the top-down management of information, and combined with bottom-up (data-based) processing, lead to the construction of a meaningful representation of text. (Anderson, 1977, as cited in Learning Theory, [n.d.]),

His analysis of the learning process in adults and children revealed schemata to have the ability to develop and form a network of complex associations. In this way they provide a framework for the speedy categorisation and comprehension of new information, the retrieval of memories, the augmentation of knowledge (filling in '*slots*' or gaps), as well as inductive reasoning (making inferences and reaching conclusions) (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Anderson's research is important in that it revealed the role of schemata in our perceptual and cognitive processes as one of enhancing *cognitive capacity* (Anderson &

Pearson, 1984, p. 274).

Modern schema theory has also been applied to forming computer models of the human perceptual processes. Notable contributors in this field are J.R. Anderson (1976) and Marvin Minsky (1985). As Anderson's theory relates directly to the structure and content of schemata, it is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.2.4. An evaluation of constructivist and schema theories

A critical discussion and evaluation of a number of constructivist and schema theories relevant to this study, now follows:

2.2.4.1. Maturana's Structural Determinism

Humberto Maturana is regarded as one of the founders of the constructivist epistemology (Wikipedia, 2009a), and his physiological research into the central nervous system of animals has suggested that perception and cognition are determined by the design and structure of our perceptual systems and processes, which produce a (mentally) created view of reality (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004, p.44). His work is particularly relevant to this study as it forms the basis of the idea of a *'multitude of worlds'* [italics added], each dependent on the observer (p.44). This would translate into the concept of '*different worlds'* of phenomenological experience as suggested in my hypothesis.

His theory of Structural Determinism is supported to a degree by Vincent Kenny (1997), but Kenny relates it more to one's personal history and social network. Kenny maintains that it is the individual's '*conditions'* and frame of reference which determine the *'range of possible outcomes'* [italics added] (Kenny, 1997, p.113) and not physiological structures. He believes that Maturana's views on the individual as a *fully-closed system* (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004) undermine the importance of the environment in providing input for social behaviour (Kenny, 1989, p.5), which is a criticism also supported by

myself. Kenny's view is also echoed by Van der Watt (1993), who points out that this idea of the organisational closure of the system implies that what we are experiencing are not true representations, only vague internal and external *'perturbations'* mediated through communication and language (Van der Watt,1993, p.15).

Personally, I find this rather obscure view of reality to be in contradiction with Maturana's early work which had a basis in scientific method. In other words, the question arises as to how he can qualify his earlier experiments and measurements (on which he bases his theory), if there may not be any reality apart from our own inner experiences. In fact, it is my opinion that his recent thinking is in danger of leading to solipsism.

However, Maturana's theory is still very relevant to this study, as he showed our neuro-physiological processes of perception to be inherently selective, which adds weight to the idea of individual interpretations of the world and supports the notion of 'different worlds' of phenomenological experience. His view that we all need to treat each others worldviews as fundamentally legitimate and with respect (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004, p.116), also highlights one of the recommendations of this study, that the shared legitimacy of individual or even group experiences (all being equally subjective), should form the foundation for a greater understanding, acceptance and tolerance of the divergent views and opinions around social, security and economic issues in SA society today. His research on the early selectivity of the perceptual processes also links up quite well with Neisser's later theory of '*Schemata Controlled Information Pickup'* (1976).

2.2.4.2. Ulric Neisser's theory of 'Schemata Controlled Information Pickup'

As this study deals with the subjective views of subjects and includes the measurement of social perceptions, it leads naturally into the realm of social cognition. Social cognition is defined by Bless *et al.* (2004, p.3), as the field of study concerned with

social knowledge and the cognitive processes that are involved when individuals construct their subjective reality. Neisser's theory, which involves an examination of the processes involved in social perception and cognition, therefore fits in well with the constructivist approach of this study.

A number of his views on the phenomenological differences in experience associated with social perception relate directly to my hypothesis. In the research published in his book '*Cognition and Reality'* (1976) (italics added), Neisser reveals social perception to be an active construction process and yet also inherently selective (p.55). He maintains that we choose to perceive certain properties of a social situation and not others, based on a unique combination of background and past experience (p.53). This explains why persons from different socioeconomic groups would see only certain aspects of a situation presented to them, resulting in a variation of responses. Bless *et al.* (2004), explain this as a situation where interpretation and the attribution of meaning in any given social context is not only dependent on the stimuli present, but also on factors such as prior social knowledge, personal motives and even emotional content in the form of moods and feelings (p.180).

Neisser's research was directed at proving that selective perception occurs very early in the perceptual process and resulted in his theory of 'Schemata Controlled Information Pickup' (1976). To arrive at his conclusions, Neisser conducted scientific experiments into optics and the detection of light and showed how one's biological state is altered to conform to the characteristics of light, but also has the capacity to store prior information. His experiments therefore showed that perception is partially determined by what is given (the interplay of light representing images), but also by prior knowledge stored in a pre-existing active array of physiological structures (neurological groupings) called *schemata* (Neisser, 1976)*. According to Neisser, using both afferent and efferent neuronal inhibition processes, schemata are able to bring about selective perception at a receptor level, as well as during the later stages of perception (1976, p.54). He therefore maintains that schemata govern our organic processes of perception (how we perceive), our early processing of information (what we choose to hear, see or smell),

as well as our later interpretation of different social situations (the meaning we attach to them) (p.75) and therefore result in the formation of perceptions which are subjective.

According to Jordaan, Jordaan & Nieuwoudt (1982, p. 425), the idea of inhibition taking place at a receptor level has been mostly rejected by recent research and it is now generally accepted that neuronal facilitation and inhibition actually occur at a higher (cortical) level. However, Neisser's theory is still useful to demonstrate the physiological processes underlying selective perception and the activity of schemata. In fact, his research correctly predicted that the views of subjects surveyed during the study would be influenced by pre-existing stored information (schemata) at an early stage of the perceptual process, resulting in 'snap judgments' and immediate responses from some subjects (Bower & Cohen,1982).

2.2.4.3. Constructive Alternativism: George Kelly and his Personal Construct Theory

George Kelly examines the inner complex working and relationships of these *cognitive structures* (Neisser, 1976), in his book 'The Psychology of Personal Constructs' (1991). In line with the constructivist approach, Kelly states that each person actively constructs a representation of reality using mental representations or abstractions which he calls *'personal constructs'* (p.6*)*. Currently there is some disagreement as to whether these representations are propositional, pictorial or both (Anderson, 1978). However, during the survey it was revealed that they can be either, depending on the phrasing of the statement or question.

Kelly describes personal constructs as being similar to concepts or percepts operating on a preverbal as well as verbal level, and forming complex associations resulting in a large and comprehensive system able to organise, order and manage our thinking as well as our perceptions of the world (worldview), and therefore any situation in which we find ourselves (Kelly, 1991, p.7). He shows them to be highly subjective, being formed from one's personal background and prior experience, and will naturally differ in

accordance with a person's life-history and living conditions, resulting in the *'construing'* of different subjective '*worlds*' (Kelly, 1991, p.7).This links up well with the concept of *different worlds* of phenomenological experience as suggested by this study, as well as the research hypothesis, which states that perceptions will differ according to the realities of income and personal circumstances (and are thus able to be measured in terms of optimism or pessimism).

In evaluating Kelly's theory, Vincent Kenny emphasises Kelly's standpoint that perception is far from being a passive process and that our sense of reality is actually *'imposed'* [emphasis added] upon events in the world (Kenny, 1989, p.4). This critique by Kenny also suggests that the hypothesis postulated in this study may be somewhat deterministic, in that he shows Kelly's view to be that differences in interpretation are due to mental '*constructions'* of experience (including the meaning people attach to their experiences), rather than to the actual experiences themselves (Kenny, 1989). Kelly's approach is also supported by Bless *et al.* (2004), who suggest that social behavior is mediated by internal mental representations of the social situation, rather than by the actual stimulus itself. Still, the idea that persons can share similar constructions (Kenny, 1989, pp.16-17), leaves open the possibility that subjects from the same socioeconomic grouping could share a common view of the world (worldview) and similar perceptions about the country.

During his evaluation of Kelly's Personal Construct Theory, Dale van der Watt (1993) highlights its practical application and its importance in fully acknowledging the legitimacy of the ideas, metaphors and perceptions of everyday people (Van Der Watt, 1993, p.72). Here we have a social world that is both tangible and real, but merely *construed* in different ways (Kelly, 1991, p.7), producing a system of constructs unique to each individual which provides meaning to his or her everyday experience (Van Der Watt, 1993, p. 30).

Kelly's emphasis on worldviews is important for this study. Both he and Kenny demonstrate that our view of the world (and therefore, of the country), depends on how

we construct our experiences (Kenny, 1989). And this, in turn, is determined by the nature and content of the personal constructs abstracted from our backgrounds and prior experience (Kelly, 1991, p.7). All this supports the study hypothesis, which states that perceptions of the country will differ greatly between high and low-income groups (rich and poor) due to vastly different phenomenological experiences.

2.2.4.4. Fiske's research on schemata, including her theory of Schema-Triggered Affect

Susan Fiske's research fits into the constructivist mould with her belief that we each actively create our own reality and meaning using schemata generalised from our individual life-experiences (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.139). She explains how our extensive use of assumptions, generalisations, expectations and inferences (heuristics) can only be explained by the use of a pre-existing framework of knowledge organised into well-integrated 'chunks' (schemata) (p.157). Her views on the formation, activation and operation of these schemata are largely based on earlier research into memory and recall which demonstrated how stored information is able to augment, speed up and influence later processing (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Fiske also defines schemata as *cognitive structures* that contain knowledge about the attributes of a concept and the relationships among those attributes (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.149). And like Neisser and Kelly, she maintains that they are able to influence perception, memory recall, inductive reasoning (inferences) and ultimately, our responses (p.139). In this way, they can be viewed as components in the top-down processing of all incoming information (p.140).

Her research also supports Neisser's (1976) theory that schemata are activated early in the perceptual process (at encoding level) as well as later, resulting in the selective perception and cognitive filtering of social information (Fiske & Taylor, 1984), which influences our interpretation of social situations and shapes our perceptions and judgements (Fiske, 1995, p.165).

Fiske's theory of *Schema-Triggered affect* (1982) is based on earlier research into the role of emotion in memory which showed that both thinking and recall use associative semantic networks of concepts and schemata to describe events (Bower & Cohen, 1982). Some events were shown to evoke rapid and automatic emotional responses, suggesting a causal relationship between the memory of the event and affect (p.302). This was also confirmed by later physiological research which revealed a definite link between emotions, memory and the activation of the sub-cortical structure called the Amygdala (Goldstein, 2005, p.229).

The link between schema activation and emotional arousal forms the basis of her theory, for which she provided proof during a number of experimental studies involving person-schemata. Fiske showed that measurable affective responses took place when subjects were presented with photographs and information linked to emotion-laden past events in their lives. In one study, subjects were presented with photographs, a personality profile (or both) which, in some cases, resembled that of an '*old flame'*, (based on information which they had previously listed on a *Princeton Personality Inventory* [PPI] as an ideal mate). Subsequent emotional responses (as measured on an affective scale), were directly correlated to the degree of match of the photograph or profile to their completed PPI. In other words, a perfect match elicited the most affect, a partial match, some affect, whereas a mismatch did not result in an affective response at all. This suggested the presence of pre-existing information (in this case, person-schemata containing specific information on their 'old flames') which, when cued by the photograph or profile, produced the schema–triggered affect (Fiske, 1982).

Further studies involving person-schemata using political and campus stereotypes also produced similar results. Fiske explains this by arguing that affect is naturally bound to the memories of certain past events or experiences within the generic knowledge structure (the network of concepts and schemata described by Bower & Cohen [1982]).

Affective responses therefore occur when specific affect-laden schemata are cued and activated, especially those involving categories of persons or traumatic events. The

subsequent emotional arousal primes certain words and rules, bringing about a faster and easier recall of these particular memories (Fiske, 1982). This is particularly noticeable in the case of the improved recall of detailed information associated with *flashbulb memories* (Goldstein, 2005).

Fiske's theory of *schema-triggered affect* is important for the study, as it shows how emotions play a role in the top-down processing of information and the formation of perceptions and also explains why some statements and questions presented during the survey evoked a speedy and emotional response.

2.2.4.5. Schematic content: JR Anderson's ACT Theory of Cognition (1976)

The general theory of cognition (ACT) (Adaptive Control of Thought) of John Anderson and his colleagues demonstrates how the coding and storage of schematic content in long-term memory actually takes place. It shows that incoming declarative information (in the form of images, propositions and their associations), is converted into procedural knowledge by drawing on pre-existing factual information in the form of mental representations (schemata) (ACT-R,[n.d.]).

Anderson (1978) bases much of his research on a computer model of the human cognitive processes and shows how all well-designed systems use pre-existing representations (arrays or 'strings)' for improving system performance, especially in encoding different types of information (visual or verbal input) (p.273). Anderson maintains that our human perceptual system is similar, in that it is also designed to process information in such a way as to maximize its efficiency and optimality (p.273). In this regard he shows that our cognitive processes are also structured to differentiate between different types of incoming social information (p.254), and that this early encoding at a perceptual level suggests the existence of pre-existing knowledge in a representational form (schemata).

Anderson (1978) explains the conditions and rules for the coding of verbal information, as well as spatial and modal properties, in mental representations. These rules would

apply equally to schemata, which, in terms of constructivist research, are also mental representations (Bless et al, 2004; Kelly, 1991).

Although there is currently some dispute as to whether representations are coded in a visual or verbal format (Anderson, 1978, p.250), he personally maintains that dual-code encoding in cognitive processing is also perfectly viable (p.275). In other words, representations (schemata) can contain both pictorial and propositional elements.

He links the existence of propositional representations to our ability to use words and concepts to describe social situations, persons, places and things and believes that meaning emerges from the processes designed to interpret these 'verbal strings' (Anderson, 1978, p.256). Our use of logical reasoning also points to verbal content in cognitive processing, as words are well-suited to making inferences (p.256).

Anderson (1978) states that *'any well-specified set of information can be represented by a set of propositions'* [italics added to quote] (p. 257). In other words, propositional representations (schemata) are primarily formed from the encoding of verbal content derived from social situations (p.250). However, he also believes that propositions can adequately represent spatial and modal information relating to visual images, including size, direction, light, colour and movement, comparing them to the programme rules and instructions which result in the construction of an image on a computer screen (p.268).

He lists three properties common to all propositional representations, namely abstraction, truth and structure. He therefore describes a proposition as being an abstraction of concepts and ideas derived from any experience, situation or event, having a truth value (able to be true or false), and containing logical rules which govern its formation (Anderson, 1978, p.250).

With regard to abstraction, a propositional representation would be composed of 'word strings' which are not identical, but bear a distinct similarity to the original verbal input. In other words, a form of paraphrasing (Anderson, 1978, p.252). However, abstraction

also refers to the ability of the representation to contain elements generalised from a number of cases that may differ in some respects (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

As stated, a proposition must also contain elements which are either true or false (Anderson, 1978, p.250). In some cases its truth or falsity can be determined by empirical experience, and in others, by its logical form (Goldstein, 2005). Truth also relates to the third essential property of propositional representations (schemata), namely their logical structure and rules (Anderson, 1978, p.250). In other words, some propositions abstracted from an event or social situation may or may not be true depending on the empirical truth of each premise, as well as the form and structure of the logical syllogism (Goldstein, 2005, p.430).

This can be demonstrated using a hypothetical example relevant to this study, one which could be typical of the reasoning of a low-income person with regard to *entitlement*.

Premise 1: All poor people must be supported by the government
Premise 2: I am a poor person
Conclusion: Therefore I must be supported by the government

What is important is that this type of reasoning can be logically valid and pass on to further processing without being necessarily true (Goldstein. 2005, p. 431). For instance, in this example, premise number one is based on an assumption that the government must support the poor, and is not necessarily true in all cases, as it is generally accepted that people must take some personal responsibility for their lives.

This issue of the truth or falsity of propositions is very relevant to schema theory as well as this particular study, as the conclusion in this example would certainly lead to a misperception which could influence this person's responses to the present SA social, security and economic situation. And is especially relevant in the light of research which

shows that people often base their responses on their real-life experiences (their socioeconomic situation) rather than logical reasoning (Goldstein, 2005, p.440).

In this regard, the flaunting of formal logical (structural) rules and the introduction of personal bias into mental representations (schemata) has also been linked to individual differences in culture and education (Goldstein, 2005, p.441). And this can also have significant effects when it comes to the perceptions of different income groups in the country.

Regarding the visual content of schemata, Anderson believes that the phenomenological features of a social situation can be coded in the form of pictorial images as well as propositions. This would confirm earlier research on perceptual schemata, which are said to contain visual elements (Neisser, 1976). In this case, the rule of abstraction would suggest that what is seen is not an identical view of the actual scenario, but rather a representation that has been processed by cognition (Anderson,1978, p.252).

In his *Dual-Code Theory* Anderson (1978) provides a speculative view of the construction of mental representations (schemata) with pictorial content. He suggests that an image of any real-life situation can be fragmented and mentally represented in dot-matrix arrays, specified according to colour and intensity (p. 255). In this regard, his linking of human cognitive processes to a computer model can be clearly seen. He maintains that within the mental representation there would be direct associations between the dots and verbal strings linked to the different activities within the social situation (p. 256). And it is these associations that allow for meaningful interpretation. This would loosely correspond to the associative network of concepts and schemata as suggested by Bower and Cohen (1982).

The use of a computer model to explain some mental processes is quite common in cognitive research (Goldstein, 2005, p.58). Although Anderson admits that his theory involving 'dots' is speculatively *'outrageous'* (Anderson, 1978, p.252), it is not so far

removed from accepted physiological research which describes how real-life images are fragmented into different features and processed in terms of neural codes for reconstruction in the mind and consciousness (Goldstein, 2005).

Anderson links his proof for pictorial representations to the ability of our minds to perform 'mapping', as well as cases of introspection, which suggest a picture-like image-code in cognitive processing which makes powerful three-dimensional imagery possible (1978, p.258). The capacity of our minds to mentally rotate and change the size and complexity of images (p.260), also points to pre-existing visual information (prototypes) on which these computations are based (p.255). These prototypes could also be described as object-schemata. Once again, using the computer model, he argues that, being especially efficient and useful when performing complex computations, visual images would be equally efficient in cognitive processing (p.258). This is supported by other research which shows that schemata do improve the speed and efficiency of information processing (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Bless *et al.*, 2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Nishida, 1999).

Anderson (1978) advocates that mental representations are dual-coded and contain components both of a visual and verbal nature which complement each other. In this regard, he believes that pictorial representations (such as perceptual schemata), may need verbal labels for easy retrieval (p.256). This corresponds to the aspect of the *verbal cuing* of schemata (Fiske, 1995).

With regard to physiological evidence, he believes that it is difficult to reduce cognitive processes to physiological terminology and suggests that there is no direct evidence for neural patterns in the brain corresponding to specific mental representations (discrete propositions or images) (Anderson, 1978, p.271). However, he points to indirect evidence, such as the hemispheric asymmetry of the brain, in which research has shown that the right and left hemispheres are better suited for spatial and linguistic tasks respectively. This suggests that the processing potential for both visually and verbally-encoded cognitive structures (schemata) exists (p. 271).

Anderson's theory is important to the study, as it addresses the nature, structure and content of mental representations (schemata). In this regard, it adequately explains the operation of propositional schemata which function according to logical rules and also provides some useful information on pictorial schemata.

2.2.5. Schemata, schema activation, schematic processing and schematic bias

Being *constructed* from one's background and prior experience (Kelly, 1991), the content of the schemata of persons from different socioeconomic categories should differ naturally in accordance with their personal circumstances and living conditions, producing highly subjective perceptions and a particular view of the world that will be reflected in their choice of responses to statements and questions involving the situation in the country. The factors involved in schema activation, as well as their effects on information processing, are thus very important in analysing and explaining the data obtained from the study.

Schemata are activated (cued) either by salient visual features, the presentation of certain ideas relating to self or one's past, as well as stereotypical labels and affect-laden categories (Fiske, 1982; Fiske, 1995; Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Once activated, they prime the selective recall of relevant memories and experiences, together with any thoughts associated with these experiences (Bower & Cohen, 1982; Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Research has shown that inductive reasoning based on the recall of prior knowledge will often contain heuristics (Goldstein, 2005, p.457), simple 'shortcuts' in thinking such as assumptions, generalisations, inferences and predictions, which serve to speed up cognitive processing (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Fiske, 1995, p.165) and can produce rapid and virtually 'automatic' responses (Goldstein, 2005, p.457).

An example of such a response would be the experience of a person who has recently fallen off a broken chair. This past experience, now represented in a schema, would, when the person is later offered another chair, result in the immediate recall of the

event, an assumption that this chair may also be defective, and a brief hesitation and inspection of the chair before sitting down again.

The role of schemata can therefore be seen as one of the augmentation, efficient organising and speeding up of the processing of information and subsequent decision-making (Bless *et al.*, 2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Nishida, 1999), as well as providing a sense of predictability and control (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). They would therefore be key elements in the formation of perceptions.

According to Kelly (1991), mental constructs (schemata) can contain fallacies or misrepresentations, leading to the formation of perceptions which are distorted and inaccurate (p.6). And incoming social information can also sometimes be adjusted to 'fit' schemata which are biased, resulting in misperceptions (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.165). This aspect of schematic bias is very relevant to the study, as it can indicate schema activation, as well as suggest the content of schemata. For example, blatant stereotyping taking place during the survey would suggest the activation of person or role schemata containing prejudicial thoughts, ideas or beliefs. In this regard, the study focussed on a number of specific schemata relevant to social perception and which have been shown to influence cognitive processing.

Perceptual schemata are structured internal representations of any object or situation acquired through perception and can have a visual or verbal content (Neisser, 1976). Perceptual schemata would therefore be cued and activated by features or affect-laden words which relate back to the original situation (Fiske, 1982; Fiske, 1995), and be instrumental in shaping an appropriate response. For example, if subjects from the study were to be approached and questioned as to their living conditions, it could be expected that their responses would be based on perceptual schemata *constructed* from their own phenomenological experiences of these conditions (Kelly, 1991).

Context schemata are said to store information specifically relating to social situations and behaviour parameters and enable the speedy processing of elements of a social

situation in order to activate an appropriate response (Nishida, 1999, p. 758). Context schemata are specifically abstracted from past social experiences (Neisser, 1976), and their content should thus differ for persons from different socio-economic backgrounds. These schemata would thus be activated in settings which invite social judgments.

Event schemata or *scripts* provide information (rules and norms) about the appropriate sequence of events in common social situations. They are said to augment or even distort memory recall based on differing visual perspectives (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.169). For example, a manager in a company (who has a specific work perspective), could view an event or situation differently from workers. Event schemata activation would thus also be linked to scenarios where social judgments are required.

Person schemata are visual or propositional representations relating to types of people. They contain information on the common personality traits, characteristics or attributes of specific persons or categories of people and aid in the prediction of behavior in social situations (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). However, in some cases person schemata can be linked to prejudice, resulting in stereotyping and labelling (Nishida, 1999, p.757). They would be activated in social situations by the presence of a person who is judged to be representative of a specific category (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Role schemata are comprised of knowledge about social roles and the norms and behaviors commonly associated with these roles and can also house gender and racial stereotypes (Nishida, 1999, p.758). This can lead to misperceptions and the over-simplification of what are actually highly complex social situations (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.161). Role schemata would also be activated in situations in which social judgements are involved.

Self-schemata are an important class and very relevant to this study, in that, being components of one's self-concept (Nishida. 1999, p.758), they would contain self-statements relating to attitudes and personality traits (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.158). The cuing and activation of these schemata by incoming self-relevant information results in

selective perception, as this information is retrieved and processed faster and more efficiently than other less important details, and anything contrary to the self-concept, ignored (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Responses which suggest either a low or enhanced self-esteem would therefore indicate the activation and content of self-schemata.

Apart from having associative links to schemata, emotion has also been found to be schematically stored in long-term memory (Nishida, 1999, p.759). Although Fiske (1982) prefers to call them 'affect-laden' schemata, emotion (or emotional) schemata contain strong elements of *affect* [emphasis added] and are accessed when associated schemata are activated (Nishida, 1999. p.759). They have a profound influence on cognitive processing, the formation of perceptions and social judgments (Fiske, 1982), and would be useful in explaining the responses to negative experiences with crime, poverty or squalor, as examined during this study.

2.2.6. Physiological evidence for schemata

Apart from the neurophysiological research provided by Maturana (Maturana & Poerksen, 2004), and Neisser (1976) which suggests that schemata have a physiological basis as neural patterns stored in areas of the brain associated with long-term memory, there is additional empirical evidence to suggest the existence of schemata and to show how their activation can result in the selective processing of information.

Earlier research has already shown that our brain has the inherent ability for either the facilitation or inhibition of specific neural clusters, centres or pathways, dependent on messages from the cerebral cortex. As stated by Jordaan, Jordaan and Nieuwoudt (1983), '*from the receptor level, through the afferent level, to the cortical level, we are dealing with an active system. The activities in the various parts [of the sensory system] influence each other*' [Italics added] (p.233).

Both the processes of inhibition and facilitation are active on various levels of the

sensory system (including visual and auditory systems) as demonstrated in early experiments cited by Jordaan *et al.* (1983, p.232; 1982, p.425-426). In other words, by means of a process of facilitation and inhibition, the selective transmission of specific visual and auditory impulses regarded as important can take place (1983, p.99). Another important finding was that these processes (facilitation and inhibition), can also be activated by one's '*psychological disposition'*, which includes the internal state of the individual (affect), as well as earlier experiences (Jordaan *et al.*, 1982, p. 432).

Research has also shown that the neocortex is the area most probably involved in the evaluation of sensory input (Jordaan *et al.*, 1983, p. 201). This area, (the frontal and prefrontal cortex), is also key to the functioning of long-term memory (Goldstein, 2005, p.154), which, according to Kelly (1991), is where schemata are formed and stored. This physiological research therefore provides evidence for the existence and functioning of schemata as neural clusters in the cerebral cortex (similar to memory), able to inhibit or facilitate the flow of sensory input at an early stage (Neisser, 1976), as well as to govern cognitive processing during the later stages of interpretation and the attribution of meaning (Fiske, 1995; Neisser, 1976).

2.2.7. Optimism, pessimism and worldview

Optimism represents a positive outlook on life and the world and the expectation that things will work out for the best, whilst pessimism suggests a negative outlook and expectations, with ambivalence lying somewhere along a continuum between the two (Peterson & Bossio, 1991). As a psychological dimension, optimism has been shown to be linked to entire belief systems (worldviews) (p.136), as well as to positive decisions and actions, and can thus be defined as a *'set of beliefs that leads people to approach the world in an active fashion'* [italics added] (p.9). In this way, both optimism and pessimism can also be viewed as schemata, or scripts for the way in which the world is viewed. This explains how one can relate any stable collection of perceptions, thoughts and ideas to either an optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent worldview.

A worldview has been described as a personally constructed framework of perceptions, including all thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs, assumptions, convictions and conclusions through which one views the world (Corey, 2001, p.109). In terms of previous research on personal constructs and schemata, a worldview could also be viewed as an associative network comprising of mental constructs (Kelly, 1991), which provides an overall perspective and allows for the management of all incoming information (Stoker, 1996, p.61).

An optimistic worldview should therefore contain subjective perceptions of the world as a generally relaxed, safe, fun and enjoyable place in which and one is able to maintain a reasonable standard of living and people express positive feelings towards each other in social judgments and altruistic and empathic thoughts and actions. Conversely, a pessimistic worldview would reflect perceptions of a world which is tense, unsafe, lacking in altruism and characterised by unpleasant living conditions. Any negative feelings about the world (dysphoria), a group or a person, would thus suggest pessimism (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p.106). An ambivalent worldview would contain elements of both these approaches or else suggest indecision.

Research has shown that blind optimism is usually associated with the very wealthy and the extremely poor (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p.7). This could be explained as the high-income group being able to afford a relatively carefree and protected lifestyle and therefore having an idealistic worldview, whilst the low-income group may well be living a *fantasy* [emphasis added] in order to alleviate their unpleasant living conditions (p.7).

Based on this research, the measurement of the worldviews of subjects from different socioeconomic groups along an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum was possible and formed an important part of the study.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is compatible with the line of enquiry and the developing body of knowledge of the constructivist approach. Constructivism has produced a wealth of research evidence over the last fifty years (Stoker, 1996) and this research was found to be particularly relevant and useful as a framework for the design of the study due to its attention to the processes of perception (the mental construction of different subjective views of the world), social cognition (the formation of perceptions), information processing (data-driven versus concept-driven processing) and schemata.

As the plan for the study was essentially to measure, analyse, interpret and compare the subjective perceptions of persons from the different socioeconomic groups in South Africa, the research design employed a broad-based interpretative approach. This allowed for an examination of the cognitive processes involved in perception and social cognition, with specific attention being given to the formation of subjective perceptions and their effect on the thoughts, emotions and actions of the different socioeconomic groups in relation to the current social, security and economic situation. Within this context, three main themes were initially identified for investigation, namely 'The relationship between high and low-income groups', 'Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest, and 'Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)'. As recommended by Terreblanche & Kelly (2002. p.143), sub-themes were later induced from the main themes to allow for a more in-depth examination.

The first theme involved perceptions of the social relationship between the high and low-income groups in South Africa, the former represented by top government representatives and company managers, and the latter, blue-collar workers and members of disadvantaged communities. An investigation relating to this theme would bring problems in the present relationship between these two groups into focus and

examine the role played by social perceptions in the establishment and maintenance of this relationship. An analysis of research data relating to this theme could help to explain why the two groups have problems relating to each other during wage negotiations and mass meetings over service delivery.

The second theme involved the affective responses to crime, violence and unrest of the different socioeconomic groups and related directly to perceptions of the current security situation in South Africa, including the strikes and service delivery protests. This theme introduced the component of 'affect' into the study, specifically 'feelings of safety', as previously measured by the South African Institute for Security Studies (Schonteich, 2001). An investigation relating to this theme would help to explain the underlying feelings and tensions in the country, specifically the anger and frustration experienced by low-income or impoverished communities, which often leads to crime and violence during the strikes and protests.

The third theme examined the role of the lifestyles and living standards (LSM) of the high, middle and low-income groups in South Africa in the formation of subjective perceptions of the economy, as well as the effect of debilitating social and environmental conditions on the perceptions, emotional responses and behaviour of members of impoverished communities. It was felt that these three themes would be sufficient to address social, affective, as well as situational perceptions of the country.

A simple process of measuring and comparing subjective perceptions in terms of the psychological dimensions of 'optimism' and 'pessimism' was incorporated into the research design. And as perceptions are also embodied in worldviews, group perceptions could be easily compared by positioning the worldviews of subjects from each income group (in batches) along an Optimism-Pessimism Scale (Continuum). By showing that high and low-income groups hold opposing worldviews, the hypothesis could be validated.

The research design allowed for a field study which included a survey involving the use of a questionnaire, as well as in-depth interviews and participant observation. This multidisciplinary approach increased the validity of the research design, provided measurable data for the analysis and comparison of worldviews, as well as qualitative data for an in-depth interpretative analysis of group perceptions and for determining schema activation and content. According to Terreblanche and Kelly (2002, p.140), these two analytic styles are compatible under a broader interpretative 'umbrella'.

For the purposes of this study, the categories of high, middle and low-income as provided by the Bureau of Market Research (UNISA, 2010), were applied. These categories are indicated as follows: Below R 50 000 per annum (low-income), between R 50 000 and R 750 000 per annum (middle-income) and R 750 000 per annum and above (high-income).

3.1.1. The design and selection of suitable items for the questionnaire

The design and construction of suitable and valid items for the questionnaire was of crucial importance to the study. In line with an interpretative approach, the measuring instruments are not graded scales, but rather sets of statements and questions relating to the three original themes, designed to provide qualitative data as well as measurable responses. For the purposes of this study, it was essential that subjective perceptions be reflected in these responses and are able to be extracted and interpreted within the context of the subject's income group and personal circumstances. As the questionnaire is essentially designed to measure worldviews on an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum, the statements also needed to be worded so as to invite an optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent response. This simplified the process and ensured speedy and accurate measurement.

Working within a constructivist framework also required that great attention be paid to the construction, phrasing and linguistic quality of the items to ensure that subjective

perceptions and responses were initiated and shaped by schema activation. In this regard, a number of different statements were considered for each theme.

3.1.1.1. Theme 1: The relationship between high and low-income groups

The statement selected for the measurement of responses relating to the relationship between high and low-income groups was *'Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor (yes/no)'.* In terms of constructivist research, prior experiences with different socioeconomic groups contribute to shaping one's view of the world (Kelly, 1991, p.7), and this statement would therefore be most suitable for measuring worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum. Any response to this statement could also be classed as a subjective perception, having passed through a process of social cognition (Bless *et al.*, 2004).

The statement is concise and provided a simple method of response, either by circling or underlining 'yes' or 'no', and also allowed for ambivalence, with subjects being able to qualify their responses by adding the word 'some' ('some wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor'), or else underlining both responses. In this regard, a positive response ('yes') would suggest optimism. In the case of high-income subjects, this could be explained as the response emanating from a positive view of self (relating to feelings of altruism) or high-self esteem, which has been shown to relate to optimism (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p.136). A positive response from a middle-income subject would also suggest optimism, the belief that '*all is well'* between rich and poor. And a similar response from a member of the low-income group would point to hopeful future expectations (optimism) regarding their 'benefactors' (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p. 9). For similar reasons, a negative response ('no') to this statement would, in all three cases, suggest a pessimistic view of the present relationship between the high and low-income groups, based on the belief (or acknowledgement) that the rich simply do not care about the poor (Peterson & Bossio, 1991).

The categories of 'wealthy' and 'poor' and affect-laden words such as 'care' (or *'not*

care' [implied]), were specifically included in the statement to cue event, person, role and emotion schemata. In the case of the low-income group, this could result in the speedy recall of either unpleasant memories of abuse or neglect, or pleasant recollections involving pro-social or charitable behaviour by wealthy persons in authority, whether in government, the workplace or simply on the street (Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Such experiences would be generalised and represented in these schemata, leading to subjective perceptions regarding 'the wealthy', including stereotypes which will influence their responses to this statement. Schema activation in this case could also produce non-verbal responses. And in the case of traumatic memories, may even result in visible *schema-triggered affect* (Fiske, 1982).

This particular statement could also cue self-schemata in low-income subjects due to internalised self-beliefs relating to their basic needs or even the idea of 'entitlement', resulting in speedy or 'snap' responses (Bower & Cohen, 1982). In the case of the middle-income group, the statement would more likely activate role and person schemata, resulting in stereotypical judgements of the poor as either *'needy'* and *'deserving'*, or else *'demanding'* and having a *sense of entitlement* (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Self-schemata could also be activated in high-income subjects, leading to responses based on perceptions of themselves as altruistic (or not) (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Schematic content in this case would be linked to events or situations where they either assisted (or neglected to assist) low-level employees or poor people. According to Baumeister (1995, p.77), some responses from this group may even be cognitive strategies designed to bolster self-esteem or reduce anxiety. Stereotyping of the poor as living off 'handouts' could also result from the activation of person or role schemata. Being controversial, this statement could also stimulate discussion and is extremely relevant in view of the current socio-political climate in the country.

3.1.1.2. Theme 2: Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

The first statement selected to record subjects' responses in relation to this theme was *'South Africa is a safe /unsafe place'.* This statement included affect-laden concepts such as *'safe'* and *'unsafe'* and was thus very likely to cue emotion schemata, result in the speedy recall of prior experiences associated with crime, violence and unrest in the country accompanied by visible changes in *affect* (Fiske, 1982). It could be expected that such powerful emotional experiences (in the form of propositional and visual schemata), would be represented in subjects' worldviews (Kelly, 1991, p.7). By relating to present and future optimistic or pessimistic expectations of the security situation in the country, the statement was therefore viewed as ideal for measuring worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p. 9).

Feelings of safety are often linked to subjective perceptions (Schonteich, 2001, p.1), and any affective, as well as verbal responses produced by this emotive statement would also provide qualitative data relating to this theme for later interpretative analysis. The statement is also simply worded, allowing for ease of response. Subjects merely had to circle one of the bipolar opposites 'safe' or 'unsafe' provided. In this case, ambivalence could also be indicated by underlining both responses.

A second statement *'South Africa is a dangerous/ fun and enjoyable place',* posed the question of whether it is still possible to experience a semblance of normality in South Africa in the current security climate. In other words, can one still have fun and enjoyment in a country which could essentially be unsafe? This creates a dilemma which can only be answered from one's own phenomenological experiences relating to crime and violence. Responses to this statement would therefore be based on highly subjective perceptions and also form part of one's general construction of the world (worldview) (Bless *et al.*, 2004).

Responding to this statement also involved merely underlining those words which corresponded to one's own perception of the security situation in the country. In this regard, an optimistic and a pessimistic choice of words was provided. The selection of the words 'fun and enjoyable' would be regarded as suggesting 'optimism' and the word

'dangerous' suggesting 'pessimism' (Peterson & Bossio, 1991). Once again, the statement also allows for ambivalence in that both options can be underlined. Also being highly emotive, the statement is suitable for stimulating discussion and gathering qualitative data relating to this theme. Crime, violence and unrest is a reality in our society and an understanding of the different feelings, views and perceptions that exist in South Africa will be important and relevant to government as well as private sector decision-makers.

Finally, this particular statement also introduces an affect-laden word, *'dangerous'* [emphasis added], which was also likely to result in the cueing of emotion schemata and the subsequent selective and speedy recall of highly personal past experiences with crime and violence, as well as affective changes (Fiske, 1982). There was also a possibly that flashbulb memories and schema-triggered-affect may result.

The third and final item chosen for this theme was the statement *'Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/ very tense'.* This is a slight variation on the previous statement, and is designed to measure the general degree of tension being experienced by all South Africans in response to crime, as well as to the level of violence accompanying the current strikes and service delivery protests. Responses would thus also be influenced by emotion or affect-laden schemata containing feelings of insecurity or anxiety (Fiske, 1982), and be based on subjective 'feelings', perceptions and expectations about the future. Once again, this anxiety may also present itself in the form of changes in body language and tension. Responses to this statement would therefore also suggest the level of optimism, pessimism or ambivalence present in a subject's worldview (Peterson & Bossio, 1991).

3.1.1.3. Theme 3: Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)

Specific questions relating to subjects' participation in the economy were presented by including a lifestyle and fixed and moveable property ownership audit in the questionnaire. This audit included ownership of fixed property (and type of home),

movable assets such as vehicles and appliances (adapted from the LSM categories provided by the 2002 HSRC report), and lifestyle in terms of dining habits, holidays and overseas travel.

In order to simplify the process, a number of options were provided and subjects merely had to indicate (tick) which of the options matched their current lifestyle and standard of living (see Appendices A-D). In this way a measurable comparison between high, middle and low-income subjects was possible and the optimistic or pessimistic inclination of their worldview inferred from their responses. Subjects' comments and non-verbal responses to this section would also suggest the cueing and activation of context schemata containing information on their living conditions. An open-ended question relating to their personal perceptions of the economy was later included in the interviews to provide the bulk of the data for the thematic (interpretative) analysis.

The validity of this audit method to provide information on worldviews, is linked to research which suggests that (financial) concerns are linked to pessimism (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p. 80), as well as previous findings which show that the majority of persons at the bottom of the LSM scale (LSM 1-2) are generally pessimistic about the economy (HRSC, 2002, p.98). From this the inference was drawn that subjects living in luxury would favour an optimistic worldview and those living in poverty and squalor a pessimistic view. This was later confirmed during the survey and interviews.

In addition to the audit, two statements relating to the economic situation in the country were also included in the questionnaire. The first of these statements was *'All unemployed people should be given grants (yes/no)'.* This enabled a comparison to be made between the perceptions of unemployed persons and those of government and private sector decision-makers regarding subsidies and grants, which is an important issue facing the country today (Mbeki, 2009).

This statement also only required a 'yes' or 'no' or 'both' response, corresponding to optimism, pessimism or ambivalence respectively, and was not chosen for the

measurement of worldviews. However, an additional benefit was that any discussion resulting from this statement could produce qualitative data for the thematic analysis relating to the first theme (The relationship between high and low-income groups), in that responses from different income groups would suggest their level of empathy for the poor.

Examining different perceptions of the role of the environment and living conditions in crime and violence in the current SA context was important for this study. A second statement included in the questionnaire under this theme was therefore *'Poor people only steal to survive' (yes/no)'.* This particular statement was also included for the purpose of stimulating discussion and obtaining qualitative data for an interpretative analysis relating to the two themes as mentioned (one and three), as well as to examine the effect of environmental conditions on the perceptions, affective responses and behaviour of persons caught up in a cycle of poverty. As before, this statement provided options for a simple 'yes' (optimistic), 'no' (pessimistic) or 'both' (ambivalent) response.

Once again, responses to this statement would suggest the degree of empathy (the quality of the relationship) with the poor, as indicated by the attribution of blame for stealing to internal or external (environmental) factors. The statement also introduced the suggestion that some crime can be the result of environmental factors such as poverty, desperation and a drive for survival, and was designed to elicit subjective perceptions based on internalised schemata, regarding the role of poverty in crime.

Information gathered from the responses to this statement would add to the current debates on poverty alleviation, entitlement and the right to the supply of basic human needs. And during the survey, these responses led to the induction of an additional (fourth) theme, '*The role of poverty in social unrest, conflict and violence'* [italics added].

Being powerfully-worded, controversial and emotive, this statement was very likely to activate emotion, role and person schemata, producing stereotypical social judgements involving the poor (Fiske & Taylor, 1984), and possibly even *schema-triggered affect*

resulting from the selective recall of traumatic memories of having to survive in poverty and squalor (Fiske, 1982).

A final reason for its inclusion was its relevance to the ongoing social unrest (service delivery protests) involving disadvantaged communities, as it would clearly reveal how attitudes and perceptions differ between socioeconomic groupings around *bread and butter* issues.

3.1.2. The design and selection of suitable questions for the interviews

With regard to the design and selection of questions for the in-depth interviews, a number of different possibilities were also considered. The questions had to be related to the three main themes already identified for the study and those selected were simply a rephrasing of each theme description into a relevant question. For instance, the theme 'The relationship between high and low-income groups' was rephrased to read Q1 'How would your describe your views on the different people in this country?', the theme 'Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest, is embodied in question two (Q2) 'How do you feel about safety and security in South Africa today?', and the final theme 'Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)', covered by question four (Q4) 'How well are you able to live in this country?' In this case, the focus was specifically on the experiences of the low-income group, with a view to entering their frame of reference and arriving at an empathetic understanding of their daily battle to survive.

Two additional questions (Q3 and Q5), were included to broaden the context and scope of the investigation and allow for richer and more detailed experiential data relating to the different income groups, namely Q3 'Tell me about some of your recent experiences which have changed the way you see the country', and Q5, 'Is there anything else you would like to add?', which is completely open-ended and designed to probe for other themes or sub-themes.

3.1.3. Final item selection

The final selection of items for the questionnaire was based on their suitability for the identification and categorisation of worldviews, schema activation and their relevance to the current SA socio-economical and socio-political context. It was also important that they were suitable for supplying qualitative data relating to the three themes chosen for the study (as well as inducing sub-themes), for interpretative analysis, thus complementing the in-depth interviews.

The items were listed in the questionnaire in sections corresponding to the three main themes, namely section 3.1 (The relationship between high and low-income groups), section 3.2 (Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest) and section 3.3 (Lifestyle and living standards [LSM]). It will be seen that statements 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 relating to themes 1 and 3 are excluded from the measurement of optimism, pessimism and worldview, as they are not completely suitable for this purpose. The final selection of items for the questionnaire and questions for the interviews are summarised in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively:

Table 1: List of items selected for the questionnaire

_____

Theme   Description

_____

Theme 1: The relationship between high and low-income groups
        Item 3.1.1. Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor
Theme 2: Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest
        Item 3.2.1. South Africa is a safe /unsafe place
        Item 3.2.2. South Africa is a dangerous/ fun and enjoyable place
        Item 3.2.3. Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/ very tense
Theme 3: Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)
        Item 3.1.2. All unemployed people should be given grants
        Item 3.1.3. Poor people only steal to survive
        All four sections of the lifestyle and property audit as shown in
        Appendices A-D.

_____

Table 2: List of questions selected for the interviews

_____

Theme   Description

_____

Theme 1: The relationship between high and low-income groups

        Q.1. How would your describe your views on the different people in this country?

Theme 2: Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

        Q.2. How do you feel about safety and security in South Africa today?

Theme 3: Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)

        Q.4. How well are you able to live in this country?

Additional questions:

        Q.3. Tell me about some of your recent experiences which have changed the way you see the country

        Q.5. Is there anything else you would like to add?

_____

3.2. THE FIELD RESEARCH

The field research took place within the context of the present social, security and economic issues facing the country and the research problem of subjective perceptions differing according to income group. As previously stated, a single hypothesis and three main themes had originally been identified for investigation, analysis and discussion. To accomplish this, the field study therefore incorporated two separate yet complementary methods of investigation and measurement. The first related to the hypothesis, which stated that the subjective perceptions of high and low-income groups would differ markedly based on specific phenomenological experiences linked to income and living conditions, and comprised of a survey in which a standardised questionnaire was

administered to a sample of the local population. This was done with a view to the collection of measurable data for an analysis and comparison of the worldviews of high, middle and low-income groups.

The second method was the collection of qualitative data for an interpretative analysis relating to the three themes using information from the survey as well as from a smaller number of in-depth interviews. This method also included participant observation to record other important information, such as impromptu comments, non-verbal cues suggesting affect and other processing trends and social dynamics pointing to schema activation.

Apart from personal interaction, the field research also involved the use of the latest technology such as electronic (e)-mail facilities and cellular phones to conduct interviews with subjects who were either resistant or inaccessible, such as top business executives and local governmental officials.

3.2.1. The sample

The reliability of the field study was ensured by a sample which comprised of a mostly random, fully representative group of men and women from all three income groups. Admittedly, a sample size of only 100 subjects could be considered a shortcoming of the study. However, Bailey (1982), states that sample sizes of 500 have been used during some studies into attitudes in the United States (US) (p.84) which has a much larger population. The sample was based on the current urban population distribution in the Durban Metropolitan area (eThekwini Online [n.d.]), and a colour ratio of 8/4/3 applied to 90 of these subjects. In other words, eight black respondents to every four from the coloured or Indian population and three from the white race group (the white ratio was raised slightly due to increased urban representation). Subjects were between 18 and 80 years of age and equal numbers of men and women included. Unfortunately, for practical reasons, with a few exceptions, the study relied mostly on participants

from Kwazulu-Natal, and the sample may therefore not be fully representative of the general population in South Africa.

The sample was collated in batches of 30 from each of the three socio-economic groupings (15 male and 15 female subjects) to reach the total of 90 for random selection, and the remaining 10 being selected on the basis of relevance (n=100), which meant that racial and gender quotas were not strictly applied to this group. In the case of couples being interviewed, income group was based on the highest-earning partner. The sample used in the survey is listed in terms of income, gender and cultural grouping in Table 3.

Table 3: Sampling list for the survey

Groups	n	Cultural Grouping
High-income group		
Female	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Male	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Middle-income group		
Female	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Male	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Low-income group		
Female	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Male	15	Black -8, coloured/Indian-4, white-3
Highly relevant subjects		
High-income		
Female	1	Black- 0, coloured /Indian-0, white-1
Male	3	Black- 0, coloured /Indian-0, white-3
Middle-income		
Female	0	Black- 0, coloured /Indian-0, white-0
Male	3	Black- 0, coloured /Indian-2, white-1

Low-income
Female	1	Black- 1, coloured /Indian-0, white-0
Male	2	Black- 1, coloured /Indian-0, white-1

Total sample n=100

_____

The sample included persons from all sectors of the community, including local politicians, top businessmen and women, professionals, city officials, government employees, union representatives, blue-collar workers and domestic servants, as well as retired, unemployed and indigent persons. In the case of the survey, the two variables being measured were 'income group' and 'worldview' and detailed personal information, including occupation, was in most cases, not considered absolutely necessary for the completion of the questionnaire. However, the 10 highly relevant subjects were approached specifically as a result of their positions and their work roles were therefore important and duly noted. This small section of the larger sample included the Durban city manager, a deputy Metro police chief, three city councillors, a specialist psychiatrist, a well-known business owner, an evangelist, a radio personality and a union representative. It was felt that the opinions of these persons would be important for a proper understanding of the responses of different interest groups to the current social, security and economic situation in the country. The occupational profile of subjects represented in the sample is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Occupational profile of high, middle and low-income subjects (survey)
_____

High-income (n= 34)	**Middle-income** (n= 33)	**Low-income** (n= 33)
top businessmen/women	local gov. employees	minimum wage workers
spouses of company executives	teachers	domestic servants
senior SAPS police officials	nurses	pensioners
local government officials	housewives	car guards
	blue-collar workers	unemployed persons
		indigents

_____

Highly relevant subjects
city manager	city councillors	evangelist

deputy police chief   local radio disc-jockey   trade union rep.
specialist psychiatrist
business owner

Total sample n=100

The sample for the in-depth interviews comprised of 20 subjects, and also included all three income groups, but as subjects were also being selected for the interviews based on their relevance to the study, racial and gender quotas were, once again, not strictly applied. As it turned out, due to subject resistance, final selection for the interviews also depended on availability and a willingness to participate. As the focus of the study was on the perceptions of subjects from the high and low-income groups, eight interviews were conducted with subjects from the high-income group, four from the middle-income group and eight from the low-income group. Unfortunately, as stated, it was not possible to recruit equal amounts of relevant male and female subjects for the interviews. The sampling list and occupational profile for the interviews are indicated in Table 5 and Table 6 respectively.

Table 5: Sampling list for the interviews

_____

	Groups	n
	High-income	
Gender	Female	2
	Male	6
	Middle-income	
Gender	Female	1
	Male	3
	Low-income	
Gender	Female	3
	Male	5

Total sample n=20

_____

Table 6: Occupational profile of high, middle and low-income subjects (interviews)

_____

High-income   (n= 8)   **Middle-income** (n= 4)   **Low-income**   (n= 8)

High-income		Middle-income		Low-income	
local business owner	(WM)	teacher	(IM)	local car guard	(WM)
specialist psychiatrist	(WF)	teacher	(IF)	trade union rep.	(BF)
company head	(WM)	city councillor	(WM)	waitress	(CF)
police brigadier	(BM)	city councillor	(IM)	casual worker	(CM)
police brigadier	(BF)			domestic servant	(CF)
municipal director	(IM)			indigent	(CM)
municipal director	(WM)			evangelist	(BM)
company director	(BM)			homeless man	(WM)

_____

Note. Cultural grouping: BM = black male, BF = black female, IM = Indian male, IF = Indian female, CM =coloured male, CF=coloured female, WM =white male, WF=white female

Total sample n=20

_____

As can be seen from Table 6, a wide spectrum of SA society was also represented in the interview sample. Special attention was, however, given to selecting local government representatives and senior police officials (being directly affected by the current strikes and service delivery protests), as well as lowly-paid workers, unemployed persons and indigents, who are most likely to be caught up in these protests.

3.2.2. The data collection process

As previously stated, the survey was conducted by administering a standardised questionnaire to subjects from all three income groups. In this study, the middle-income group acting as a control. Most of the actual field work was limited to the Durban Metropolitan area (Kwa-Zulu Natal). However, some high-income subjects outside of Durban were also included by using telephonic interviews or the online questionnaire.

Qualitative data for an interpretative analysis relating to the three themes were also collected during the survey by recording additional comments as well as personal observations made with regard to affective responses and other non-verbal forms of communication. However, the bulk of these data came from the responses to the questions posed during the interviews, as well as from any discussions which resulted.

3.2.2.1. Subject resistance

A number of difficulties in gathering data emerged involving subjects from all income groups. As predicted, access to members of the high-income group proved problematic due to gate keepers, busy work schedules, disinterest or a desire for privacy. There also appeared to be some concerns that the interviews (face-to-face as well as telephonic), may be part of a media or marketing strategy. In most cases, introductions using mutual acquaintances or known associates were necessary. Social and business internet networks were particularly useful in this regard. As a result of the challenges obtaining access and face-to-face interviews with top executives, the online (e-mail) questionnaire and telephonic interviews were used to great effect in reducing subject resistance, being less time-consuming and intrusive. Resistance to the online questionnaire was also reduced by making prior arrangements over the phone where possible and exhibiting UNISA credentials with the e-mail. The use of a trained Zulu-speaking assistant known to the community also helped to manage subject resistance due to suspicion which emerged amongst black middle and low-income groups.

3.2.2.2. The administration of the questionnaire

Subjects were approached to complete the questionnaire using a variety of strategies. Some were acquaintances and this simplified the process. In other cases, subjects were approached at their home, place of employment, social and religious gatherings or shopping centres. With regard to the low-income group, the questionnaire was presented randomly to local workers and car guards as well as unemployed members of the community who frequent a church soup kitchen. As stated, some of the

questionnaires were submitted electronically to high-income subjects or completed over the phone. There were also some cases when the questionnaires were not personally administered by the researcher, but by a research assistant. The assistant, a retired nursing professional with a certificate in (hiv) counseling and six years practical experience, was trained in interviewing and observation skills and in the specific completion of the questionnaire during a number of meetings prior to the survey.

Debriefing sessions were also held with her at regular intervals during the survey to ensure that the methods she employed, as well as the data obtained, were correct. Any uncertainties were cleared up at these sessions.

Prior to the survey being conducted, subjects were informed of the fact that I was a student with Unisa, the purpose and importance of the study, the fact that participation was voluntary, that their names would not be used, and that any information provided will be regarded as confidential and only made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

For a number of practical reasons (literacy, time constraints and accuracy), subjects did not actually complete the questionnaire themselves (although they were free to examine it), but the statements and questions contained in the questionnaire were posed to them, clarified, and their responses recorded alongside the relevant sections. Following the completion of the questionnaire, subjects were thanked for their willingness to participate. In the case of indigent subjects, a stipend was paid to them to increase the beneficial value of the study.

The hard-copy questionnaire was self-constructed and designed to be completed in less than 10 minutes to reduce subject resistance. It was prepared in English, concise, simple (thus suitable for all educational levels), and printed in a one-page paper format which is easy to manage and file. It was compiled in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the South African Institute for Clinical Psychology compiled by Steere and Wassenaar (1985), as cited in Wassenaar (1992). In view of the current sensitive socio-

political situation in the country, race, political affiliation and occupation were not listed on the questionnaire so as to maintain trust and reduce experimenter effect. However, the subject's cultural group was later entered on the sheet to meet the racial quotas set for this survey. As top government employees had been identified as a focus group, their questionnaires were also specifically indicated as 'gov' or 'police'.

The questionnaire comprised of three parts, an introduction (section 1), a second section which requested personal information (gender and income category), and a third section containing the three measuring instruments (sections 3.1 to 3.3). As stated, these are not scales as such, but rather sets of statements and questions designed to measure different responses to the current social, security and economic situation in the country. In terms of constructivist research and following the careful design and construction of the items, these responses would indicate the optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent inclination of subjects' subjective perceptions as well as their worldviews.

As shown previously, section 3.1 dealt with perceptions of the relationship between high and low-income groups, section 3.2 with affective responses to the security situation in the country and section 3.3 provided the opportunity for an audit of the subject's lifestyle and living standards (LSM). The use of prepared statements and questions greatly simplified the entire process and assisted in the coding of the data in terms of worldviews.

The method of recording was extremely simple, with responses being indicated by circling either 'yes' or 'no' or both (section 3.1), underlining either one of two phrases contained in each statement (suggesting either optimism or pessimism) (or both for ambivalence)(section 3.2.), or placing ticks in appropriate boxes (section 3.3). Additional observations, including comments, points of discussion, as well as mood changes and other non-verbal responses, were also reflected in brief notes at the bottom of each questionnaire during or after its completion. These were later transferred to the participant observation sheets for the final analysis.

Section 3.1 of the questionnaire deals with the social relationship between high and low-income groups and relates to the cognitive elements in social cognition, containing three statements with yes/no answers designed to measure social judgments (perceptions) which would suggest the quality of the present relationship between high and low-income groups. The statements are intended to activate schemata and the recall of memories of prior experiences to allow for schematic processing. Subjects' responses to this section would reflect an optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent (undecided) view of this relationship.

Section 3.2 relates to the affective component of social cognition and contains a set of three statements designed to reveal a subject's affective responses to crime, violence and unrest in the country. In this case, subjects merely have to underline those words contained in the statements which correspond to their feelings on the situation. The statements are designed to cue schemata and prime memories relating to their previous experiences with crime and violence, resulting in schematic processing. Once again, their choice of responses would suggest either an optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent view of the security situation in South Africa.

Section 3.3 is comprised of four sets of questions related to lifestyle and movable/ immovable property ownership. These four sections were specially adapted for this study and do not address all the LSM categories used by the HSRC (HSRC, 2002). The living standards and lifestyles of subjects' are indicated by merely ticking the appropriate boxes, which relate to fixed and moveable property ownership, dining habits and holiday and travel opportunities. As shown previously, the optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent inclination of their perceptions and worldviews can be inferred from their responses. Once again, it was anticipated that these questions would result in schema activation as subjects refer to mental representations of their home situation and living conditions. Examples of completed questionnaires are provided as Appendices A-C.

3.2.2.3. The administration of the on-line questionnaire

The questionnaire was also adapted for copying and pasting on onto e-mails or uploading onto social and business networks for the purpose of completion by subjects with limited access, such as top executives and governmental representatives. It contained exactly the same sets of statements and questions as the hard-copy questionnaire, but was structured in such a way that its completion would simply require typing in one-word answers or a symbol such as an asterix. The on-line questionnaire also contained a similar introduction to meet ethical guidelines as well as a brief and cordial request for its completion and return by e-mail. As stated previously, the e-mail questionnaire provided increased accessibility, saved time and costs and allowed for greater anonymity. It was also considered suitable for posing sensitive questions and more convenient than an interview, as subjects could complete it in their own time (Bailey, 1982). And being standardised, helped to reduce interviewer bias. An example of a completed on-line questionnaire is included as Appendix D.

3.2.2.4. The interviews

The interviews were specifically designed to obtain more detailed and in-depth information surrounding the personal experiences and perceptions of the different income groups relating to the situation in the country and provide a basis for demonstrating schema activation and examining schematic content. Interviews were conducted mostly with relevant subjects in the high-income group (such as top governmental officials and company executives), and the low-income group, represented by blue-collar workers and unemployed persons, although a few middle-income subjects were included as a control measure. The method for conducting the interviews was slightly different to the completion of the questionnaire, as they were less structured and allowances had to be made for more time (approximately 15 minutes) and a greater depth of questioning. However, as shown, the questions were also standardised to increase validity and limit researcher effect and demand characteristics. In most cases, special arrangements, including appointments, had to be made. As previously stated, obtaining the interview often required a prior introduction arranged with the assistance of a known associate, and in some cases, this involved using an

Internet social or business network. This *'friend of a friend approach'* [italics added] proved quite successful in finding suitable (relevant) subjects for the interviews (Kelly, 2002, p.383).

The actual process involved in conducting the interviews was also more complex, requiring interpersonal and active listening skills and open-ended questioning to encourage subjects to speak and share information freely. It also required the use of an interview sheet and well as a record of participant observation. All interviews were conducted by me personally. At the start of each interview it was necessary to establish a rapport with each subject in order to foster trust. Following a personal introduction, the purpose of the interview was clarified and the same ethical guidelines used during the survey (informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality), explained to each subject. The open-ended questions listed on the interview sheet were then introduced one at a time and the subject encouraged to speak freely. Once again, each interview sheet was completed by me, based on the subject's responses. However, key points were also extracted and clarified (using active listening) from the general discussion. Responses were not recorded verbatim and only relevant points summarised and recorded on the interview sheet. Being a trained counsellor with many years of practical experience meant that subtle changes in body language, voice tone and mood could also be detected unobtrusively and recorded on the observation sheet. Once again, subjects were thanked for their willingness to participate.

As stated, telephone interviews were also conducted in a few cases where executives or highly relevant subjects were on business trips or otherwise not available. According to Bailey (1982), telephone interviews are a fast and efficient method of completing a survey which offers subjects a degree of anonymity (p.207). Unfortunately, a telephonic interview can also lead to mistrust due to the belief that the call is part of a media or marketing strategy.

The interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of subjects' phenomenological experiences of the country and created the opportunity to collect additional information

and observations that would be useful in the final data analysis to determine schema activation, such as emotional reactions, response times and depth of cognitive processing.

As discussed earlier, the interview sheet itself contained a series of five open-ended questions, three relating to the main themes of the study and two additional questions to create the opportunity for a detailed record of personal experiences and other information which could be used to induce other themes or sub-themes. The questions were printed on the interview sheet beforehand and being standardised, increased the validity of the interview process, reduced experimenter effect and provided a suitable framework for discussion. Responses were recorded in the form of brief written notes on the lines provided on the sheet alongside each question. It was decided that notes would be less intrusive and more confidential than an audio recorder. A copy of a completed interview sheet is attached as Appendix E.

3.2.2.5. Participant observation

Terreblanche & Kelly (2002, p.134), list participant observation as an important method of the collection of qualitative data within an interpretative approach. The specific technique used in this study involved making unobtrusive field notes to record comments and additional insights from impromptu questioning and discussion resulting from the survey and interviews, as well as noticing changes in affect and other forms of non-verbal communication. This information was all recorded on specially prepared observation sheets and later assisted with inducing sub-themes, identifying social dynamics, developing insights and ideas and highlighting problems during the data analysis. As I had given my research assistant some basic training in observation techniques, any feedback with regard to emotional responses and interesting dynamics she provided during the debriefing sessions was also included on the observation sheets. Observing body-language, voice tone, word emphasis and changes in affect added another 'textual domain' to the study, one which resulted in rich 'new dimensions' of interpretation (Kelly, 2002, p. 392).

The observations were recorded on a plain paper sheet with open line spaces. Field notes were made unobtrusively during or after the completion of the questionnaire or interview and provided a holistic view of the entire process of social interaction, with specific attention being paid to non-verbal cues, the use of words, changes in affect and emerging social dynamics. As previously stated, other information provided by the research assistant relating to cultural issues or socio-political bias, was added during our debriefing sessions. A completed observation sheet is included as Appendix F.

3.3. THE CODING (RATING) PROCESS

3.3.1. The raw data

The raw data obtained from the questionnaires were in the form of responses to the statements posed in sections 3.1 and 3.2, as well as specific lifestyle and LSM options indicated for section 3.3. Due to the careful design and construction of the statements, all responses (excluding those relating to statements 3.1.2 and 3.1.3), could be easily interpreted as optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent. And the options indicated in section 3.3. also clearly pointed to a specific standard of living (LSM) and lifestyle.

Any additional comments made on the questionnaires arising from points of discussion, were transferred to participant observation sheets and used to supplement the qualitative data from the interviews. Field notes made on the observation sheets also provided additional information relating to changes in emotional states, body language (including tone of voice and facial expressions), and other cues relating to the speed and depth of processing observed during the completion of both the questionnaires and interviews. This was also integrated with the qualitative data from the in-depth interviews.

The raw data from the in-depth interviews were in the form of individual answers provided to the standardised but open-ended questions (1-5) in the interview sheet. As previously stated, the interviews were not recorded verbatim and only relevant points.

summarised and recorded. This comprised the bulk of the qualitative data for the interpretative analysis of the three (later four) themes.

3.3.1.1. Categorisation of worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum

Constructivist research suggests that each worldview represents an associative network of schemata able to influence a subject's responses to any statements and questions presented in the questionnaire (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Kelly, 1991). As the design of the statements allowed for each response to suggest optimism, pessimism or ambivalence, this provided a very simple method of coding and categorising subjects' worldviews on an *Optimism-Pessimism Continuum* [emphasis added], thus enabling an easy comparison between high, middle and low-income groups to be made.

This coding of the data from the questionnaires in terms of *'worldview'* was concluded using a scale comprising of five categories, namely 'fully optimistic', 'generally optimistic', 'ambivalent', 'generally pessimistic' or 'fully pessimistic'. These represent a continuum ranging from blind optimism (idealism) in which everything in the world and the country is seen in a positive light (the '*Polyanna Principle*') (Peterson & Bossio,1991, p. 5) to a through-going pessimism which includes dysphoria, helplessness, apathy and brooding (p.10), and in which nothing in the country is seen as positive, safe, fun, enjoyable or pleasant. The coding in terms of these five categories is now further elaborated.

A fully or 'blindly' optimistic worldview suggests that the subject experiences the world and the country as a utopian ideal, a safe, fun, enjoyable and relaxed place where the wealthy care about the poor and the economy is such that it is possible to maintain a luxurious standard of living. This would be reflected in an affirmation of statement 3.1.1, the selection of options 'safe', 'fun and enjoyable' and 'quite relaxed' in section 3.2 and a luxurious lifestyle indicated in section 3.3 (LSM).

The fully optimistic response to all the relevant statements and questions initially seemed unlikely and was thought to be an ideal. The most likely optimistic outcome was believed to be a 'generally optimistic' worldview, in which the subject's choices did not meet all the requirements for the fully optimistic ideal, but optimistic responses were still in the majority.

An ambivalent worldview would be recorded when the subject indicated a mixture of optimistic, pessimistic and ambivalent responses to the statements in sections 3.1.1 and 3.2 and was able to maintain a reasonable standard of living, as indicated in section 3.3.

In cases where the choices did not all completely match all the responses linked to the 'fully pessimistic' worldview, the subject's worldview would be listed as 'generally pessimistic' as long as most of the options selected suggested pessimism.

Finally, the fully pessimistic worldview would correspond to the situation in which the subject experienced the country as an unsafe, dangerous and very tense place in which the rich do not care about the poor and every day is a struggle to survive. This worldview would be reflected in an unconditionally negative response ('no') to the statement 3.1.1, 'unsafe', 'dangerous' and 'very tense' indicated for section 3.2 and a living standards measure of LSM 1, suggesting an impoverished and squalid lifestyle.

3.3.1.2. Detailed rating of the questionnaires

As previously shown, for the purposes of this study, it was accepted that the inclination of the subject's worldview (optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent), would be revealed by a certain combination of responses to the statements and questions in sections 3.1 to 3.3 of the questionnaire. In this regard, each sheet was individually examined and evaluated, with each section being rated separately and later summed.

The starting point for the coding of worldviews was the subjects' lifestyle and living standards (LSM) (section 3.3). As stated previously, a luxurious lifestyle was considered

as suggesting a predisposition towards an optimistic view of the economy, whereas an impoverished lifestyle a predisposition towards pessimism.

The criteria that were applied for a *'luxurious'* [italics added] standard of living (LSM 7-8) were also based on those provided by the SAARF (HSRC, 2002. p.165), in this case, ownership of fixed property (degree of urbanisation) and (luxury) vehicles, but also included two other categories, namely dining habits and travel/holiday opportunities. Note that a minimum cost of R300 000 was applied for the classification of a motor vehicle as 'luxury', based on US criteria and adjusted for the SA exchange rate (Wikipedia, 2011). The five criteria for a *luxury* lifestyle are listed as follows;

- subjects were from the high-income group
- possessed their own homes
- owned luxury motor vehicles (over R300 000)
- could afford to travel overseas
- could afford to eat only at the best restaurants

To allow for individual choice as regards lifestyle, high-income subjects who possessed their own homes and owned luxury motor vehicles, but personally *chose* either not to eat at the best restaurants or to travel overseas, were still listed as LSM 7-8 and section 3.3 rated as 'optimistic' and awarded the symbol (+) representing optimism (a positive view of the economy), provided that one of the two (overseas travel or dining at the best restaurants), was indicated. See Appendix C for an example of a high-income subject with a rating of (+) (optimistic) for section 3.3 due to her extremely high living standards and obvious luxurious lifestyle.

A rating of '*ambivalent'* [italics added] for section 3.3 was allocated to subjects who also owned or rented homes, but drove a normal motor vehicle (below R300 00 00), could only afford to eat out at regular food outlets and had acquired some property such as television sets, stoves and fridges. This would normally be associated with an LSM classification of 3-6 and applied to most middle-income subjects, but also included

some high-income subjects who could not meet the criteria for a luxurious lifestyle (LSM 7-8) as indicated above. This rating was indicated on the questionnaire alongside section 3.3 as 'amb' (ambivalent towards the economy) (see example listed as Appendix B).

As stated previously, an impoverished and squalid lifestyle (LSM 1-2) was linked to a predisposition towards pessimism and a negative view of the economy. This rating of section 3.3 as 'pessimistic' was only associated with subjects who possessed no fixed or movable property, lived in single rooms or any place they could find, and could not afford to eat out at all. In such cases, the symbol (-) was allocated to this section, suggesting a negative perception of the economic situation in the country (pessimism).

In Appendix A an example of such a rating is provided. As can be seen, the subject indicated that he lives in a single room (at the back of someone's else property), can only afford to eat at home, possesses no fixed or movable property, is unemployed and destitute and indicates that apart from watching television at his home of his host, he has nothing else to do. This qualifies for the rating of (-), which represents pessimism. This was also confirmed in later discussion during which time he indicated that he was dreadfully unhappy with his living conditions and the whole economic situation in general (see note on the lower right-hand side of the questionnaire [Appendix A]).

Continuing with the assessment process, initial ratings from section 3.3 were summed with those from sections 3.1.1 and 3.2 to arrive at the final categorisation of the subject's worldview. In this regard, the following simple process was applied. In section 3.1 (The relationship between high and low-income groups), only statement 3.1.1 was applied for the purposes of coding the worldview. A positive response to this statement that 'Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor' ('yes'), was rated as suggesting the perception of a positive relationship between rich and poor (optimism) and indicated with a positive symbol (+) (see Appendices B and C). A negative response ('no') was rated as suggesting a negative perception of the relationship between the two groups (pessimism) and indicated with a negative (-) symbol (see

Appendix A). These symbols (+) and (-) which referred to 'optimism' and 'pessimism' respectively, were applied consistently throughout the entire rating process.

The rating system applied to section 3.2 was equally simple, with the responses to the three statements relating to subjects' feelings about the present situation regarding safety and security in the country being rated individually. Once again, the process was the same, with an optimistic response to any one of the three statements indicated by the symbol (+) and a pessimistic response by the symbol (-). An example of a pessimistic response to all three statements in section 3.2 is provided in Appendix A.

In a case where both options were indicated or underlined (in other words, the subject could not make up his or her mind, or indicated that both situations can exist simultaneously), a rating of 'amb' (ambivalent) was applied to the particular statement. The ratings of the three statements were summed and a general rating of either (+) optimistic, (amb) ambivalent or (-) (pessimistic) applied to section 3.2 as a whole. In other words, two negatives (-) cancelled a positive (+) and led to an overall rating of 'pessimistic' (-) for section 3.2 and vice versa ('optimistic')(+), in the case of two positives and one negative. In the case of two statements in section 3.2 being rated as ambivalent, the overall assessment was that the subject's perceptions relating to this section were 'ambivalent' ('amb') (see Appendices B and C).

For the purposes of this study, it was accepted that the scope of subjects' responses to sections 3.1 to 3.3 of the questionnaire (perceptions of the relationship between high and low-income persons, affective responses to crime, violence and unrest and lifestyle and living standards [LSM]), was sufficiently broad to indicate the position of their worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum. In other words, to provide an overall assessment of a questionnaire and categorise a worldview as 'fully optimistic', 'generally optimistic', 'ambivalent', 'generally pessimistic' or 'fully pessimistic', merely required the ratings of the three sections of the questionnaire to be summed. In this regard, a 'fully optimistic' assessment was only applied in cases when all three sections were rated as optimistic (+) and conversely, as 'fully pessimistic' when all three sections

rated as pessimistic (-). Anything in-between was assessed as 'generally optimistic', 'ambivalent' or 'generally pessimistic' depending on the summed outcome of the three ratings (see examples provided for further explanation).

Appendix A provides a good example of a fully pessimistic worldview, that of an indigent low-income white male ('WM'), and in which each section has been individually rated as pessimistic (-), leading to a final assessment of fully pessimistic, 3 x (-) as indicated on the top of the page.

Appendix B indicates a subject 'WF' (white female) who has been assessed as having an ambivalent view of the world and the social, security and economic situation in South Africa. As can be seen, section 3.3 was rated as 'amb' (ambivalent) as this middle-income subject owns a house, a car, is able to eat out and have regular holidays. This suggests a reasonable standard of living (somewhere between LSM 3 and 6). With regard to section 3.2, 'Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest', the subject has indicated ambivalence to two of the three statements (both responses underlined) and thus this section is also given an 'ambivalent' rating. Finally, even though her response to the statement in section 3.1.1 is positive, summing the three ratings gives a final tally of one (1) optimistic rating (+) to two (2) ambivalent ratings (1 /2A as indicated on the top of the page), leading to a final coding of her worldview as 'ambivalent' (amb).

Appendix C is an example of a high-income subject with a 'generally positive' view of the world and the situation in the country. This was obtained from summing the three ratings (sections 3.1 to 3.3) and arriving at a final assessment of two optimistic (+) responses (section 3.1 and 3.3) to one ambivalent rating (section 3.2), indicated as '2/1A', on the top of the questionnaire.

This method of rating and assessment was applied objectively to each questionnaire to obtain the final position of the subject's worldview of the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum and was considered sufficiently reliable for the comparison of the worldviews of subjects from the high, middle and low-income groups.

3.3.1.3. Rating of the online questionnaire

The coding of the raw data from the online questionnaire was identical to that of the hard-copy questionnaire for all three sections (see Appendix D for an example of a rated online questionnaire). As stated previously, the only difference was that the questionnaire was pasted, submitted and returned online, and this required that subjects either type in their choice of options, or else indicate their selection by means of an asterix or any other symbol alongside the relevant option. In the example provided (Appendix D), it can be seen that income group and gender is not indicated on the online questionnaire, as this is already known prior to submission via e-mail to the subject concerned. In this case, the subject typed her responses to sections 3.1 and 3.2 directly onto the questionnaire and used an asterix to denote her lifestyle in section 3.3. In all cases, the recovered (completed) online questionnaire was printed and then endorsed with the subject's race (cultural group), gender and income group for statistical purposes and to meet the quotas as determined beforehand.

Appendix D is an example of an online questionnaire completed by a subject from the high-income group, a white female ('WF'), and the website address on the top of the sheet indicates that she is employed as a senior executive by the local government (Durban municipality). This information was known beforehand, as this method using an online survey was directed mostly at top managers in the private sector or government service who were otherwise not accessible, using name and e-mail lists provided by the company or municipal website. As stated previously, the rating process was identical to that applied to the hard-copy questionnaire with the exception that further discussion of the questions was not possible. In a few cases there was a brief exchange of e-mails when respondents were unsure of what was required.

During the assessment of section 3.3, *Lifestyle and living standards (LSM),* the subject indicated that she owned a house, a normal motor vehicle and household appliances, ate usually at home and only occasionally at food outlets and restaurants. She did not indicate any overseas travel or regular holiday excursions. The objectivity and fairness

of the rating system is highlighted by the fact that, in spite of her known high-income status, her lifestyle and LSM was assessed as 'average' and she was given a rating of ambivalent ('amb') for this section.

This process was carried forward to section 3.2 (*Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest),* in which the subject revealed a fully optimistic view of the security situation in the country by recording an optimistic response to all three statements, thus acquiring an overall rating of 'optimistic' (+) for this particular section.

This same rating process was applied to section 3.1, (*The relationship between high and low-income groups*), in which the subject indicated that she believed that wealthy people in South Africa do care about the poor, which also attracted an optimistic (+) rating. When the ratings of all three sections were summed, this subject was given a final assessment as having a 'generally optimistic' worldview (two optimistic ratings to one ambivalent [2/1A]), as a 'fully optimistic' rating was applied only in cases when all three sections were rated as optimistic (+).

Although the online questionnaires did not lend themselves to further investigation and discussion, the way in which they were completed often pointed to the possibility of a new underlying dynamic or sub-theme. For example, in this particular case (Appendix D), this subject, by responding positively to all three statements in section 3.2, revealed a fully optimistic view of the safety and security situation in South Africa. However, she is also a senior local government employee (director) and quite likely at the forefront of strike action and service delivery protests. For this reason, the printed online questionnaire was endorsed with the remark '*official position?'* [italics added] alongside the rating, as by this time, following in-depth interviews with a number of top police and municipal managers, a pattern was beginning to emerge suggesting that work position and role (visual perspective) could be influencing the completion of the questionnaire.

3.3.1.4. Thematic coding of the data from the interviews

In-depth interviews were held with eight high-income, four middle-income and eight low-income subjects (n=20). As stated earlier, the purpose of these interviews was to identify perceptions, thoughts and ideas which could provide a qualitative database for an interpretative analysis of the three themes and also clarify the results obtained during the survey. As shown previously, the questions posed were similar to those in the questionnaire but were open-ended to encourage introspection and discussion. An example of a completed interview sheet is provided as Appendix E. As can be seen, it is structured, but open-ended and contains questions matched to the three major themes selected for the study. It also shows the two additional questions (Q3 and Q5) that were included to broaden the scope of the investigation. As stated previously, the information provided by each subject was not recorded verbatim, but relevant points in respect of each theme extracted from the conversation and noted in the space provided alongside each question.

All interview sheets were individually critically evaluated and important points relating to each theme highlighted, as shown by the ticks in the example. The actual process of thematic coding involved isolating, categorising and organising specific 'bits', instances or patterns of subjects' thoughts and comments, as well as their actions (supported by researcher observations), into the three themes decided upon during the initial planning and design of the study (Terreblanche & Kelly, 2002, p.143). As stated earlier, the structure of the interview (using a standardised question sheet) had already simplified the initial coding of the data into the themes, and all that remained was for the data to be explored in detail and searched for finer nuances, new insights and associations. Specific attention was given to any new information provided in response to the additional questions three and five.

The data were then examined for recurring ideas, noticeable social dynamics and behavioural trends from which additional themes and sub-themes could be induced. For instance, in the example provided (Appendix E), which is that of a retired low-income white male ('WM') who works as a car guard, he contributes to a sub-theme of '*entitlement'* by admitting that the poor need to 'stand up' and be prepared to work. He

also draws attention to another emerging sub-theme, namely *'unemployment'*, by stating that he feels the private sector could be doing more to provide employment.

3.3.1.5. Coding of the observation sheets

As described previously, the observation sheets were completed unobtrusively either during or immediately after administering a questionnaire or conducting an in-depth interview. This can be seen by the somewhat disorganised scribbling of the field notes (see Appendix F for an example of a completed sheet). As can be seen, important observations with regard to subjects' comments, emerging patterns and non-verbal cues are mentioned in these short notes. These were extracted and categorised as new sub-themes, processing trends and social dynamics.

For example, in Appendix F, the notes in lines 1-3 and 10-12 were interpreted as suggesting a trend for high and middle income subjects to more readily engage in discussion than low-income subjects This had great relevance for the analysis on schema-driven versus data-driven information processing concluded later in the study. Another example of thematic coding relates to lines 5-8, which was an observation abstracted from a number of comments made on the economy by low-income subjects which suggests that they tend to focus on their immediate (basic) needs and not long-term requirements. This observation was grouped with other processing characteristics linked to specific income groups. Notes made in lines 4-6 of the sample observation sheet (Appendix F), refer to visible changes in the body language of some subjects when approached to participate in the survey. These were interpreted as suggesting a threat or discomfort and were coded in terms of a pattern of subject resistance which emerged during the study.

Another important dynamic was also identified in this way using participant observation. Lines 14-20 refer to a slight hesitation in responding to the statements on safety and security that was noticed during the survey and interviews with some high-ranking police officers, which suggested that an unseen variable may be at play. When

compared with the data obtained from the questionnaires, it was noted that some of these officers, as well as other senior municipal (local government) officials, had responded optimistically to all three options listed in section 3.2 (the safety and security situation in the country), in spite of being in the forefront of the strikes and service delivery protests). This phenomenon is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Finally, the observation sheet sometimes also acted as a diary of day-to-day attempts to complete the survey and interviews and the kind of problems experienced. In the given example (Appendix F), lines 22-24 describe attempts to gain access to an up-market gymnasium for the purposes of administering questionnaires and conducting face-to-face interviews with high-income patrons. As can be seen, the manager's negative response was recorded, coded and added to the discussion on subject resistance. All in all a total of five participant observation sheets were completed, with one (Appendix F), being provided as an example.

3.4. ANTICIPATED POSSIBLE OUTCOMES (WORLDVIEWS)

Previous research has already revealed differences in the perceptions of persons from different socio-economic groups in South Africa relating to the economy and environmental concerns (HSRC, 2002), as well as feelings of safety (Schonteich, 2001). In the light of this research, a number of different possible outcomes for this study were anticipated.

The first possible outcome was that the majority of high-income earners (over 50%) would select the options linked to a 'generally optimistic' view of the world and the country, resulting from '*rose-coloured'* [italics added] perceptions of a favourable social relationship with the poor, high-security business and home environments sheltering them from the unpleasant effects of crime, and an opulent lifestyle.

In line with this thinking, the worldview and view of the country held by the majority of low-income, unemployed and destitute members of the community could be generally

pessimistic, resulting from their daily experiences with social rejection, their vulnerability to crime and a lifestyle of poverty and squalor.

In terms of these two possible outcomes, the middle-income group could have produced a mixed bag of responses, having a 'middle-of-the-road' approach to the question of the social relationship between high and low-income groups, being less vulnerable to crime than the poor and being able to maintain a reasonable lifestyle. Their responses to the questionnaires and interviews should therefore suggest ambivalence or at least be spread evenly between optimism and pessimism.

Another possible outcome, and one which was more in line with the earlier HSRC study (2002), was that the majority of high-income earners could hold a generally pessimistic worldview due to negative perceptions of a declining social, environmental, economic and security situation in the country.

Conversely, the majority of the low-income group could have selected options suggesting a more optimistic worldview, having over time, come to accept the realities of the situation in the country. However, if this acceptance was due to the condition of '*learned helplessness'* [italics added], it would more likely lead to pessimism (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p. 94), which should then have revealed itself through other responses.

Recent developments such as the strikes and service-delivery protests do suggest that 'acceptance' is no longer the case and that the dynamics have changed. This introduced a final possible outcome in which subjects could have responded purely in their own self-interest. This would have had the effect that all subjects, whether from the high, middle or low-income group, would favour a mixed bag of responses, but if analysed carefully, these responses would clearly be in favour, or supportive of their own socioeconomic group. A tendency to select some options based on self-interest did occur, as revealed during the in-depth analysis of the data, but fortunately this did not affect the outcome of the study.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

4.1. THE DATA

The raw data from the survey took the form of coded responses to the standardised statements and questions posed in the three sections of the questionnaire. As a result of the phrasing and construction of the items, these responses represented subjects' subjective perceptions of the social, security and economic situation in the country. During the assessment process, these responses had been individually rated as optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent. And as previously shown, each completed questionnaire was also coded as representing a 'fully optimistic', 'generally optimistic', 'ambivalent', 'generally pessimistic', or fully pessimistic' worldview, and subsequently grouped in terms of income category. This enabled an easy comparison of the responses of the different income groups to be made.

The data from the questionnaires were complemented by additional qualitative information obtained from the interviews and personal observations which had been thematically coded into themes, sub-themes, processing patterns and social dynamics. Based on the constructivist research provided, it was accepted for the purposes of the study, that all data which had been collected, coded and evaluated, reflected the content of subjects' subjective perceptions, worldviews and internalised schemata.

4.2. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

4.2.1. Worldviews

4.2.1.1. High-income group

Only one subject (3%) revealed a fully optimistic worldview, whereas 17 (50 %), a generally optimistic worldview, eight (23.5%) an ambivalent worldview and eight

subjects (23.5%), a generally pessimistic view. No subjects in this income group chose those options corresponding to a fully pessimistic view of the world or the country. This outcome is recorded in Table 7 and diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.

Table 7: Number of subjects in high-income group (per worldview)

O	%	Gen. O	%	Amb	%	Gen. P	%	P	%
1	3	17	50	8	23.5	8	23.5	0	0

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n=34

Figure 1: Distribution of worldviews of high-income group on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum.
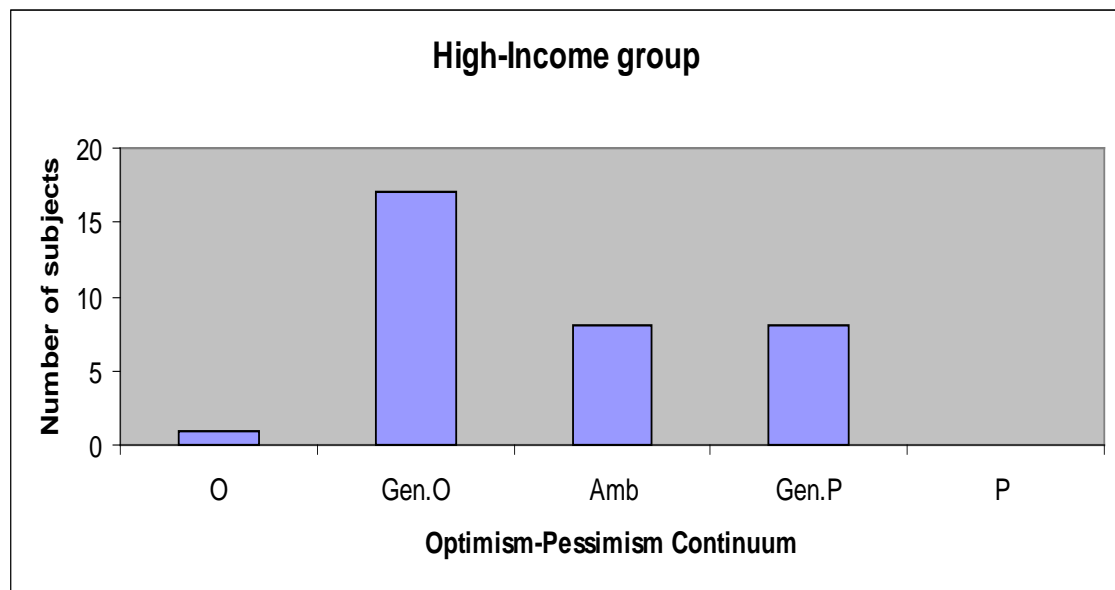
Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n= 34

As can be seen from Figure 1, the majority of high-income subjects (18 out of 34) (53%) chose those options which suggested either an optimistic or generally optimistic view of the current social, security and economic situation in South Africa.

4.2.1.2. Middle-income group

No subjects in this category selected options corresponding to a fully optimistic or fully pessimistic worldview. Six (18%) revealed a generally optimistic worldview, 10 (30%) an ambivalent view and 17 (51%) a generally pessimistic worldview. These results are listed in Table 8 and represented in Figure 2.

Table 8: Number of subjects in middle-income group (per worldview)

O	%	Gen. O	%	Amb	%	Gen. P	%	P	%
0	0	6	18	10	30	17	51	0	0

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n=33

Figure 2: Distribution of worldviews of middle-income group on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum.
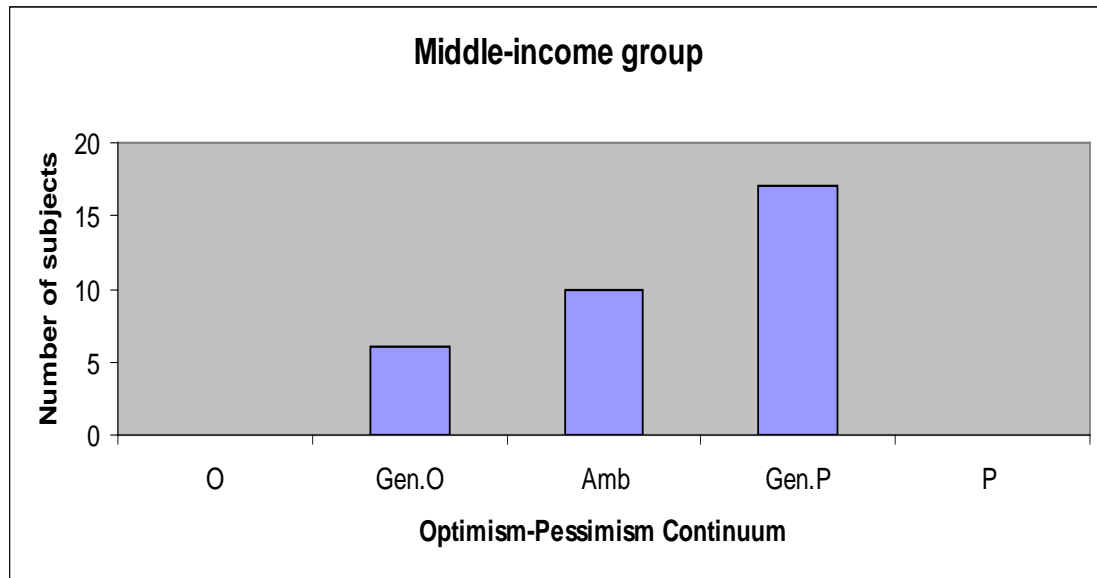
Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P=
        generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n=33

Figure 2 indicates that the majority of middle-income subjects exhibited a generally pessimistic worldview and view of the conditions in South Africa, which was contrary to the expected ambivalence from this group.

4.2.1.3. Low-income group

No subjects from the low-income group selected responses corresponding to a fully optimistic view of the world (worldview). Only three (9%) revealed a generally optimistic view, eight (24 %) an ambivalent view and the majority of low-income subjects interviewed (22) (67%), chose options suggesting either a fully pessimistic (4) (12%) or generally pessimistic worldview (18) (55%). See Table 9 and Figure 3 in this regard.

Table 9: Number of subjects in low-income group (per worldview)

O	%	Gen. O	%	Amb	%	Gen. P	%	P	%
0	0	3	9	8	24	18	55	4	12

_____

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P=
        generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n=33

_____

**Figure 3: Distribution of worldviews of low-income group on the Optimism-
          Pessimism Continuum.**
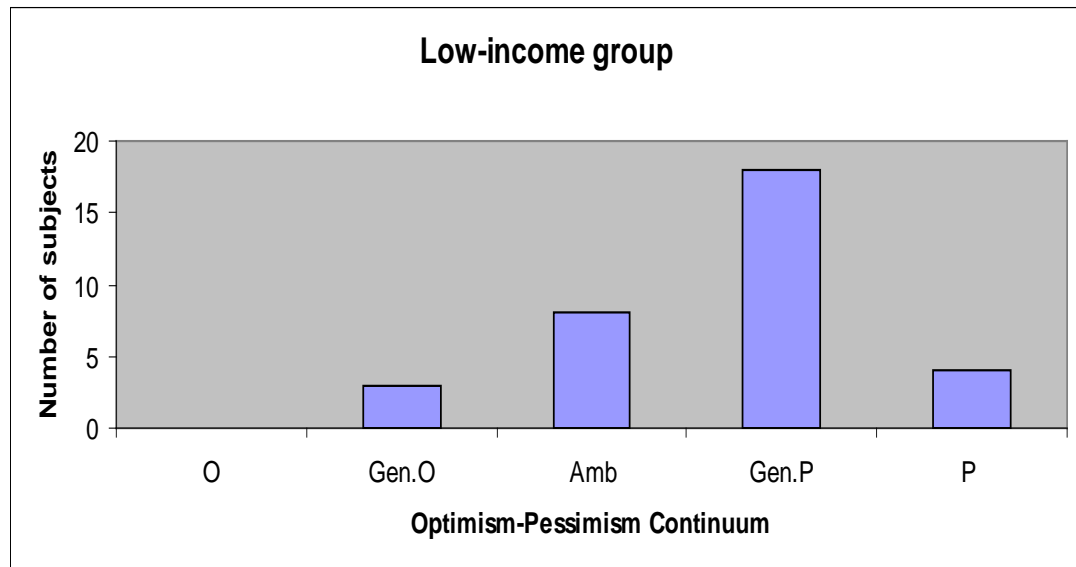
Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P=
        generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
Total sample n = 33

As can be seen on the bar graph, the overwhelming majority of low-income subjects
(67%) chose those options which suggested either a pessimistic or generally
pessimistic worldview and view of the current social, security and economic situation in
South Africa. This confirms the earlier research that the majority of persons at the
bottom of the LSM scale (LSM 1-2) are generally pessimistic about the economy
(HRSC, 2002, p.98).

The results of the rating of subjects' responses to the three items in section 3.1 of the
questionnaire are indicated below. They were rated separately as only statement 3.1.1
was considered for the purposes of measuring subjects' worldviews.

4.2.2. Section 3.1: Relationship between high and low-income groups

4.2.2.1. Statement 3.1.1: Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor (yes/no)

During the survey, 13 out of 34 high-income subjects (38%) answered in the affirmative to statement 3.1.1, five (15%) were ambivalent and the remaining 16 (47%) answered in the negative. Most middle-income subjects interviewed (21 out of 33) (64%), felt that the wealthy do not really care for the poor, with six (18%) being ambivalent on the issue and only a further six (18%) believing that they do. The most important result in this section was the emphatic 'no' recorded by most low-income subjects who completed the questionnaire (30 out of 33) (91%), with only one subject indicating ambivalence (3%) and the remaining two (6%) believing that they do care. These results have been summarised and recorded in Table 10 for comparison.

Table 10: Responses of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups to statement 3.1.1. 'Wealthy people in S.A care about the poor'

	High-income n	%	Middle-income n	%	Low-income n	%
Yes	13	38	6	18	2	6
No	16	47	21	64	30	91
Amb	5	15	6	18	1	3
	Group n =34		Group n =33		Group n= 33	

Note. Amb = ambivalent.
Total sample n=100

4.2.2.2. Statement 3.1.2: All unemployed people should be given grants (yes/no)

The results relating to this statement showed that only eight (24%) of the high-income subjects fully supported unconditional grants for unemployed persons, whilst 22 (65%) were opposed and four (11%) ambivalent on the issue. With regard to the middle-income group, eight (24%) were fully supportive of the idea, two ambivalent (6%) and 23 (70%) also not in favour of unconditional grants. A number of high and middle-income subjects did support the idea of 'conditional' grants and this will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

In contrast to the other groups, the overwhelming majority (25 out of 33) (76%) of low-income subjects were fully in favour of unconditional grants for unemployed persons, with only five (15%) against and three (9%) expressing ambivalence at the suggestion. These results are summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Responses of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups to statement 3.1.2. 'All unemployed people should be given grants'

	High-income n	%	Middle-income n	%	Low-income n	%
Yes	8	24	8	24	25	76
No	22	65	23	70	5	15
Amb	4	11	2	6	3	9
Group n =34			Group n =33		Group n= 33	

Note. Amb = ambivalent.
Total sample n=100

4.2.2.3. Statement 3.1.3: Poor people only steal to survive (yes/no)

The results revealed that only four high-income subjects (12%) responded with a definite 'yes' to this statement, with three (9%) being ambivalent and by far the majority (27 out of 34) (79%), recording a negative response. With regard to the middle-income group, 16 subjects (48%) supported the statement, with two (6%) ambivalent and 15 (45%) providing a 'no' response. Contrasting with this were the majority of low-income subjects who supported the idea (23 out of 33) (70%), with only two being ambivalent (6%), and eight (24%) not in agreement with the statement. These results have also been summarised and recorded in Table 12.

Table 12: Responses of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups to statement 3.1.3. 'Poor people only steal to survive'

	High-income n	%	Middle-income n	%	Low-income n	%
Yes	4	12	16	48	23	70
No	27	79	15	45	8	24
Amb	3	9	2	6	2	6
	Group n=34		Group n =33		Group n= 33	

Note. Amb = ambivalent.
Total sample n=100

4.2.3. Section 3.2 Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

Due to its relevance to the study in confirming differences in *feelings of safety* (emphasis added] between the income-groups (Schonteich, 2001), section 3.2 was assessed independently. As shown in the method section, the assessment of 'fully optimistic' was indicated by a positive (optimistic) response to all three statements. Conversely a 'fully pessimistic' assessment required a negative (pessimistic) response

to all three, while assessment in terms of the other categories depended on the sum of the ratings (as optimistic, pessimistic or ambivalent) as applied to each statement.

The results of the survey revealed that nine high-income subjects (26%), six middle-income (18%) and only two low-income subjects (6%) recorded a fully optimistic response to section 3.2 of the questionnaire. A 'generally optimistic' view was allocated to eight high-income (24%), two middle-income (6%) and 10 low-income subjects (30%). With regards to 'ambivalence', eight high-income (24%), seven middle-income (21%) and only one low-income subject (3%) were recorded. The 'generally pessimistic' figures were as follows: high-income group (seven) (21%), middle-income subjects (13) (39%) and five low-income group subjects (15%). Finally, a fully pessimistic rating for section 3.2 was given to only two high-income subjects (6%), five middle-income (15%) and 15 low-income subjects (45%).

These figures are tabulated in Table 13.

Table 13: Responses of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups to section 3.2. of the questionnaire: Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

	High-income n	%	Middle-income n	%	Low-income n	%
0	9	26	6	18	2	6
Gen O	8	24	2	6	10	30
Amb	8	24	7	21	1	3
Gen. P	7	21	13	39	5	15
P	2	6	5	15	15	45

Group sample n=34   Group sample n =33   Group sample n= 33

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic

Total sample n=100

_____

It can be clearly seen from the table that middle and low-income subjects had a far more pessimistic view of the safety and security situation in the country than the high-income group.

4.2.4. Section 3.3: Lifestyle and living standards (LSM) audit

Table 14: Housing of subjects from high, middle and low- income groups

_____

Criteria	High-income n	Middle-income n	Low-income n
House/flat owner	33	27	11
Renting house/flat	1	5	4
Room or granny flat	0	1	12
Live wherever possible	0	0	6
Other	0	0	0

_____

Total sample n= 100

_____

Table 15: Property ownership of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups

_____

Criteria	High-income n	Middle-income n	Low-income n
Luxury vehicle	29	1	0

Normal vehicle	5	24	4
Television	34	32	20
Stove and fridge	34	33	22
Nothing	0	0	8

Note: There is an overlap of figures in this table. Subjects could own a vehicle as well as a
television, stove and fridge

Total sample n= 100

Table 16: Dining habits of subjects from high, middle and low-income groups

Criteria	High-income n	Middle-income n	Low-income n
Eat in street /trash cans	0	0	2
Eat at home only	3	11	25
Eat at home & outlets	23	20	5
Only the best restaurants	8	2	1

Total sample n= 100

**Table 17: Travel and free time activities of subjects from high, middle and
low-income groups**

Criteria	High-income n	Middle-income n	Low-income n
Travel internationally	16	0	1
Regular holidays only	10	14	2
Watch TV only	7	18	16

(No TV) visit family & friends	1	1	11
Nothing to do	0	0	3

_____

Note: The lifestyle categories in Table 17have been listed in descending order. In other words, only the highest lifestyle option provided by each subject relating to travel and free time has been tabulated.

Total sample n= 100

_____

In general, the results show that subjects reported a lifestyle, property and asset ownership and living conditions (LSM) more or less in line with their income group. There were a few cases which were exceptions, one a low-income blue-collar worker with rich parents who take her on occasion to only the best restaurants, the second, a low-income evangelist whose overseas trips are sponsored by his organisation, and finally, two middle-income subjects, one a politician (city councillor) and the other, a well-known local radio personality, who both stated that they eat only in the best restaurants. This will be discussed further during the analysis in Chapter 5.

4.3. RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC CODING OF QUALITATIVE DATA

During the coding process, the large amount of qualitative data collected from the surveys, interviews and personal observations was summarised, integrated and coded into themes, sub-themes, processing trends and social phenomena (dynamics).

For example, when analysing the data relating to the theme of 'The relationship between high and low-income groups', the power of schemata in governing social perceptions became apparent, and a sub-theme, '*Perceived versus actual relationship'*, was induced for further analysis. It was also observed that subjects tended to respond to questions relating to this relationship in their own self or group interest. And as a result, another sub-theme of '*Group identity'* was introduced. Finally, due to the frequency with which person and role schemata had been activated (blatant stereotyping), a third sub-theme of '*Group stereotypes'* was added to this theme.

When examining the data relating to the theme of 'Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest', a number of cases of *schema-triggered affect* and *flashbulb memories* were noted, which suggested the activation of emotion (or emotional) schemata. In order to allow for a more in-depth examination and analysis, sub-themes relating to these two interesting phenomena were also added to the main theme.

With regard to the theme 'Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)', the many responses and comments recorded during the survey and interviews relating to the low-income group having a sense of entitlement, provided sufficient evidence for a more-in-depth evaluation of the data within a separate sub-theme. The frequent references to a lack of employment opportunities during the survey and interviews, as well as visible changes in affect, voice tone and body language occurring during discussions on this issue with the low-income group, also prompted the inclusion of a sub-theme *'unemployment'*.

Finally, during the intensive examination and evaluation of the data, the powerful role of squalid and desperate living conditions in shaping perceptions became apparent, and an additional theme 'The role of poverty in social unrest and violence in South Africa', was induced. This was complemented by a sub-theme specifically examining the role of the environment in crime and violence. This additional theme (and sub-theme) created the opportunity for a deeper insight into the psyche of persons from impoverished communities and suggested that the psychological effects of poverty may themselves be important factors underlying the current strikes and service delivery protests.

Wherever possible, relevant individual cases were extracted from the data and linked to the main themes or sub-themes. These cases provided the rich 'new dimension' of deeply personal thoughts, feelings and subjective experiences, as recommended for interpretative research by Kelly (2002, p. 392), and also the opportunity for detailed explanations in terms of schema activation.

In addition to this, a few distinct trends relating to cognitive processing were also highlighted for further examination. Differences in the type, depth and speed of

processing had been noted between income groups, which could also be explained by schema theory. And an interesting phenomenon relating to the activation of *event* schemata, which resulted in subjects' responses being influenced by a particular visual perspective based on their work role or position (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.169), was identified from the results of the survey and personal observation. These were all included in the list for further analysis.

A number of important social dynamics had also been noted during the data-collection process, including subject resistance, the role of self-esteem and efficacy in shaping subjects' responses and culturally-based concerns and fears. These were also included for further examination and analysis. The main themes of the study, induced sub-themes, identified trends in cognitive processing and social dynamics are all listed in Table 18 and Table 19 and more fully discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 18: Themes and sub-themes identified for this study

_____

Theme   Description

 _____

Theme 1: The relationship between high and low-income groups

Sub-themes: Perceived versus actual relationship
                Group identity
                Group stereotypes

Theme 2: Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

Sub-themes: Schema-triggered affect
                 Flashbulb memories

Theme 3: Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)

Sub-themes: Entitlement
                Unemployment

**Theme 4: The role of poverty in social unrest and violence in
             South Africa**

Sub-theme: The role of the environment in crime and violence

_____

Table 19: Trends and social dynamics identified during the data collection process

_____

Cognitive processing
          Depth of processing
          Processing speed
          Visual perspective due to work role or position
          Visual and propositional processing

Social dynamics
          Subject resistance
          The role of self-esteem and efficacy
          Cultural fears

_____

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. A SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Terreblanche and Kelly (2002, p.140) argue that there are many different analytic traditions which fall under the umbrella of a broad interpretative analysis. In line with this thinking, and to improve the validity and reliability of the study, quantifiable measurement and analysis were combined with a phenomenological approach and interpretative analysis in a process of method triangulation. This resulted in a hypothesis relating to the social phenomenon of perceptions of South Africa differing according to income group (HSRC, 2002; Schonteich, 2001) being generated and investigated using a survey, and the findings subsequently integrated with qualitative data from a series of in-depth interviews, as well as personal observations.

The survey was aimed at measuring subjective perceptions of the social, security and economic situation in the country as reflected in the worldviews of subjects. And the interviews and techniques of participant observation provided information on the '*internal reality of subjective experience'* [italics added] (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 2002, p.6). In this regard, three predetermined themes, namely 'The relationship between high and low-income groups', 'Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest and 'Lifestyles and living standards (LSM)' were initially investigated. These were later supplemented by a fourth theme induced from the data, 'The role of poverty in social unrest and violence in South Africa'.

5.2. A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

5.2.1. Analysis of the survey results (worldviews)

As shown in Chapter 4, the results from the assessment and rating of the completed questionnaires revealed that 18 out of 34 high-income subjects selected options

corresponding to either a fully or generally optimistic worldview (1 and 17 respectively). In contrast with this, six middle-income subjects and only three low-income subjects revealed a generally optimistic view. In fact, there were no middle or low-income subjects who presented a fully optimistic worldview at all.

The results also showed that only eight high-income subjects held a pessimistic or generally pessimistic view of the situation in the country. This was much less than the 17 middle-income subjects who held such a view, and contrasted dramatically with the 22 low-income subjects whose responses suggested a fully or generally pessimistic worldview (4 and 18 respectively). Although all groups revealed some degree of ambivalence when it came to their worldviews, as predicted earlier, an ambivalent worldview was highest amongst the middle-income group (10 subjects, as opposed to eight for the low-income group and eight for the high-income group).

A comparison of the distribution of these worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum shown in Table 20 and Figure 4 reveals the extent of these differences.

Table 20: Comparison of worldviews of different income groups

_____

Groups	O	Gen. O	Amb	Gen. P	P
	n	n	n	n	n

_____

Groups	O	Gen. O	Amb	Gen. P	P
High-income	1	17	8	8	0
Middle-income	0	6	10	17	0
Low-income	0	3	8	18	4

_____

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic
High-income n= 34, Middle-income n= 33, Low-income n=33

Total sample n= 100

Figure 4: Distribution of worldviews per income group on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum.
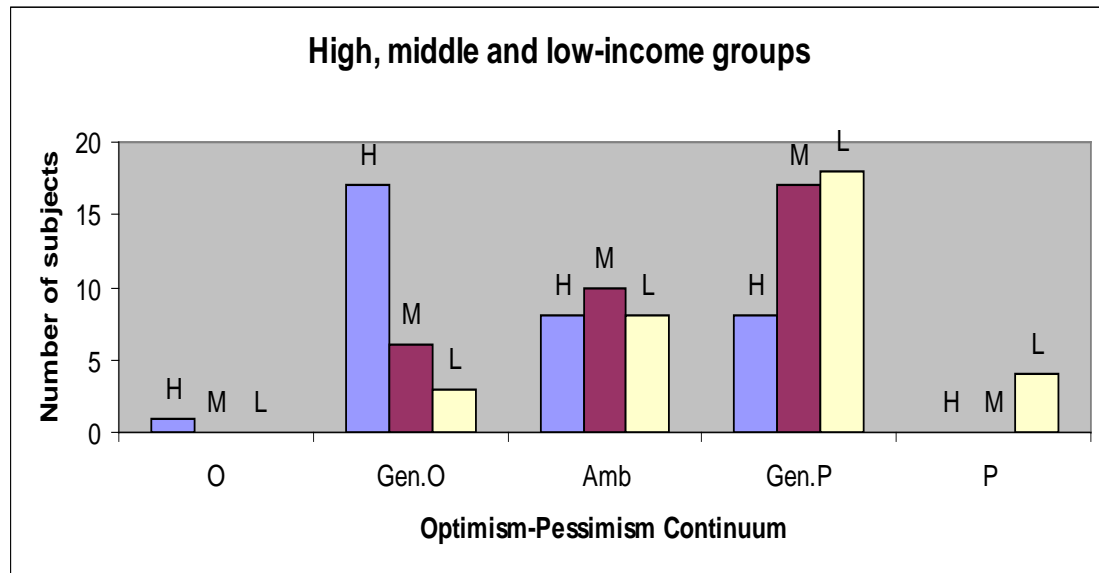
High, middle and low-income groups

Note. O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P= generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic

Legend. H= high-income group, M= middle-income group, L= low-income group.

Total sample n = 100

This distribution of worldviews on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum reveal that there are marked differences in the responses of subjects from the high, middle and low-income groups to the statements and questions contained in the survey. The graph also shows that the perceptions of the country of the high-income subjects interviewed were substantially more positive than the other two groups.

If the results are generalised to the entire population and measured in terms of an optimistic versus a pessimistic outlook, they suggest that the wealthy and the poor in this country have different subjective perceptions of the current social, security and economic situation in the country based on largely opposing worldviews. Furthermore, these perceptions and worldviews differ to the extent that one could justifiably say that the two groups live in '*different worlds'* of phenomenological experience, thus validating the original hypothesis.

5.2.2. Interpretative analysis of the results.

Terreblanche and Kelly (2002) explain the interpretative method of research as focussing on human feelings and experiences. Qualitative research techniques, such as interviews and participant observation, were therefore the most suitable for measuring the intricacies of language and expression required for the phenomenological approach also applied in this study, and also to reveal schema activation and differences in schematic content between the income groups (Terreblanche & Kelly, 2002. p.123).

What was therefore of critical importance for this interpretative analysis, was the socio-historical and linguistic context of the phenomena of group differences in perceptions, in other words, the current real-life social, security and economic situation in South Africa. Although qualitative data are not as precise as statistical data, a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and context of this social phenomenon, operating within the framework of the three chosen themes, provided a rich source of information for determining schema activation and content (Terreblanche & Kelly 2002.) In this regard, a detailed analysis of each theme, sub-theme, trend, processing pattern, and social dynamic identified from the results in Chapter 4, was concluded.

5.2.2.1. The relationship between high and low-income groups

Subjects' responses to questions 3.1.1., 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 of the questionnaire provided a solid basis for an interpretative analysis of the social relationship between high and low-income groups in the country. These data were complemented by answers provided to Question 1 during the in-depth interviews, 'How would you describe your views on the different people in the country?' and also supplemented by comments and recorded observations of changes in body language and mood recovered from the observation sheets. During the assessment of the questionnaires, it had been noted that 38% of high-income subjects answered in the affirmative to statement 3.1.1 'Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor'. Although the sample may not be fully representative of the general population, these results do suggest that a significant number of high-

income persons in SA may have a positive perception of themselves when it comes to pro-social behaviour towards the poor and their social relationship with the low-income group in general.

This observation attracted some support during the interviews and in one specific case, a well-known (high-income) chief executive officer (C.E.O) of a major SA company, in response to the question relating to the relationship between high and low-income groups, stated with conviction that, in spite of all the labour and protest problems in the country, he still believed that there was goodwill between the different socio-economic groups. This response from an executive manager suggested a level of optimism which seemed slightly out of touch with the views of the low-income (blue collar) workers recorded in the survey and interviews and prompted further analysis. This interview had been conducted telephonically, with the result that personal observations were limited to his choice of words, emphasis and voice tone. As it turned out, this subject's responses to the questions in the interview were extremely well thought-out and presented, with no indication of haste or sudden emotional shifts.

In terms of previous research, his optimistic view of the relationship between high and low-income groups would have been due to pre-existing event and context schemata specifically abstracted from his positive past social and work experiences (Neisser, 1976). The cueing of these schemata by the question relating to relationships would have resulted in the selective recall of situations in which there were favourable interactions between the income groups in his own company, which he subsequently generalised to other companies and to all high and low-income persons. This kind of generalisation or inference is typical of schema activation (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.167).

A second reason for his optimism may be the content of his self-schema. Research has shown that 'efficacy' (as included in a positive self-concept), results in a more optimistic view of any situation (Peterson & Bossio, 1991). And being an extremely well-known, competent and respected businessman, the optimism reflected in his views could be linked to the activation of *word-strings* (Anderson, 1978) reflecting this self-efficacy

within his self-schema, which also forms part of his self-concept (Nishida, 1999, p.758).

The activation of this positive self-schema would once again guide his cognitive processes towards the selective recall of thoughts, perceptions and memories of exclusively favourable social interactions between management and workers in his company, to the extent of ignoring others (including cases in the broader social environment), which are incongruent (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

The activation and content of the schemata of other high-income subjects could have been similar to that shown in this case, resulting in the optimistic view of the relationship between the two groups displayed by quite a significant number (38%) of the subjects. However, as shown by the results, not all high-income subjects believed that such a favourable relationship existed. In fact, some mentioned that an elite upper-class was forming in the country which was only concerned with '*lining their own pockets'* [italics added]. This scepticism is supported by Mbeki (2009), who points to the existence of a high-income elite composed of political and business leaders in the country.

During further discussions, other high-income subjects admitted that there was a large gap in income between rich and poor and believed that this was leading to inter-group hostility. This is also supported by recent research which shows that it was the contrast between the opulence of the elite and the suffering of impoverished masses which led to perceptions of corruption and resulting civil violence in other African countries (Ikejiaku, 2009a).

During the analysis, the question arose as to whether there was any evidence which supported the belief in a favourable social relationship between the two groups held by these high-income subjects, or whether it was merely a perception. This led to the induction and examination of a sub-theme entitled '*Perceived versus actual relationship'.* Based on the research provided, inferences or conclusions based on schematic processing may not always be accurate (Anderson, 1978; Fiske & Taylor, 1984). And in this case, could lead to overly-optimistic perceptions. Bearing in mind that

many high-income individuals are government leaders and company executives, any misperceptions in this regard could affect judgments relating to the mood of impoverished community members and employees when it comes to service delivery protests and wage negotiations.

With regard to prosocial (caring) behaviour and empathy with the low-income group, the results of the survey showed that only 24% of high-income subjects fully supported unconditional grants for unemployed persons. And this could also have been due more to *pragmatism,* as a number commented that grants may be a means of reducing crime. However, in all fairness, a number did state that they would support conditional grants in deserving cases, and that there needs to be greater involvement in the upliftment of disadvantaged communities, but directed more towards empowerment and not simply handouts.

During the interviews, a few high-income executives did express genuine empathy and concern for the welfare of workers. In this regard, there are two cases worth mentioning. The first is that of the white C.E.O discussed earlier, who described projects he had initiated which involved both management and workers. One was 'immersion', in which top management was exposed to the kinds of problems experienced by blue-collar workers in the townships in order to develop empathy. He was sincere in his belief that this project, as well as others, had improved relationships within his company. The second case involved a top (black) executive (also from a major company) who mentioned in the interview that he owned two farms where he was supporting indigent families and implementing programmes of upliftment. His tone of voice suggested also genuine empathy and concern for the empowerment of less-privileged communities.

With regard to the views of middle-income group on this issue, the results showed that most subjects surveyed (64%) felt that the wealthy do not really care for the poor, who deserve a better deal. During the interviews a number stated that a change in the attitude of government and company managers was required, away from self-interest to

a more empathetic and understanding approach towards the poor. As a result, it was concluded that in general, middle-income subjects had a less-than-positive view of the relationship between high and low-income groups and a more favourable approach to the poor.

Insofar as the low-income group was concerned, the overwhelming majority (91%) did not support the statement that the wealthy cared for the poor. In fact, many of their responses were accompanied by sudden changes in body language, facial expression and tone of voice, which suggested strong emotions. This was most likely due to the cueing and activation of event, context and emotion schemata relating to negative past experiences with the high-income group.

For example, in one particular case (interview), a low-income subject (a homeless white man), expressed strong feelings of anger when asked about his views on the high-income group ('the wealthy'). His verbal response was also noticeably quick, in which he accused them of '*exploiting*' the poor [italics added]. Further questioning revealed that this response was related to an incident where he had allegedly not been paid by a business owner for work done, suggesting the activation of an event schema with links to powerful emotion schemata. In this case, the phrase 'wealthy people' had acted as a cue to activate this event schema, as well as a (propositional) person schema relating to this subject's past employer, in which he is categorised as 'exploitative'. Having links to other schemata within his associative network (Bower & Cohen, 1982), this person schema has been extended to include the entire high-income group, now categorised and stereotyped as having an exploitative trait.

What was particularly interesting about this interview were the powerful emotions triggered by the painful memory of this one event. In terms of Fiske's research (1982), this was clearly a case of *schema-triggered affect,* which sped up the subject's cognitive processing (Fiske, 1982), resulting in the sudden and rapid response to the question.

Another highly relevant case was that of an unemployed male subject whose completed questionnaire indicated a fully pessimistic perception of the world and the situation in the country. This subject became intensely angry when questioned on the relationship between high and low-income groups, his answers being immediate and abrupt and most unfavourable towards the high-income group and society in general ('*they don't care'*). Subsequent questioning revealed that in the last few months living on the streets, he had been mugged, robbed and stabbed and claimed to have received no support from the social or justice system.

This subject's prior traumatic experiences with crime have been assimilated into his organised knowledge structure in a variety of schemata (Bower & Cohen, 1982). His perceptual schemata most likely contain powerful visual representations of these incidents (Anderson, 1978; Neisser, 1976), have strong affective components and would be easily cued by any questions relating to his past. When questioned on the category of 'wealthy people', his person and role schemata were cued, activated and primed the selective recall of negative memories of past humiliation and rejection he experienced from (high-income) people in authority when trying to access support, such as doctors, magistrates and senior police officials (Bower & Cohen, 1982; Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Nishida, 1999). This selective processing resulted in his stereotyping of all high-income persons as 'uncaring' (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

However, schemata are also linked via an associative network (Kelly, 1991), and the powerful affective response which accompanied his answers could only have come from the activation of those perceptual, event and emotion schemata directly related to the attacks, resulting in an immediate switch from 'people' to the incidents themselves. The activation of these schemata resulted in *schema-triggered affect* (the sudden and intense emotional reaction) (Fiske, 1982).

The anger he directed at society and the world itself, suggests that these experiences with social rejection and violence have led to the formation of 'scripts' (event schemata), containing negative propositions which became '*rules'* governing his thoughts and

actions (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Examples of such propositions would be, '*The world is unfriendly and dangerous'* and *'No-one can be trusted'.* As shown by Goldstein (2005), these propositions would not necessarily be true for all persons. However, to this particular subject they represent reality and would explain his pessimistic responses.

On an even deeper level, his belief that 'no-one cares' also suggests that he may also have assimilated similar propositions linked to the role of a *victim* into his self-schema. This case therefore highlights the effects of debilitating living conditions involving chronic exposure to crime, violence, poverty and squalor, on one's thinking, cognitive processing, worldview and perceptions of the country.

In conclusion, it appears that a significant number of subjects from the high-income group truly *believe* [emphasis added] that a favourable relationship with the low-income group exists, but according to evidence from the survey and interviews, this could be just an overly-optimistic perception, and one which is certainly not shared by either the middle or the low-income group. As previously shown, this optimism could be linked to their worldviews, a positive self-concept based on self-efficacy and success (Peterson & Bossio, 1991), or as Baumeister (1995) suggests, a strategy for maintaining self-esteem or reducing anxiety about the true state of affairs (p.77). The latter possibility was mentioned during an interview in which an evangelist expressed his belief that some rich people may merely be acting out and wearing a mask of altruism to appease the poor, or to bolster their own self-esteem.

During the analysis, a noticeable trend for both high and low-income subjects to select those options which were in support of their own socioeconomic group, or showed them in a positive light, led to the induction of a second sub-theme, that of '*Group identity'.*

As seen previously, a reasonably high percentage (38%) of high-income subjects believed that wealthy people care for the poor, which could be seen as a positive validation of their own group. Although the low-income group had an overwhelmingly negative response to the same statement, this could also be interpreted as being in

their own, or group interest. Believing that the wealthy do not care enables them to '*cry foul'* [emphasis added] and increases the legitimacy of their demands for a better deal.

In addition to this, the overwhelming majority (76%) of low-income subjects were in favour of unconditional grants, suggesting that these subjects identified with the unemployed and responded in the interest of the (low-income) group. Similarly, a large majority of low-income subjects (70%) also responded positively to the statement 'poor people only steal to survive', once again suggesting an identification with poverty-stricken communities, which translated into an empathetic response.

During the interviews, most low-income subjects stressed the need for upliftment and a better life for the poor, even those who were not themselves destitute. A relevant case in question was the evangelist previously mentioned, who although highly-educated, worked for a non-governmental missionary organisation and subsequently belonged to the low-income group. From his words and empathetic tone of voice, it was clear that he identified strongly with this group.

This can be explained in terms of schema activation as perceptual, event and context schemata containing information on the living conditions and experiences of the poor, (supported by emotion schemata relating to feelings of compassion), shaping his thinking and responses (Kelly, 1991, p.7). It is also probable that higher spiritual values, as well as his specific missionary role, have been incorporated into his self and role schemata in a propositional form, directing his actions towards an identification with the poor and needy (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

This explanation could also apply to the other subjects who expressed support for the less-fortunate. For instance, in another case, a middle-income local politician (city councillor), contrary to expectations, fully identified with his constituents from the low-income group. His office was extremely modest, being situated in the middle of a poor area, and the tone of the phone calls taking place during the course of the interview, revealed genuine concern and even indignation at the kind of treatment being received

by his constituents. As in the case of the evangelist, this subject had also internalised his role of representative (and protector) of the low-income group and most likely had a *script* (event schema) governing his empathetic approach and altruistic behaviour.

An analysis of the data revealed many cases of blatant stereotyping. This led to the inclusion and examination of another sub-theme, that of '*Group stereotypes'*.

During the survey and interviews, a number of low-income subjects had stereotyped the high-income group as selfish and unfeeling, some even describing them as '*greedy'* and '*uncaring'* [italics added]. These sentiments were echoed by some middle-income subjects, including a local politician (city councillor) who stated that, in his experience, most high-income people do not care enough.

Stereotyping of the low-income group also occurred, with several subjects from both the middle and high-income groups commented that 'the poor' (as a group) have a sense of entitlement and are constantly looking for handouts.

According to constructivist research, stereotyping is most likely to occur as the result of the activation of person and role schemata containing prejudice and bias, which leads to selective processing and misperceptions (Bless *et al.*, 2004; Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

The effects of these misperceptions were highlighted in a case involving a middle-income female teacher, who commented that the stereotypical view that all low-income (poor) people are '*previously disadvantaged',* is resulting in the real issues relating to poverty not being addressed. This view is also supported by Mbeki (2009, p.69). As a teacher, this subject (correctly) pointed to a low level of education as one of the main reasons for poverty, a fact that has been confirmed by research (Unisa, 2010; Van Aardt & Coetzee, 2010).

5.2.2.2. Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest

The results of the assessment of section 3.2 of the questionnaire showed that the high-income group had a far more optimistic view of the safety and security situation than the middle and low-income groups. This could be due to the fact that the high-income group is comparatively insulated from the effects of violent crime, which is lowest in affluent areas (Schonteich, 2001). These results were supported by comments recorded during the survey and interviews, which showed that although some had concerns and fears about the future, in general, they felt the safest and were cautiously optimistic that the situation could be brought under control. A number citied the security surrounding the Soccer World Cup as an example of the potential to control crime. And although a few admitted to being victims of crime, observations of their voice tone and body language suggested that, with the exception of a few severe cases involving assaults or hijackings, most had not been seriously affected. It is also possible that, as a result of their income, they have more access to support mechanisms such as psychotherapy.

An unexpected outcome of the assessment of section 3.2 was the pessimistic view held by many middle-income subjects, in which 39% were rated as having a generally pessimistic and 15% a fully pessimistic view of the security situation (total 54%). This was contrary to the expected ambivalence. During the surveys and interviews, most subjects from the middle-income group felt that there has been no real improvement in security in the last few years, especially with regard to petty crime such as theft and housebreaking to which they are the most susceptible. Incidences of governmental corruption were viewed as quite serious by this group and many supported a call for a more realistic view of the crime situation by the government. In one case, a middle-income male teacher cautioned that the denial of the high crime rate in South Africa by authorities was an obstacle to reducing crime.

Most middle-income subjects agreed that the crime rate has led to increased feelings of anxiety and insecurity. This was corroborated during an interview with a specialist psychiatrist who stated that she has noted an increase in anxiety and stress levels over the past few years. A number of middle-income subjects also expressed a hope for an improvement in security based on the successes of the Soccer World Cup.

The results from the assessment of section 3.2 showed that the majority of low-income subjects held a pessimistic view of the security situation in the country. In this regard, 45% held a fully pessimistic view and 15% a generally pessimistic view (total 60%). This suggests that the low-income group feels less safe than the other two groups.

During the survey and interviews, many low-income subjects admitted to being either direct or indirect victims of violent crime such as assaults, muggings, robberies and stabbings and believed that the security situation was getting worse. Visible affect (anxiety and fear) was also very apparent in these cases. Research has shown a strong link between violence and stress (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.135). From these results and personal observations, as well as the individual cases presented in this study, it becomes clear that traumatic experiences with crime can seriously affect a victim's perceptions and worldview. This seems particularly true of the low-income group, which generally has less coping skills or access to therapy (Coleman *et al.*,1984. p.134). There was also some criticism of the police and justice system, which is understandable in the light of this group's lack of access to resources, especially in rural areas. As with the high and middle-income groups, a glimmer of hope was expressed in line with the success of the security at the World Cup.

In a number of interviews in which subjects admitted to being victims or witnesses to serious crime, schema-triggered affect was clearly visible. This was often accompanied by a detailed recall and vivid description of the traumatic event. This led to the addition of two sub-themes, *Schema-triggered affect and Flashbulb memories,* for further analysis.

Schema-triggered affect was most visible among subjects from the low-income group, but also manifested itself to a degree in the other two socioeconomic groups. During one particular interview, schema-triggered affect resulted in an uncharacteristic and sudden, unexpected response (a very 'hard line' approach to crime), by a high-income company owner who had witnessed his neighbour being hijacked and assaulted. This was accompanied by an immediate change in his body tension, facial expression and

tone of voice, all suggesting intense anger. As in the previous case of the unemployed young man, this traumatic experience has been assimilated into his perceptual and context schemata which were cued by Q3 of the interview, 'recent experiences that have changed your view of the country'. The powerful visual memory of this incident, when selectively recalled, resulted in schema-triggered affect, producing an *automatic* and intense emotional reaction (Bower & Cohen, 1982, p.302; Fiske, 1982). Once again, this case supports the argument for one's worldview being affected by traumatic events, as this subject mentioned that this one event had changed his whole perception of safety and security in the country.

The homeless man interviewed earlier was once again another relevant case for schema-triggered affect. During his interview, which was characterised by frequent body movements and changes to his tone of voice suggesting affective responses such as fear and anxiety (later confirmed during questioning), he stated that he had been robbed and mugged a number of times. He was also able to provide vivid and highly emotive descriptions of these assaults by attackers, also suggesting the activation of flashbulb memories. As in the first case, this could be attributed to the activation of perceptual and emotion schemata, a resulting selective recall of images relating to these incidents, and schema-triggered affect.

Further evidence of flashbulb memories also emerged from the survey. In a number of cases, fear was openly displayed by elderly low-income subjects who were previously victims of violent crime and they were able to construct vivid and highly detailed images of the event and reported recurring memories of seeing their attackers approaching. These images would have been stored visually in perceptual schemata (Anderson, 1978; Neisser, 1976), have links to emotion schemata, and be cued by questions relating to safety and security, resulting in schema-triggered affect (fear).

With the majority of population being composed of middle and low-income persons (Unisa, 2010), these results, coupled with existing research (Schonteich, 2001), suggest that most people in South Africa do not feel safe at this time. And second, that the life

stressors associated with violence and poverty are a factor influencing the pessimistic outlook of low-income persons in the country (Coleman *et al.*,1984).

5.2.2.3. Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)

An analysis of the results from the questionnaire reveals that most subjects report living conditions, property and asset ownership (LSM) and a lifestyle more or less in line with their income group. However, one interesting case, that of a middle-income politician (city councillor) whose dining habits deviated from the norm, can also be explained in terms of schema activation. In response to questioning, this subject replied that he could afford to eat in the best restaurants, which seemed unusual in view of his income category. However, at the same time, his facial expression and tone of voice became more confident and self-assured. The immediate change in his verbal and non-verbal response suggest the cueing of a propositional self-schema containing *word-strings* (Anderson, 1978, p.252) relating to his elevated social position, accompanied by enhanced self-esteem brought about by the activation of associated emotion schemata.

The data from the survey and interviews all suggested that the high-income group are still able to maintain their high standard of living and enjoy a favourable lifestyle in spite of the high cost of living. However, some did have concerns about how long this will continue, in the light of allegations of government corruption, excessive public spending and possible economic changes in the country. With regard to improving the living conditions of the poor, some high-income subjects did argue that there needs to be greater involvement by both government and the private sector in the upliftment of disadvantaged communities, but directed towards empowerment. This group engaged in meaningful discussion around economic issues and was quite well-informed as to the broader social and economic problems facing the country.

Most middle-income subjects admitted to (barely) coping under the current economic climate and felt that something needs to be done to assist them as well. Subsidies were mentioned by one subject as a possible solution. However, most agreed that more

needed to be done to assist the poor, especially in the fields of education and employment. This group also had a reasonably broad perspective on the economic situation in the country, less than the high-income group but certainly much more than that displayed by low-income subjects. They also represented a more balanced approach to the socioeconomic problems in the country than the high-income group, being more in touch with the problems and needs of the poor.

Most low-income subjects had a negative and pessimistic view of the economy and of their own situation, which varied from '*just managing*' to living from '*hand to mouth*' [italics added to quotes]. They felt that the current cost of living was simply too high for them to continue and they also had to overcome many obstacles in the form of a lack of educational, training and employment opportunities. Generally, this group did not enter into much discussion, their ideas being quite fixed and limited in their range. There were visible signs of emotion in many of these subjects when section 3.3 was presented during the survey, as well as Q4 ('How well are you able to live in this country?') during the interviews. When questioned, this appeared to be due to the recall of unpleasant memories of their daily struggle for survival resulting from poverty and a lack of employment opportunities. These memories would have been brought to the surface by the cueing of perceptual and context schemata containing visual representations of their squalid living conditions (Anderson, 1978; Kelly, 1991; Neisser, 1976), as well as emotion schemata represented a range of emotions from irritation, frustration and a sense of unfairness, to anger and even fear, depending on the phrasing of the question (Fiske, 1982; Nishida, 1999).

In one instance, a low-income domestic worker was interviewed and requested to explain her views on the current economic situation and the position with the poor. Her facial expression immediately changed to one of sadness, which was also evident in her voice, as she described the removal of a friend's children by welfare authorities due to the inability of the parents to care (financially) for them. It was clear that there had been schema activation, most probably involving perceptual schemata containing visual representations of the removal of the children, or of her friend's grief (Anderson, 1978;

Neisser, 1976), as well as schema-triggered affect (the sudden wave of sadness). Perceptual schemata are cued and activated by affect-laden words relating back to the original (traumatic) situation (Fiske, 1995), and seem to be closely linked to emotion schemata and incidences of schema-triggered affect. This case showed the real face of pain and trauma associated with poverty in South Africa, and also demonstrated that schema-triggered affect is not limited to anger and fear but can also produce other emotions such as sadness.

Due to the frequent comments relating to *entitlement,* this was highlighted as a separate sub-theme for in-depth analysis.

During the surveys and interviews, a number of high-income businesspersons stated that, in many cases, the poor do have legitimate expectations, but unfortunately, some have cultivated a sense of entitlement and a culture of laziness which is contributing to the conflict between management and workers. These subjects were willing to support the idea of grants for the poor provided they were conditional and not hand-outs.

When questioned, there was agreement amongst most middle-income subjects that a percentage of poor people do have a sense of entitlement. However, this group certainly had a greater understanding of the difficult situation and needs of impoverished communities. These (middle-income) subjects also felt that a better work ethic needed to be cultivated amongst the low-income group, and also supported the idea of conditional assistance (grants) based on personal effort and co-responsibility.

As shown by the results of the survey, a large majority of low-income subjects (76%) supported the idea of unconditional grants for the unemployed. This suggests a belief amongst this group that that the poor and destitute are entitled to more assistance. A few did admit that there is a sense of entitlement within their own group, but added that in most cases it was justified.

In reply to the high-income group's accusations of laziness, a small number of low-

income subjects also admitted that some unemployed persons had the wrong attitude and did not really want to work. However, as a result of promises made by government, expectations had been created. According to Mbeki (2009), the categorisation of certain individuals as 'previously disadvantaged' (PDI'S) had also created expectations (p.69).

Relating to this, in one particular interview, a trade unionist stated categorically that workers had been promised, and now '*demanded'* [emphasis added] a better life and upliftment.

Mbeki (2009) calls the whole issue of social grants a '*resource curse'* [italics added] (p.85). He believes that a system that allows people to receive an income without working does not really solve the country's employment problem. In fact, he suggests that it actually draws attention away from it (p.87), discourages entrepreneurship (p.72), and can result in dependence. Mbeki also argues that this dependence can in turn, produce psychological side-effects such as a *victim consciousness* (p.70), in which the grant recipients learn to perceive themselves as victims and weak and ineffectual. This would be accompanied by feelings of insecurity (that the grant will be reduced or removed) and low self-esteem (resulting from the humiliation caused by the stigma of having to live off welfare and hand-outs (p.87). This link between dependency and low-self-esteem has also been identified in earlier research (Baumeister, 1995, p.77).

A sense of entitlement could be explained in terms of schema theory as a process of self-labelling as *'poor'* or '*disadvantaged'* and therefore *'needy'* or *'deserving'*. In such cases, propositions such as '*poor and therefore deserving*' [emphasis added], would be assimilated into self-schemata, resulting in perceptions of entitlement (Anderson, 1978). Anderson (1978, p.252) describes propositional word-strings in schemata as being abstractions of more complex associations and formed in terms of simple rules of logic. In this case, examples of the logical form would be (If) *I am poor* (Then) *I am entitled to a grant*, or (If) *I am poor,* (Then) *I can steal to survive* [emphasis added]. These propositions would then act as rules and heuristics (cognitive shortcuts) to simplify or speed up processing (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Fiske, 1995, p.165), resulting in the virtually

'automatic' responses to the questions relating to entitlement (Goldstein, 2005, p.457). This kind of self-labelling could also explain the link between dependence and low self-esteem (Baumeister, 1995; Mbeki, 2009), and would account for the self-deprecating remarks made by some low-income subjects during the interviews.

Due to its relevance to the present SA context, as well as previous research which shows that unemployment can have a debilitating effect on emotional and mental wellness (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.135), a separate sub-theme of *Unemployment* was also included for in-depth analysis. Mbeki (2009) shows that unemployment is rising in the country, and suggests that this is due to globalisation and a shrinking manufacturing sector. He provides statistics which reveal that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is down from 25% in 1990 to only 16% in 2008 (p.97).

In this regard, subjects from all three income groups felt that the government and private sector could do more to provide employment opportunities. Most low-income subjects surveyed or interviewed felt very strongly about the need for more education and training, and in one particular case, questions relating to employment cued a spontaneous emotional response, in which anger and frustration were etched on the face of a lowly-paid waitress, as she became visibly upset at what she called the '*unfairness'* of the present economic system, in which the low salaries paid have the result that poor people cannot afford to study and therefore do not qualify for better-paid jobs. This perception of unfairness was most likely the result of activated context schemata abstracted from her unsuccessful attempts at finding better employment (past social experiences) (Neisser, 1976). And the priming and selective recall of these painful memories resulted in the sudden schema-triggered affect.

Another interesting case was that of the previously referred to homeless man, a middle-aged white indigent who was interviewed at length. This subject emphasised that he really wanted to work, but that the situation in the country (lack of employment opportunities) was making him *'feel like a hobo'* [italics added]. In this regard, he did not see himself as a beggar, but rather as someone who was willing to work. In terms of

schema theory, this response suggests that he had introduced positive propositions representing this willingness into his self-schema which were sustaining his self-esteem.

This particular case is important as it shows that, even under debilitating social and economic conditions, a person's self-schema (and dignity) can remain intact (*Perseverance Effect*) (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.165).

5.2.2.4. The role of poverty in social unrest and violence in South Africa

During the analysis of the data from the survey and interviews, the effect of the conditions associated with poverty in shaping perceptions which could lead to social unrest and violence, became increasingly apparent. Earlier research has already revealed the role of poverty in maladaptive behaviour (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.133). More recently, Burton's (1997) *Human Needs Theory* (as cited in Ikejiaku, 2009a), also shows that poverty (when linked to the denial of basic human needs), leads to reactions that result in conflict, including a *'restlessness'* and a seeking of restitution through violence (p.16). This restlessness seems to be an adequate description of the existing mood in the country, which is underlying the current strikes and service delivery protests. Many of the thoughts and perceptions of low-income subjects interviewed also related to this notion of *restitution* (entitlement).

There is some disagreement with regard to the actual causes of poverty in South Africa. Ikejiaku points to the problems associated with a rapidly growing African population and an accompanying scramble for scarce resources such as land, jobs, education and social amenities (Ikejiaku, 2009a). One can clearly see this taking place in the land claims, educational demands and the levels of unemployment in South Africa today. On the other hand, Mbeki (2009) believes poverty in South Africa to be the result of governmental and corporate policies leading to a steady process of de-industrialisation which has proved disastrous for the economic development of the country, resulting in increased unemployment and poverty (p.69).

Whatever the causes, it is the effects of poverty that were most noticeable during the study and which led to the inclusion of a sub-theme of *'The role of the environment in crime and violence'.*

Research has already revealed how rapid social change associated with societies in transition can produce sub-cultures of crime and violence, together with a decline in norms and values (Geen, 1995, p.398). With regard to the present situation in South Africa, Ikejiaku (2009b), attempts to establish a clear link between poverty and crime by showing income and group inequality to be significant factors in certain crimes in South Africa, such as burglary and theft (p.455). He also lists urbanisation as one of the main reasons for the high levels of crime in SA by linking it to the social problems associated with overcrowding, unemployment, increased consumer demands and expectations (p.454). In this case, his conclusions are reasonably justified, in that previous research has already shown a direct link between unemployment and crime (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.136).

The psychological effects of living in an environment of violence, which include stress and anxiety, are also well-documented (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.135). Apart from the increased anxiety in patients reported by a specialist psychiatrist, heightened tensions and strong emotions were clearly visible in the non-verbal affective responses of many low-income subjects. This needs to be considered in the light of constructivist research which shows that schemata are easily cued by affect-laden statements (Fiske, 1982), and how bias in schemata can lead to errors in cognitive processing, distorted perceptions and other inaccuracies (Kelly, 1991 p.6; Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.165).

In this regard, data from the study showed the majority of low-income subjects to be sympathetic towards those who steal to feed themselves and their families, suggesting that the psychological effects of poverty, deprivation and violence on cognitive processing may be such that some poverty-stricken community members may even find justification for criminality such as looting and the violence that often accompanies service delivery protests, by viewing it through the filter of their own desperate situation.

5.2.2.5. Cognitive processing: Trends revealed by the data collection process

During the study, marked differences in cognitive processing had been noted amongst the income-groups. This led to the inclusion of sub-themes relating to the depth and speed of processing. For example, the observational data revealed that, in many cases, high-income subjects did not accept the questions at face value, some even pointing out that these types of question cannot be answered quickly using a one word 'yes or 'no' format. In general, high-income subjects appeared to be able to see beyond the surface to the deeper meaning and implications of the statement or question, which usually led to discussion.

Some middle-income subjects also engaged in dialogue, but did not entirely present the broad perspective provided by the high-income group. This depth of processing by the high-income group suggested more cognitive effort and therefore the possibility of data-based processing. However, as seen previously, some individual cases involving high-income subjects did reveal schematic processing as well.

This depth of processing was not evident during the surveys or interviews involving low-income subjects, who generally accepted the statement or question at face value. These subjects tended to focus more on their immediate needs and not long-term considerations and concerns. In other words, the low-income group generally displayed a more limited cognitive perspective, which even suggested '*cognitive miserliness'* (Fiske, 1995, p.153).

This phenomenon can be explained in terms of differences in schematic content. For example, the content of the schemata of subjects from the low-income group (and their resultant perceptions), would be based only on a limited framework of knowledge and experience derived from local conditions, whereas many high-income subjects occupied positions of responsibility requiring a wide knowledge and advanced decision-making

skills. As seen from the lifestyle audit, 47% of high-income subjects reported that they had travelled overseas. In contrast to this, no middle-income subjects and only one low-income subject reported ever having travelled abroad. This would suggest that the high-income group has a broader perspective, access to more information on social, security and economic issues, a cosmopolitan view of the world and therefore more developed and mature perceptual and context schemata.

With regard to the speed of processing, according to Bower and Cohen (1982), immediate or 'snap' responses and judgments point to schema activation and the use of heuristics. During the survey, most low-income subjects responded quickly and spontaneously to the statements and questions, especially those involving self-interest. This also appeared to be linked to the level of affect displayed. In other words, a high level of emotional arousal led to a more rapid response (Fiske, 1982). This applied to all income-groups, but was especially noticeable in low-income male subjects. Responses by the middle and high-income groups were also generally slower due to their answers being more considered.

This tendency of the low-income group to provide speedy responses can be explained by their frequent use of heuristics (inferences, generalisations and assumptions) as well as the high emotional content of their schemata, which in many cases, contained information on unpleasant, negative and even traumatic experiences linked to deprived lifestyles and squalid living conditions (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

A sub-theme involving the phenomenon of *visual perspective* was also included in the analysis and examined. Anderson and Pearson (1984, p.275), showed that visual perspective can result in selective attention and recall, which in the case of event schemata, can lead to a situation where a particular (work) role influences one's responses (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.169). In this regard, the data from the study revealed substantial differences in processing due to *visual perspective* between private sector and government executives. During face-to-face interviews, a slight hesitation was noticed when some top-ranking police officials were interviewed regarding their

perceptions of the current situation in the country with regard to safety and security. This suggested that an unseen variable may be slowing down their responses. When cross-referenced with the results from the questionnaire, an interesting trend emerged. The data revealed that the overwhelming majority of high-income subjects who optimistically endorsed all three items in section 3.2 (South Africa as 'safe', 'fun and enjoyable' and 'quite relaxed'), were either police or local government managers.

Fortunately, during the original planning of the study, it had been decided to focus on the worldviews and perceptions of high-income government employees in the South African Police Services and Durban municipality, being in the forefront of dealing with the strikes and service delivery protests. As a result, the survey sheets belonging to16 top governmental managers (brigadier/director and higher) had been endorsed as 'police' or 'gov', enabling a comparison to be made between them and the remaining 18 private sector executives (Total n = 34).

Using the same rating system as applied earlier, it was found that eight government service managers (23%), selected those options corresponding to a fully optimistic view of safety and security, compared with only one private sector manager (3%). Four government (12%) and four private sector managers (12%) revealed a generally optimistic view, two government (6%) and six private sector managers (18%) were ambivalent on the issue, two government (6%) and five private sector managers (15%) adopted a generally pessimistic view, and two private sector (6%) but no government managers (0%) revealed a fully pessimistic view. The results are presented for comparison in Table 21 and Figure 5.

Table 21: Comparison of responses of government and private sector executives to section 3.2 of the questionnaire

Groups	O n	%	Gen. O n	%	Amb n	%	Gen. P n	%	P n	%

Gov.	8	23	4	12	2	6	2	6	0	0
PS	1	3	4	12	6	18	5	15	2	6

_____

Note. Gov = government executives (police and local government)
    PS = Private sector (businesspersons and professionals)
    O = fully optimistic, Gen. O = generally optimistic, Amb = ambivalent, Gen. P=
    generally pessimistic, P = fully pessimistic

Total sample n=34

Figure 5. Responses of government and private sector executives (High-income group) to section 3.2 (Affective responses to crime, violence and unrest) as measured on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum.
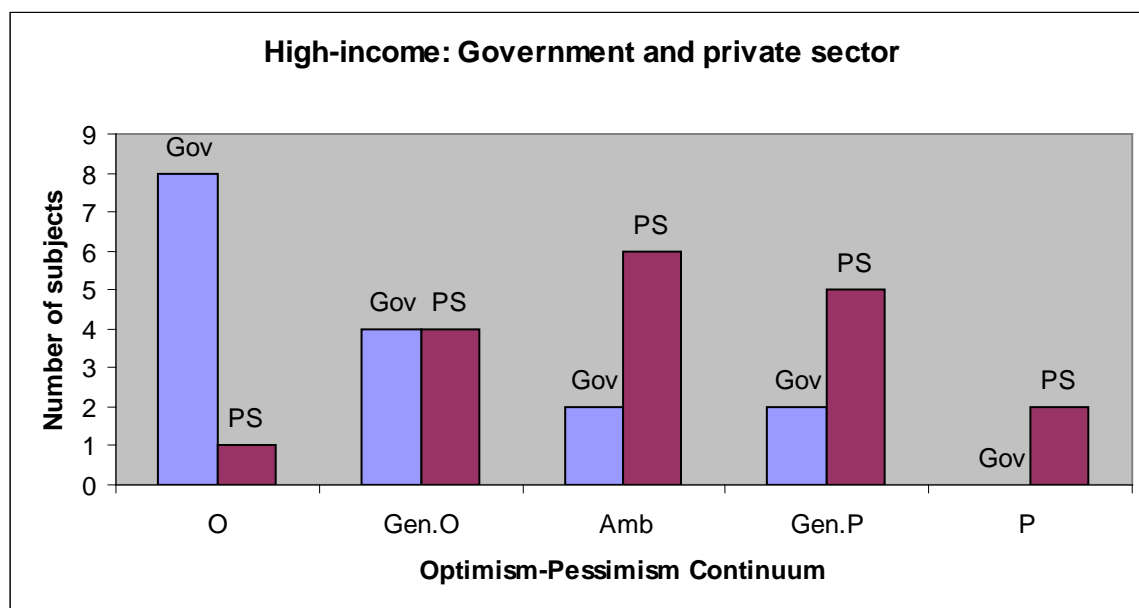
Legend. Gov= Top government service managers (police and local government), PS= Private sector executives and professionals.

Total sample n= 34

The bar graph clearly illustrates that police and local government managers had a far more optimistic view of safety and security in the country than their counterparts in the private sector. This seems unusual in view of their ready access to the current high crime statistics in the country and being in the forefront of the strikes, unrest and service delivery protests.

This phenomenon can be explained in terms of schema theory as differences in perceptions of an identical situation occurring as the result of context schemata containing dissimilar *visual perspectives* based on work role (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p.169). Context schemata (or scripts) contain rules about the appropriate sequence of events in a social situation (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). In the case of government managers, their internalised scripts could have included a statement such as '*There is an official position on this issue and I better stick to it'* which came to mind during the questioning. Having to recall and respond to this '*rule'* would have resulted in the brief hesitation that was observed. As this script would not have been present in the case of private sector managers, they recorded different responses.

A further sub-theme '*Visual and propositional processing',* explored the question as to what extent schematic content activated during the study was visual or propositional. When questioned on issues requiring thinking and consideration, subjects reported hearing the answer in 'words' (verbal content), which suggests propositional schemata. However, when questioned on property ownership and living standards, many subjects reported seeing visual images of their homes and vehicles, suggesting pictorial content.

It was also clear from emotional responses that were observed, especially those resulting from flashbulb memories, that visual content (perceptual schemata) had been activated, and in many cases, this resulted in schema-triggered affect. However, some of the other cases analysed had suggested the presence of verbal content in self and context schemata. When the data are carefully analysed, it is evident that both categories of representations were activated during the survey and interviews, and schematic content depended on what aspect the statement or question was examining,

and how it was phrased. This corresponds to Anderson's (1978) research which showed that representations (schemata) can contain both pictorial and propositional elements (p.275).

5.2.2.6. Important social dynamics which emerged during the data collection process

Subject resistance was encountered during the survey and included all socioeconomic groups, but was especially noticeable when contacting high-income businesspersons for interviews. It appeared that there was some concern that the survey was related to a media or marketing campaign, as many e-mail questionnaires were completely ignored. In some cases, strong reassurances were necessary to complete the in-depth interviews. The use of a 'friend-of-a-friend' approach (Kelly, 2002, p. 383), assisted in this regard. And, as shown previously, social and business internet networks were especially helpful in contacting known associates for these introductions.

Subject resistance also occurred to a lesser degree in the middle and low-income groups. One low-income subject refused to complete the survey even when offered a stipend, and the research assistant reported that she personally believed the political situation in the area to have fuelled some suspicion. Some low and even some middle-income subjects had expectations of payment when completing the questionnaire, which also suggested subject resistance, although for different reasons.

Based on the data collected, another sub-theme involving the role of *self-esteem and efficacy* in the responses of all income groups was also included and examined. According to Peterson and Bossio (1991), optimism is also related to a positive self-concept and perceptions of self-efficacy, and this may have played a role in the optimistic view of the country of many competent high-income subjects, by activating self-schemata based on successful business and social experiences. Conversely, research has shown that pessimism is related to helplessness and very often, to low self-worth as well (Peterson & Bossio, 1991, p.136). Any perceptions resulting from the

activation of self-schemata formed from past experiences involving deprivation, humiliation and helplessness, may also have influenced the responses of impoverished low-income persons, most of whom held a negative view of the country.

The comments put forward by Mbeki (2009) on a *victim consciousness* existing amongst the poor (p.70), is particularly relevant to this question of self-esteem and efficacy. Mbeki argues that a dependence on social grants and the shoddy treatment received at payment centres can result in feelings of humiliation, which further erode self-esteem (2009, p.87). In terms of the constructivist approach, such negative and degrading experiences would all be represented in self and context schemata and activated by questions relating to subjects' lifestyles and living standards.

In view of some of the comments made by subjects during the survey and interviews, a final sub-theme highlighting *cultural fears* was included in the analysis. These fears emerged amongst some (black) senior citizens in the low-income group, who admitted to be living in fear of being accused of witchcraft simply because they are old.

In terms of schema theory, any discussion on the issue of crime and violence would cue context schemata and the selective recall of memories formed from their prior experiences with violence and intolerance, and include threats based on cultural superstition (Neisser, 1976). Their emotional responses can be explained by the associative connections between context and emotion schemata (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

5.3. RESEARCH AUDIT

According to Kelly (2002, p.422), interpretative research can be evaluated in terms of how well it accounts for the phenomenon studied. In this case, this phenomenon was the noticeable differences in the perceptions of high and low-income groups in this country. He continues by stating that the value of an interpretative study does not lie in scientific proof, but rather in the consequences that flow from the research. In other

words, important social issues that have been identified and viable solutions offered (p.422).

5.3.1. Design validity

The design allowed for method triangulation to increase validity and reliability. As shown previously, this involved combining a process of the measurement of worldviews along an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum, with an interpretative analysis of qualitative data from in-depth interviews and participant observation. According to Terreblanche and Kelly (2002, p.140), these two approaches are compatible (valid) within a broader interpretative paradigm.

Kelly points out the danger of research which only seeks evidence for what the researcher already believes (2002, p.425), and the study design thus allowed for an objective approach in which a detailed rating process was included and the analysis was enhanced by means of tables and graphs.

5.3.2. Design coherence

As already stated, a broad-based interpretative paradigm was selected for the framework of the study. This 'fitted' well with constructivist research and the purpose of the study, which was the measurement and comparison of the subjective perceptions of the different socio-economic groups in South Africa. The design is such that it was possible to successfully incorporate three different methods of data collection into the study, namely, administering a survey to a representative sample, conducting in-depth interviews with a smaller amount of subjects, and keeping an observational record of the entire process. These methods complemented each other and operated well within the real-life context of the current social, security and economic situation in South Africa. The design also allowed for the successful integration and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained.

5.3.3. Design flexibility

According to Durrheim (2002), a qualitative design should be open, fluid and changeable. In fact, he maintains that all research should be iterative, continually feeding back and adjusting to pragmatic considerations (p.31). The design of this study therefore allowed for continuous self-evaluation, as seen by adjustments made to the direction of the questioning early on when *'entitlement'* emerged as an important sub-theme. As additional sub-themes were induced, more attention was given to the gathering of specific information relating to these themes. Additions to the original planning, such as the in-depth analysis of individual cases in terms of schema theory, were also possible due to the flexibility of the study design.

As shown in the study, a number of novel data-collecting methods were employed to overcome subject resistance and ensure accessibility, especially to subjects from the high-income group. The use of the Internet made it possible to access the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of top city officials and businesspersons using governmental and company websites, and social and business Internet networks were frequently used to arrange appointments or introductions. Apart from face-to-face interviews, electronic e-mail facilities also made it possible to submit an adapted online questionnaire to those who were otherwise not accessible. In some cases, especially with out-of-town subjects and top executives, telephone interviews were conducted.

5.3.4. Strengths and limitations of the process

Previous research suggested that the subjects' choices and perspectives provided during the field study and interviews would accurately reveal the action of underlying schemata governing their phenomenological experience of the country as well as their view of the world (Kelly, 1991, p.7). However, this was dependent on the external and internal validity of the study as well as its reliability, dependability, credibility and comprehensiveness.

5.3.4.1. External validity

By using a representative sample drawn mostly from the Durban Metropolitan area, the results of the study may not be able to be fully generalised to the entire SA population. The size of the samples for the survey and interviews were also small but did provide sufficient in-depth information for an interpretative study (Durrheim, 2002, p.45) (100 and 20 subjects respectively). However, the fact that the questionnaire and interviews dealt with perceptions in a real-life context of the current social, security and economic conditions in the country, and not some theoretical model, added to its external validity.

5.3.4.2. Generalisability

Generalisability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts (Kelly, 2002, p 431). In this case, the method of measuring subjective perceptions (as embodied in categories of worldviews) on an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum, applied within a broad interpretative approach, was specifically included to increase the generalisability of the study. In this regard, the accuracy of measurement and the comprehensive description of the data collection process and analysis provided, should ensure that the methods employed in this study and the results obtained, can be transferred to other contexts, such as measuring attitudes or perceptions relating to other social dimensions in the South African context.

Kelly also refers to the validity of findings which are able to provide 'pragmatic proof' of an important social phenomenon, such as in this case, where clear differences in the perceptions of rich and poor relating to the current social, security and economic situation in the country were demonstrated. He emphasises the value of such findings with the power to orient and change (behavioural) practices (2002, p.432).

5.3.4.3. Internal validity

The hard-copy questionnaire, interview sheet, on-line questionnaire and participant observation sheet for taking field notes, were all accurately formulated, constructed and tailored to match the research context and problem. During the preparation of the statements and questions for the questionnaire and interview sheet, great care was also taken to ensure accuracy and that they fully operationalised the three variables of social and affective perceptions and lifestyle (living standards). The structured interview sheet also contained only one set of standardised questions to ensure accuracy of recording during the interviews.

5.3.4.4. Measurement validity

The measurement process was subject to constant review, and about midway through the field study it was noted from the feedback received from subjects, that an additional statement in the questionnaire, such as 'poor people have a sense of entitlement' would have been helpful to record all the comments relating to the new sub-theme of '*entitlement'* which was induced from the incoming data. At that late stage it was not possible to amend the questionnaire, and measurement validity was ensured by specifically including verbal questioning relating to 'entitlement' during all later discussions and interviews, and recording the responses in the observation sheets.

Another case related to the theme of 'Lifestyle and living standards (LSM)'. Although a question related to specific perceptions of the economy was included in the interviews, measurement validity could have been improved with the inclusion of a similar question in the questionnaire under section 3.3.

As stated previously, the study also made use of the services of a trained research assistant to interview low and middle-income subjects from the black cultural group who were not competent or comfortable completing the questionnaires in English. This special arrangement to accommodate language and culture reduced researcher effect and subject resistance and ensured that statements, questions and requirements were understood, and responses correctly recorded, thus increasing measurement validity.

The validity of the measurement process was somewhat reduced by the use of e-mail questionnaires and telephonic interviews in cases where access was a problem. Disadvantages of the e-mail questionnaire included the inability of subjects to pose questions, a low response rate and the possibility that a subordinate may complete the questionnaire on behalf of the target subject (Bailey, 1982). However, the e-mailing process proved to be essential later on to ensure representivity and comprehensiveness when many top government officials and company executives were, for a number of reasons, unavailable for face-to-face interviews. A number of checks and balances, including follow-ups, ensured that the online facility was reliable and completed by the correct high-income subject, and the low response rate to the e-mail questionnaire (around 15 %) was also obviated by forwarding more than the desired number of questionnaires. The telephone and cellular phone interviews also proved a useful addition to the measurement process and completion of the survey, and the problem of mistrust was largely eliminated by using referrals from known associates.

5.3.4.5. Interpretative validity

The first part of the study was simplified by using a simple method of coding the data from the questionnaires in terms of five different categories of worldviews along an Optimism-Pessimism Continuum. Careful and comprehensive analysis, as shown in Chapter 5 and Appendices A-F, ensured that the data were correctly interpreted and laid out for easy comparison in the form of tables and graphs. Insofar as the interpretative (thematic) coding and analysis of the interviews and observational notes were concerned, the process followed the recommended guidelines as contained in two research reference books, Bailey (1982) and Terreblanche and Durrheim (Eds.)(2002). Additional skills applied during the study which added to its interpretative validity, were an empathetic person-centred approach, the observation of non-verbal behaviour and logical reasoning.

5.3.4.6. Steps taken to improve validity

Challenges to the validity of the study by rival hypotheses were taken into consideration. In this regard, the ongoing debate between concept-driven and data-driven processing was important. Based on constructivist research, and as a result of special attention being paid to the phrasing of the statements and questions, all responses provided during the survey and the interviews were regarded as being the result of schema activation and processing, and governed by a particular worldview. Some could argue that this was not the case, and that the elements of the social situation represented by each statement and question were determinative in the type of response. However, research has shown that schematic processing is reasonably accurate in any given social situation that does not involve high levels of accuracy, self-relevance or importance (Fiske, 1995), and for this reason, all statements and questions contained in the questionnaire and interview sheet were, on the surface, clear and simply worded, requiring little cognitive effort and thus inviting schematic processing (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). However, on a deeper level, they were also open to interpretation, being oversimplifications of a more complex situation, and it was accepted that this could also have resulted in data-based processing.

As it turned out, both schematic and data-based processing were evident during the completion of the questionnaires and the interviews, and both approaches have been useful in analysing and explaining the findings of the study.

5.3.4.7. Reliability

The issue of the reliability of this study was crucial. Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002), define reliability as the *'degree to which results are repeatable'* [italics added] (p.63). In other words, the research should be reliable enough to be replicated in different settings with the same results. As shown previously, by including a survey using a standardised questionnaire within the broad interpretative research approach of this study, an accurate method of measuring subjective perceptions in the form of worldviews was provided. This was complemented by a detailed account of the data collection process and rating of the questionnaires.

Unfortunately, a more scientific approach was not suitable or possible as a result of the interpretative paradigm applied in the study, as the emphasis was on the investigation of subjective perceptions within a specific socio-cultural and socio-historical context. In support of this argument, Durrheim and Wassenaar are also quick to point out that interpretative research does not assume to be investigating a stable and unchanging reality (2002, p.64), and one therefore cannot expect to be able to exactly duplicate the results of an interpretative study under different socioeconomic or socio-historical conditions. In this particular case, these conditions comprise the background to the current strikes and service delivery protests and the study is specifically directed at a better understanding of these particular events. For this reason, the criterion of 'dependability' proved to be more applicable.

5.3.4.8. Dependability

As stated previously, and seen in the light of the rapidly-changing social and socio-political situation in SA, it is accepted that these results may not be exactly duplicated during later studies. Perceptions can change as the situation shifts and this study therefore focuses more on the dependability of the present findings, in which comprehensive and detailed field work resulted in an accurate measurement and recording of subjective perceptions and the analysis of several important themes within the current South African social, security and economic milieu. This real-life context ensured that the findings are convincing, believable and conclusive.

To ensure the dependability of the findings, a number of important steps were taken to ensure accurate reporting, recording, interpretation and the control of bias.

Researcher or experimenter effect is described by Durrheim (2002) as the profile or personality of the researcher affecting responses, or else the researcher deliberately or inadvertently providing subtle clues as to what response is required (p.48). One of the reasons for this could be the researcher either consciously or unconsciously seeking to

confirm a previously held belief or position. The study was therefore designed to specifically address researcher bias and experimenter effect as far as possible.

First, as stated previously, the questionnaire and interview sheet were standardised, concise and simplified so as to limit the role of the interviewer and reduce subject resistance. Second, applying counselling ethics also proved useful in reducing subjectivity and researcher bias, as well as ensuring cordial relationships during the survey and interviews. Third, it had been considered that the presence and profile of a white male researcher may affect the responses of black subjects, and for this reason (as well as language issues), a black female research assistant was employed and trained to administer the questionnaire to low-income subjects from this cultural group. It was believed that they would respond more authentically to a researcher who was culturally compatible and fully understood their language. This strategy later proved to be essential in view of the high levels of subject resistance and suspicion experienced.

Demand characteristics are described by Durrheim (2002, p.48) as the use of a research setting which lends itself to a specific type of response. Entering a bar to interview regular patrons as to the positive or negative effects of drinking would be such a case, as responses in favour of drinking could be expected. This would once again suggest that a researcher was seeking to validate a previously-held position. As before, specific steps were taken during the survey to reduce demand characteristics and increase the dependability and credibility of the findings. For instance, subjects from all socioeconomic groups were approached in familiar everyday surroundings which allowed them a measure of control, such as a local soup kitchen (low-income group), after church or social gatherings, at shopping centres or by appointment in their homes or at work. In some cases, when top company or government managers were otherwise inaccessible, interviews were concluded over the phone or by means of online e-mails. In fact, some favourable comments were made about the online questionnaire, which was experienced as less-intrusive, thus reducing demand characteristics by allowing subjects to complete and return it in their own time.

As stated, the study was conducted in a culturally sensitive manner by employing the services of a trained Zulu-speaking assistant to eliminate the possibility of language and cultural bias. This later proved to be absolutely essential, as during the study, high levels of mistrust and suspicion became apparent in spite of the fact that the assistant was well-known and recruited from the local community. This appeared to be due to political polarisations as well as concerns that the interviews were part of a marketing campaign. This variable was effectively managed by the trained assistant.

The dependability of the findings was increased by eliminating the possibility of misunderstandings due to language issues. Although the questionnaire was in English, the Zulu-speaking assistant succeeded in interviewing those subjects who were unfamiliar with the English language.

The control of extraneous variables was an important aspect in ensuring the validity, reliability and dependability of the study. A few possible factors were identified early and efforts made to neutralise their effects. For example, the study was designed to measure differences in the subjective perceptions and phenomenological experiences of high, middle and low-income groups with regard to the current South African social, security and economic situation. However, in the interests of dependability, it was taken into consideration that socioeconomic grouping may not be the only variable involved in subjects' responses to the questionnaire and interviews. Perceptions could also differ according to cultural, moral or religious beliefs and values and not be based solely on income and living conditions. However, as Corey (2001, p.109) points out, beliefs and values also form part of one's overall view of the world, and it was believed that the simple method of coding in terms of worldview, would assimilate this variable.

There was also the possibility of inaccurate responses due to illiteracy, ignorance or a general lack of understanding amongst some subjects in the lower income group. Once again, this variable was largely eliminated by the simplicity of the questionnaire and the use of a trained assistant during the field research, one who was totally familiar with the problems facing the local indigent communities.

5.3.4.9. Comprehensiveness

The study is considered sufficiently comprehensive in that it succeeded in integrating a large theoretical framework with months of field research. According to Durrheim (2002), interpretative research typically does not require a large or random sample (p.45). However, as previously stated, the small samples, comprising of 100 subjects for the survey and 20 for the in-depth interviews, could be considered a shortcoming of the study, and being based largely on the demographics of the Durban Metropolitan area, may also not be fully representative of the general population in the country.

The data were gathered using a process of methodological triangulation. This enabled the data to be checked from multiple perspectives and ensure that it was sufficient to address the research problem of subjective perceptions (of the country) differing according to income group.

In this regard, data triangulation was also involved, as measurable information from the questionnaires was integrated with qualitative data provided by the interviews and participant observation. According to Kelly (2002), the required condition for a good interpretative study is '*saturation',* in other words, a situation where the account has been '*richly fed'* by the material collected, to the point where it can be said that the data have been thoroughly explored and a satisfactory sense of the social phenomenon has been acquired (p.422). The integration of previous constructivist research with fresh data obtained from the questionnaires, interviews and participant observation sheets, allowed for a rich and detailed examination of subjective perceptions relating to the current social, security and economic situation in South Africa. And the analysis of specific cases provided an in-depth and detailed view of schema activation.

The study also made use of a broad-based analysis involving other sources of information. For example, previous research provided by the Human sciences Research Council (2002) and the Institute of Security Studies at Unisa (Schonteich, 2001), was applied during the analysis. The induction of a new theme '*The role of poverty in crime*

and violence', broadened the scope of the study to include an examination of cognitive factors underlying poverty-related crime and social violence, such as is being experienced with the current wave of strikes and service delivery protests. The analysis was supported by two important articles by Dr. Brian-Vincent Ikejiaku (2009a; 2009b), which enabled a useful parallel to be drawn between previous social unrest in Africa and that occurring in South Africa at the moment, as well as a recent critique on the causes of poverty in SA by Moeletsi Mbeki (Mbeki, 2009). As shown, a number of important processing trends and social dynamics which emerged during the data collection process were also examined and included in the final analysis.

5.3.4.10. Practical issues and problems relating to the sampling process

Criticism may be levelled at the study for the personal details of some subjects being incomplete or not sufficiently comprehensive. However, the nature and sensitivity of the current South African situation must be taken into account. Race was not indicated on the questionnaire due to possible accusations of racism or discrimination. However, racial and gender quotas which conform to the demographics in the Durban area were applied during the actual sampling process and the subject's cultural group added after the completion of each survey sheet. In addition to this, concerns about time constraints and possible subject resistance (many subjects were approached on the street), led to the conciseness of the questionnaire and a requirement for its speedy completion. Information on age, education and place of employment was therefore not requested, and this proved to be a pragmatic approach, as during the survey many subjects were openly suspicious, believing it to be part of a marketing strategy.

As can be seen from Tables 4 and 6, a wide spectrum of South African society was represented in the survey and interviews. Special attention was, however, given to including local government representatives and senior police officials (being directly affected by the current strikes and service delivery protests), as well as lowly-paid workers, unemployed persons and indigents, who are most likely to be caught up in these protests.

The interview sample also included some highly relevant subjects approached as a result of their social and work positions, and whose opinions were considered especially important for the study. These included the Durban city manager, a deputy Metro police chief, three city councillors, a specialist psychiatrist, the well-known C.E.O of a major company, an evangelist, a radio personality and a union representative.

5.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the investigation, the ethical guidelines of the S.A. Institute for Clinical Psychology compiled by Steere and Wassenaar, as cited in Wassenaar (1992), were applied. In line with these ethical standards, an introduction was included at the beginning of the questionnaire and the personal interview sheet which indicated the purpose and importance of the study, the fact that participation is voluntary (informed consent), that subjects could remain anonymous and that the information provided will be regarded as confidential. The content of the introduction was discussed with subjects prior to the completion of the questionnaire and they were assured that the information would only be made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

To comply further with the guidelines, the questionnaire was constructed to be unbiased, politically neutral, racially and gender sensitive. For this reason it also did not list race or political affiliation. As the study was limited to consenting adults, authorisation and access was not an ethical but rather a practical problem.

Poor and indigent subjects were treated as a vulnerable group and, as previously mentioned, a research assistant was recruited from the local community to assist this group with the completion of the questionnaire. This ensured cultural empathy, understanding and attention to their psychological well-being. To add to the beneficial value of the study, a stipend of R10.00 was paid to each subject from this group. As the study only involved the completion of a questionnaire or interview and no experimental testing, no actual harm came to subjects. Although in some cases the data collection process did uncover strong feelings, care was taken not to expose subjects to

unnecessary questioning that would be highly traumatic.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1. Worldviews

As shown in the data analysis, there were very noticeable differences in the responses of subjects from the high-income and low-income groups to the statements and questions contained in the survey. Taken as a whole and measured in terms of an optimistic versus a pessimistic outlook, the study therefore first demonstrated that the two groups had different subjective perceptions of the country and largely opposing worldviews, resulting from the activation of schemata constructed from income-specific prior experiences and living conditions. Second, as shown in Figure 4, the clear differences in the positions of the worldviews of these two groups on the Optimism-Pessimism Continuum, do suggest that their subjective perceptions differ to the extent that one could justifiably say that they represent 'different worlds' of phenomenological experience, thus validating the original hypothesis.

In spite of the shortcomings of the sample in terms of representativeness, these results do suggest that other perceptions belonging to high-income government and private sector executives, such as what constitutes adequate employment and educational opportunities, a satisfactory service to the community and a living wage, could also differ significantly from low-income members of the community and blue-collar workers throughout the country. These fundamental differences in perceptions could thus be an important factor underlying the strikes and service delivery protests.

6.1.2. LSM and pessimism in South Africa

An analysis of the data relating to worldviews suggests that the lower the living standards of subjects, the more pessimistic their outlook on the social, security and economic situation in the country. For example, 67% of the low-income group recorded

either a fully or generally pessimistic worldview. And three of the four low-income subjects who revealed a fully pessimistic worldview, were from the LSM 1 category. This was represented by subjects who indicated on the questionnaires that they were unemployed, destitute, living on the streets or in single rooms, eating whatever they could find and having no fixed or movable property whatsoever. As stated, in many cases this pessimism was clearly visible in the comments made during the interviews, as well as from personal observations.

What was of particular interest was the generally pessimistic worldview and view of the country of 51% of middle-income subjects, revealed by the results of the survey. This pessimism was also particularly noticeable from the comments made relating to the crime rate and the current economic situation in which some admitted to be '*barely coping'* [italics added]. As a result, many reported feeling increasingly anxious and insecure. Being representative of the middle-class, these data suggest that the average working man-in-the-street is pessimistic about the social and security situation in South Africa and the economy in general. This could be explained by the fact that the middle-income group is the most vulnerable to economic change, not having a high-income buffer and, living on the economic borderline, are the most likely to perceive their standard of living as dropping.

6.1.3. The social relationship between high and low-income groups in South Africa

The results of the survey, interviews and observation sheets show that quite a number of high-income subjects had an optimistic view of the social relationship between themselves and the low-income group. However, this view was not shared at all by the low-income group. Interestingly, the majority of middle-income subjects also did not perceive this relationship as very satisfactory, and as the control group, this could be seen as a social commentary on the actual relationship between rich and poor in the country. In fact, the findings suggest that many people in SA could actually have a negative perception of the high-income group (a category which includes government

representatives and company managers), when it comes to altruism and a genuine concern for the less fortunate.

The higher levels of optimism displayed by high-income subjects could suggest that the harsh realities of living in poverty and squalor as experienced by the vast 'urban underclass' (Mbeki, 2009, p.80) may not be fully understood or appreciated, and this could very well affect negotiations involving service delivery, employment or wages.

6.1.4. The role of poverty in social unrest and violence in South Africa

Mbeki (2009) believes that a growing number of South African households are living in poverty. To support this, he cites the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) H.D. report on South Africa (2003), which shows a decline in the Human Development Index from 1995 to 2003 (Mbeki, 2009, p.96). With this in mind, one of the focus areas of the study was to examine the effect of the phenomenological experiences associated with poverty and squalid living conditions on the formation of perceptions, as well as the role of these perceptions in the ongoing social unrest and violence in the country.

In this regard, an analysis of the research and data from the study showed that the traumatic experiences and conditions associated with poverty can be represented in a variety of schemata, which, when cued and activated, negatively affect the thinking and perceptions of the poor, as well as their subsequent responses. This should be viewed in the light of previous research which shows an indirect link between poverty and crime (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.263), and an even more direct relationship between poverty, aggression, crime and atrocities committed in Africa (Ikejiaku, 2009a, p.21).

6.1.4.1. The psychological effects of poverty and squalor

The debilitating psychological effects of living on hand-outs and in conditions of squalor and deprivation in slums and informal settlements also need to be considered. In this regard, Mbeki (2009) suggests that that these effects could include humiliation, low self-

esteem and a state of helplessness or *victim consciousness.* However, other research into *Human Needs Theory*, (Ikejiaku, 2009a. p.16), shows that this can easily change into powerful emotions of frustration and anger, leading to conflict and violence, such as is presently being experienced with the frequent strikes and service delivery protests. These emotions were observed in many low-income subjects during the surveys and interviews, when statements and questions relating to their economic circumstances were presented.

6.1.4.2. Skewed perceptions

As previously stated, the data also showed that the majority of high-income subjects displayed an optimistic worldview which matched their opulent lifestyle and generally favourable life experiences, and which contrasted sharply with that presented by the middle and low-income groups. If applied to the general population, this suggests that the views of some high-income decision-makers could be out of touch with the socio-economic realities as experienced by low-income workers and community members.

Ironically, even researchers can fall into an optimistic cognitive *'trap'* [emphasis added], able to skew perceptions. For instance, in his latest research article on South Africa (2009b), Ikejiaku claims that since democracy in 1994, there have been improvements in areas such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, corruption and conflict. This is not supported at all by Mbeki (2009), a South African based analyst, who points to a decline in the SA Human Development Index between 1995 and 2003 (p. 96), and a rise in unemployment as the result of a 9% reduction of the manufacturing sector between 1990 and 2008 (p.97). In addition to this, if viewed carefully, Ikejiaku's definition of conflict and violence in South Africa seems to refer to mass killings (Ikejiaku, 2009b, p.458), and not the kind of civil or social unrest that is manifesting itself in the recent strikes and service delivery protests.

6.1.5. Other processing phenomena and social dynamics

A number of incidences of schematic bias became apparent during the study and analysis which pointed to important differences in information processing, as well as other social dynamics which could also be contributing to the lack of agreement between the high and low-income groups.

.

6.1.5.1. Schematic versus data-based processing

As previously stated, particularly noticeable during the study were the speedy, often affect-laden responses and lack of in-depth consideration of the questions by the overwhelming majority of subjects from the low-income group, which suggested schematic processing. Contrasting with this was evidence that subjects from the middle, and especially the high-income group, paid more careful consideration to the questions and their implications, and in many cases, this resulted in discussion. This tendency amongst high-income subjects to engage in cognitive activity suggests data-based processing. It is therefore possible that some of the differences in the perceptions of South Africa noted between high and low-income persons (as reflected in their worldviews), could have been due to the different ways in which social information was being processed by the two groups.

There were a number of specific factors identified during the analysis that could contribute to such differences in processing and these may also apply to the SA population as a whole. For example, based on the lifestyle and living standards audit, the high-income group has ready access to transport and television, and, it could be assumed, the Internet, reference books and reports as well, all the information that would be required for more considered opinions. Most also hold positions of responsibility which require a wide knowledge and advanced decision-making skills.

Finally, as shown, many high-income individuals travel overseas for business (and pleasure), and would certainly have a more cosmopolitan view of the world. This exposure to information and other environments would certainly broaden their perspective on social, security or economic matters in this country, and places the low-

income group (especially unemployed persons), at a disadvantage, as their thinking, perceptions and decision-making will be based on only a limited framework of knowledge and experiences, local conditions and immediate needs.

Statistically, education levels have also been shown to correlate closely with income level, work position and responsibilities (Unisa, 2010; Van Aardt & Coetzee, 2010). In other words, another possible reason why the low-income group could favour schematic processing is that data-based processing normally requires a moderate to high cognitive response, which in turn depends on cognitive skills generally associated with a higher education.

A low education has also been shown to be strongly related to adult criminality (Coleman *et al.*, 1984, p.262), which could help to explain the degree of unrest and violence associated with the current service delivery protests involving impoverished communities which lack educational opportunities.

6.1.5.2. Work role and responsibilities

The analysis also showed how the responses (perceptions) of some high-income subjects differed from others due to visual perspective, or the work role in which they were employed. It is therefore possible that this phenomenon may extend into other areas, affecting communication between governmental and community representatives, as well as decision-making.

6.2. SUMMARY

In spite of the limitations of the study in terms of sample size and representativeness, the results do suggest a number of summary conclusions which could be applied to the present South African context:

First, as a result of income-specific prior experiences (based on huge discrepancies in

lifestyles and living standards), high and low-income groups in this country may well interpret current events and situations differently.

Second, high-income managers (including heads of government departments), may be seen to have a broader, more long-term and information-(data) based approach to dealing with social, security, economic and business matters. This makes sense in view of the current budgeting, long-term planning and prioritisation applied both in government and the private sector.

Finally, this long-term vision and planning may not really *'fit'* [emphasis added] with the views and expectations of low-income communities, who tend to focus on their immediate self-interest and needs, with little regard for the 'bigger picture'. As seen in recent months, these differences in perceptions can lead to anger and frustration and may even be a factor influencing the current strikes and protests.

6.3. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Practical recommendations arising from this study should therefore first be directed at sensitising all groups as to the fundamental differences in opinion that can be expected due to socioeconomic background, second, at practical arrangements that can be made to bring the two groups together, and third, joint consultative measures to prevent labour and community unrest. A number of recommendations in this regard are provided:

6.3.1. Addressing the problem of differences in perceptions

Diversity-training programmes and workshops at governmental, community, business and even factory level, should include information on the dynamics of perception-formation and how subjective perceptions of any situation can differ based on background and past experience. This training should include a plea for a greater tolerance and understanding of each other's opinions and points of view, based on the shared legitimacy of individual or group experiences (all being equally subjective).

6.3.2. Promoting an understanding of the factors involved in the cycle of poverty, crime and violence

Interventions could include the dissemination of information relating to the cycle of poverty, crime and violence to all heads of government departments, as well as to business leaders from the private sector. This could firstly be achieved through government circulars, but also presented during workshops. The danger of perceptions of mismanagement and corruption would also have to be addressed (Ikejiaku, 2009a). In this regard, due to low levels of literacy in most disadvantaged communities, the best method would be face-to-face meetings with communities to clear up misperceptions.

To facilitate these meetings and to improve access to important information about government priorities and plans to provide housing or improve service delivery, *Community Liassion Committees* should be established in all municipal areas. During an earlier joint police-business-community Service Delivery Improvement Programme (S.D.I.P) sponsored by Business Against Crime in the late 1990's (BAC, 1998, 2000), similar committees were implemented with success at a number of police stations and functioned well until interest and support waned. With the necessary local government, business and community commitment and support, these liassion structures could be successfully initiated or revived. However, they will need to be mandated to empower local authorities to engage the community in a meaningful way, as well as allowing community leaders to enter into ongoing dialogue with governmental structures.

6.3.3. Access to Information

Apart from the liassion committees already mentioned, other more creative mechanisms to distribute information to less-educated communities will need to be implemented. This could include government-sponsored community newspapers (and/ or radio stations for those who are illiterate), in areas where they do not already exist. The importance of access to information became very apparent during this study. Low-income subjects with limited information at their disposal tended to engage in heuristic

processing, made decisions in their immediate self-interest and did not take broader factors such as budgetary and logistical constraints into account.

When engaging in consultations or negotiations with the community, or in the case of companies, with their workers, sufficient information should be made available prior to the meetings and negotiations, and liasson staff provided to explain the details to less-educated workers. Having this information at one's disposal can help to facilitate data-based processing, shown to be the most suitable method for effective decision-making. On the other hand, decision-makers should also be informed as to the actual conditions on the ground before entering into discussion and fully appreciate the ever-present potential for conflict and violence.

6.3.4. Training

The study also revealed the importance of education and training at all levels. This call is also made by Mbeki (2009), who emphasises the need for skills development and a massive educational drive, especially in the technical field (p.90). Improved cognitive skills amongst the leadership of low-income communities will also favour data-based processing and therefore improve reasoning and decision-making abilities.

To facilitate this, community training programmes linked to the Community Liassion Committees could be implemented. As previously stated, similar liassion structures, with the support of business and the private sector, earlier provided joint-training opportunities for police and community members (BAC, 1998, 2000). The relative success of this earlier police programme shows first, that with the necessary commitment and support, community-based initiatives *can* [emphasis added] work, and second, that best-practices in this regard, already exist.

To improve the rather unfavourable relationship suggested by the study between (high-income) management and low-income workers, emotional intelligence (EI), as well as communication and negotiation skills, should be improved with workshops at

governmental and company management level. A project already mentioned in one case reviewed in this study, inter-group 'immersion' (as implemented by the C.E.O. of a major South African company), could assist in this regard.

6.3.5. Responsibility

The analysis revealed that having a position of responsibility requiring advanced decision-making skills translated into higher levels of cognitive activity and improved (data-based) information processing. Mbeki (2009) also advocates a new culture of accountability (p.98) to deal with problems relating to the provision of basic services such as electricity and water, health, education and housing, which are usually at the forefront of service delivery protests. The advantages of including community members and workers representatives in top-level consultative decision-making processes, is therefore clear. This could be facilitated by equipping the Community Liassion Commitees as already proposed, with some joint-decision-making powers.

6.3.6. Work Roles

The phenomena of visual perspective differing according to work role could be important for government-community or management-worker negotiations. As shown in the study, low-income or unemployed members of the community and blue-collar workers tended to focus on immediate needs and solutions. If applied to the general population, this implies that during strikes or service delivery negotiations, these workers or community members would probably have little time for long-term solutions or alternatives. To solve this problem, negotiators and managers should be mandated or empowered to find short-term 'piecemeal' solutions to urgent community or worker needs and concerns which are outside of the framework of long-term governmental or company policies and special departmental or company funds made available for this purpose.

REFERENCE LIST

ACT-R (J. Anderson). [n.d.]. [Abstract]. Abstract retrieved as HTML download from
http://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/act.html

Anderson, J. R. (1978). Arguments concerning representations for mental imagery.
Psychological Review, 85 (4), 249-277.

Anderson, R.C. (1977). The notion of schemata and the educational enterprise. In R.C.
Anderson, R. J. Spiro & W. E. Montague (Eds.), *Schooling and the acquisition of
knowledge* (pp. 415-431)*.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Anderson, R.C. & Pearson, P.D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in
reading comprehension. In P.D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research*
(pp.255-291). New York, NY: Longman. Retrieved as PDF Download
(Anderson_Schema) from netfiles.uiuc.edu via Google.com.
http://scholar.google.co.za/scholar?q=Anderson,+R.C.+%26+Pearson,+P.D.+(1984)

Bartlett, F.C.(1932). *Remembering.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge U. Press.

Burton, J. (1997). *Violence experienced: The source of conflict violence and crime and
their prevention.* New York, NY: Manchester U. press.

Business against Crime. (1998). Winning the war against crime: The service delivery
improvement programme (SDIP). In *BAC Bulletin* (1) 2. Durban, South Africa.
Copy in possession of author.

Business against Crime. (2000). Improving delivery. In *BAC Newsletter –Zululand* (5) 1.
Richards Bay, South Africa. Copy in possession of author.

Bailey, K. (1982). *Methods of social research* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Free press.

Baumeister, R. F. (1995). Self and identity: An introduction. In A. Tesser (Ed.),
Advanced social psychology (pp. 51-98). New York, NY : McGraw-Hill.

Bless, H., Fiedler, K., & Strack, F. (2004). *Social cognition : How individuals construct
social reality.* New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Bower, G.H. & Cohen, P.R. (1982), Emotional influences in memory and thinking: Data
and theory. In M.S. Clark & S.T. Fiske (Eds.), *Affect and cognition: The 17th
annual Carnegie Symposium of Cognition,*(pp. 291-331). Hillsdale, NY: Erlbaum.

Coleman, J., Butcher, J. & Carson, R. (1984). *Abnormal psychology and modern life.*
New York, NY: Scott, Foresman & company.

Corey, G. (2001). *Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy.* Belmont, CA:
Brookes/Cole.

Durrheim, K. (2002). Research design. In M.Terreblanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (Rev. ed., pp. 29-53). Cape Town, South Africa: UCT Press.

Durrheim, K. & Wassenaar, D. (2002). Putting design into practice: Writing and evaluating research proposals. In M.Terreblanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (Rev. ed., pp. 54-71). Cape Town, South Africa: UCT Press.

eThekwini Online. [n.d.]. *About Durban (eThekwini).* Retrieved as HTML download from http://www.durban.gov.za/durban/government/cifal/about/durban-ethekwini

Fiske, S.T. (1982). Schema–triggered affect: Applications to social perception. In M.S. Clark & S.T. Fiske (Eds.), *Affect and cognition*: *The 17th annual Carnegie Symposium of Cognition,* (pp. 55-78). Hillsdale, NY: Erlbaum.

Fiske, S. T. & Taylor, S. E. (1984). *Social cognition.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fiske, S.T. (1995). Social cognition. In A. Tesser (Ed.), *Advanced social psychology*. (pp.149 -193). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Geen, R. (1995). Human Aggression. In A. Tesser (Ed.), *Advanced social psychology*. (pp.383 -419). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg, H. (2004). *Family therapy: An overview* (6th ed.). London, England : Thomson.

Goldstein, B. C. (2005). *Cognitive psychology: Connecting mind, research and everyday experience.* London, England: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Human Sciences Research Council. (2002). *Public attitudes in contemporary South Africa. Insights from an HSRC survey.* Retrieved as PDF download from http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2025&freedownload=1

Ikejiaku, B. (2009a). The relationship between poverty, conflict and development. *Journal of Sustainable Development, 2* (1), 15-28. Retrieved as PDF download from http://journal.ccsenet.org/index.php/jsd/article/view/231

Ikejiaku, B. (2009b). Crime, poverty, political corruption and conflict in apartheid and post apartheid South Africa: The implications on economic development. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, 3*(10), 451-459. Retrieved as PDF download from http://academicjournals.org/ajpsir/contents/2009cont/oct.htm

Jordaan, W, Jordaan, J & Nieuwoudt, J. (1983). *General Psychology: A psychobiological approach* (Part 1)(6th impression).Johannesburg, South Africa: McGraw-Hill.

Jordaan, W, Jordaan, J & Nieuwoudt, J. (1982). *General Psychology: A psychobiological approach* (Part 2)(5th impression).Johannesburg, South Africa: McGraw-Hill.

Kelly, G.A. (1991). *The psychology of personal constructs: Vol.1. A theory of personality.* London, England: Routledge.

Kelly, K. (2002). From encounter to text: collecting qualitative data for interpretative research.In M.Terreblanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (Rev. ed., pp. 379-397). Cape Town, South Africa: UCT Press.

Kenny, V. (1989). Anticipating autopoiesis: Personal construct psychology and self-organizing Systems. In A. Goudsmit [Ed.], *Self-organisation in psychotherapy. Demarcations of a new perspective.* Heidelberg, Germany: Springer-Verlag. Retrieved as HTML download from http://www.oikos.org/vincautopo.htm

Kenny, V. (1997). Constructivism- everybody has won and all must have prizes! *Transactional Analysis Journal*, *27* (2), 110-117.

Kreyenberg, J. (2002).*Transactional analysis as a systemic constructivist approach.* Retrieved as PDF download from 'articles' http://www.coachingsupervision.de/english/index.html

Learning Theory-Schema Theory (n.d.). [abstract]. Retrieved as HTML download from http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2175/Learning-Theory-SCHEMA-THEORY.html

Matthews, M.R. (2000). Constructivism in science and mathematics. In D.C. Philips (Ed.), *National Society for the Study of Education* (99th yearbook, pp.161-192). Chicago, IL: Univ. Chicago Press. Retrieved as HTML download from http://wwwcsi.unian.it/educa/inglese/matthews.html

Maturana, R. & Poerksen, B. (2004). *From being to doing. The origins of the biology of cognition.* Transl. by Wolfram and Alison Koeck. Heidelberg, Germany : Carl-Auer-Systeme.

Mbeki, M. (2009). *Architects of poverty: Why african capitalism needs changing.* Johannesburg, South Africa: Picador Africa.

Minsky, M. (1975). A framework for representing knowledge. In P. Winston (Ed.), *The psychology of computer vision.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Neisser, U. (1976). *Cognition and reality.* San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman.

Nishida, H. (1999). *A* cognitive approach to intercultural communication based on schema theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *23* (5), 753-776.

Peterson, C., & Bossio, L. (1991). *Health and optimism.* Toronto, Canada: Collier Macmillan.

Schonteich, M. (Institute for Security Studies, 2001). Sleeping soundly: Feelings of safety: based on perceptions or reality. *Nedbank ISS Crime Index, 5* (2). Retrieved as HTML download from http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/CRIMEINDEX/01Vol5No2/sleeping.html

Stoker, R. (1996). Constructivism,- paradigm theory or bundle of techniques? *Education and Child Psychology, 13*(4), 58-63.

Terreblanche, M. & Kelly, K. (2002). Interpretative methods. In M. Terreblanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (Rev. ed., pp. 123-146). Cape Town, South Africa: UCT Press.

Terreblanche, M. & Durrheim, K. (2002) (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences.* Cape Town, South Africa: UCT Press.

Unisa Bureau of Market Research (2010). South Africa: Income distribution research shows high skew. *Personal Income patterns and profiles for South Africa 2009* [Abstract]. Abstract retrieved as HTML download from http://www.allafrica.com/stories/201003010747.html

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2003). *South Africa Human Development report 2003.* Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford U Press.

Van Aardt, C. & Coetzee, M. (2010). *Personal Income patterns and profiles for South Africa, 2009 (BMR report 387)* [Abstract]. Abstract retrieved as PDF download from Google.docs (quickview) at http://www.google.co.za/#hl=en&biw=1247&bih=507&q=income+and+education+correlation+unisa&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=&fp=dfbb767fe32c8f11

Van Der Watt, D. (1993). *Constructions of constructivism.* Masters dissertation, University of South Africa library, Pretoria, South Africa.

Wassenaar, D.R (1992). Ethics in counselling. In J. Uys (Ed.), *Psychological counselling in the South African Context* (2nd ed., pp. 49-68). Cape Town, South Africa: Maskew Miller Longman.

Wikipedia (2009a). *Humberto Maturana.* Retrieved February 2009 as HTML download from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humberto_Maturana

Wikipedia (2009b). *Schema_psychology.* Retrieved February 2009 as HTML download from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schema_(psychology)

Wikipedia (2011).*US Luxury car segments, according to manufacturers suggested retail price (in $US).* Retrieved July 2011 as HTML download from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/luxury_vehicles

APPENDIX A- Rated questionnaire (low-income male, fully pessimistic worldview

Fully Pessimistic　　3 * ⊖　　　　WM
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　lo income.

Section 1: Introduction

I wish to thank you for being willing to complete this questionnaire. I am a student with the University of South Africa completing my master's degree in psychology. This survey is designed to measure your perceptions of the country and will be important in providing additional information relating to the forming of different perceptions. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you may remain anonymous. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential and only be made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

Section 2. **Personal particulars**

Gender

☑ Male

☐ Female

Income category

☐ Top income earner (Above R 750 000 PA)

☐ Middle income　　(R 50 000 -R 750 000 PA)

☑ Low or no income　(Below R 50 000 PA)

Section 3: **STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Section 3.1

Please underline your response to the following statements:

Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor　YES/NO ⊖

All unemployed people should be given grants　YES/NO

Poor people only steal to survive　YES/NO

Please tick the relevant boxes:

Section 3.3

Please tick the correct box which matches your current lifestyle:

I live in the following......

☐ A house or flat which I own

☐ A house or flat which I rent

☑ In a granny flat or single room

☐ Wherever I can find a place to sleep

☐ Other ....

⊖

Section 3.2

Please underline how you currently feel about the country:

South Africa is a safe /unsafe place ⊖ ⊖

South Africa is a dangerous/ fun and enjoyable place ⊖

Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/ very tense ⊖

same cognitive *Politscal* *5 Times*

Whenever I want a meal I......

☐ Eat what I can find in the street/ trash cans

☑ Eat at home only

☐ Eat usually at home but also at food outlets

☐ Eat in the best restaurants and hotels and only occasionally at home

I own the following items or appliances :

☐ A luxury motor car, SUV or 4 x4

☐ A normal motor vehicle

☐ A TV

☐ A stove and fridge

☑ None of the above ⊖

In my free time I do the following:

☐ Travel internationally & visit exotic locations

☐ Have regular holidays

☑ Watch TV

☐ Visit family or friends

☑ Sit around with nothing to do △

unemployed

Thank you for your participation in this survey

unemployed with *living conditions*

APPENDIX B- Rated questionnaire (middle-income female, ambivalent worldview)

ambivalent.
1 Ⅱ/2 A

W F
18-60

Section 1: Introduction

I wish to thank you for being willing to complete this questionnaire. I am a student with the University of South Africa completing my master's degree in psychology. This survey is designed to measure your perceptions of the country and will be important in providing additional information relating to the forming of different perceptions. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you may remain anonymous. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential and only be made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

Section 2. Personal particulars

Gender

☐ Male
☑ Female

Income category

☐ Top income earner (Above R 750 000 PA)
☑ Middle income (R 50 000 -R 750 000 PA)
☐ Low or no income (Below R 50 000 PA)

Section 3: STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Section 3.1

Please underline your response to the following statements:

Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor   YES/NO

All unemployed people should be given grants   YES/NO

Poor people only steal to survive   YES/NO

Please tick the relevant boxes:

Section 3.2

Please underline how you currently feel about the country:

South Africa is a safe /unsafe place   *ambivalent*

South Africa is a dangerous/ fun and enjoyable place

Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/ very tense

Circumstances (amb)
ambivalent

Section 3 .3

Please tick the correct box which matches your current lifestyle:

I live in the following......

☑ A house or flat which I own   *(amb)*
☐ A house or flat which I rent
☐ In a granny flat or single room
☐ Wherever I can find a place to sleep
☐ Other ....

Whenever I want a meal I......

☐ Eat what I can find in the street/ trash cans
☐ Eat at home only
☑ Eat usually at home but also at food outlets
☐ Eat in the best restaurants and hotels and only occasionally at home

I own the following items or appliances :

☐ A luxury motor car, SUV or 4 x4
☑ A normal motor vehicle ✓
☑ A TV
☑ A stove and fridge
☐ None of the above

In my free time I do the following:

☐ Travel internationally & visit exotic locations
☑ Have regular holidays
☑ Watch TV
☑ Visit family or friends
☐ Sit around with nothing to do

Thank you for your participation in this survey

APPENDIX C- Rated questionnaire (high-income female, generally optimistic worldview)

generally optimistic 2/ 1A

W F 60+
-highly educ
Dr Slavan

Section 1: Introduction

I wish to thank you for being willing to complete this questionnaire. I am a student with the University of South Africa completing my master's degree in psychology. This survey is designed to measure your perceptions of the country and will be important in providing additional information relating to the forming of different perceptions. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you may remain anonymous. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential and only be made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

Section 2. Personal particulars

Gender

☐ Male

☑ Female

Income category

☐ Top income earner (Above R 750 000 PA)

☐ Middle income (R 50 000 -R 750 000 PA)

☐ Low or no income (Below R 50 000 PA)

Section 3: STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Section 3.1

Please underline your response to the following statements:

Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor YES/NO

All unemployed people should be given grants YES/NO

Poor people only steal to survive YES/NO

Please tick the relevant boxes:

Section 3.2

Please underline how you currently feel about the country:

South Africa is a safe /unsafe place

South Africa is a dangerous/ fun and enjoyable place

Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/ very tense

ambi.

Section 3.3

Please tick the correct box which matches your current lifestyle:

I live in the following......

☑ A house or flat which I own

☐ A house or flat which I rent

☐ In a granny flat or single room

☐ Wherever I can find a place to sleep

☐ Other ....

Optimistic

Whenever I want a meal I......

☐ Eat what I can find in the street/ trash cans

☐ Eat at home only

☐ Eat usually at home but also at food outlets

☑ Eat in the best restaurants and hotels and only occasionally at home

I own the following items or appliances :

☑ A luxury motor car, SUV or 4 x4

☐ A normal motor vehicle

☑ A TV

☑ A stove and fridge

☐ None of the above

high lyflife.

In my free time I do the following:

☑ Travel internationally & visit exotic locations

☐ Have regular holidays

☑ Watch TV

☑ Visit family or friends

☐ Sit around with nothing to do

APPENDIX D- Rated online questionnaire (high-income female, generally optimistic worldview)

[handwritten: generally optimistic 24/1A.   High-income WF]

http://www.durban.gov.za/durban/e_colophon/edisclaimer

>>> "jp Henderson" <jph@saol.com> 2010/11/17 01:32 PM >>>
ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT CARD/STUDENTEKAART

UNISA
0457-629-2   2010
MR J P HENDERSON

DEAR MS ▇▇▇▇

I am a Durban ratepayer and student with the University of South Africa completing my master's degree in Psychology. I would be grateful if you could answer a few questions which would help me with my research studies. Please take a few moments to complete and push reply to this e-mail/message.

I am looking at current perceptions of the country and any time you take to complete a short list of questions would be appreciated. Please understand that your participation is voluntary and any answers you provide will be treated as confidential and only be made available to the Psychology department of Unisa.

JP (Jimmy) HENDERSON

Section 3.1   **Please type in 'yes' or 'no' next to the following three questions:**

Wealthy people in South Africa care about the poor	yes
All unemployed people should be given grants	no
Poor people only steal to survive	sometimes – mostly not

Section 3.2   **Please delete the words that you feel are _not_ applicable:**

South Africa is a safe /place
South Africa is a / fun and enjoyable place
Life in South Africa is quite relaxed/

[handwritten: official position ?]

Section 3.3

Please put an asterix* or other mark next to the statement which matches your current lifestyle: *[handwritten: amb]*

I live in the following...	Whenever I want a meal I ...
A house or flat which I own *	Eat what I can find in the street or in trash cans
A house or flat which I rent	Eat at home only
In a granny flat or single room	Eat usually at home but also at food outlets and
Wherever I can find a place to sleep	restaurants *
Other	Eat usually in the best restaurants or hotels and only
I have the following items or appliances	occasionally at home
A luxury motor car, SUV or 4 x 4	In my free time I do the following:
A normal motor vehicle *	I travel internationally
A TV *	Have regular holidays

APPENDIX E- Assessed personal interview sheet (low-income male)

PRO-FORMA INTERVIEW SHEET

WM 60+ Alex. car guard

Thank you for being willing to complete this questionnaire. As I informed you earlier, I am a student with the University of South Africa completing my master's degree in psychology and the purpose of this interview is for me to gather information on your perceptions of the country which will provide us with important information on how different people form perceptions. Once again, your participation is voluntary and you may remain anonymous. Any information you provide will be treated as confidential and only be made available to the psychology department of Unisa.

PERSONAL DETAILS (ticked off by interviewer)

Gender

☑ Male

☐ Female

Income category

☐   Top income earner (Above R 750 000 PA)

☐   Middle income   (R 50 000 to R 750 000 PA)

☑   Low or no income   (Below R 50 000 PA)

Standardised questions

1. How would you describe your views on the different people in this country?

(Especially with regards to the high income group on the one hand and the poor and unemployed on the other)

Rich could do more for upliftment. Poor need to stand up and prepared to work.

2. How do you feel about safety and security in South Africa today?

Major centre crime is safe. Political agenda to farm attacks. less crime in small Town (Excl Farms)

3. Tell me about some of your recent experiences which have changed the way you see the country

talk about nationalization of mines + banks makes me concerned.

4. How well are you able to live in this country? (your standard of living)

coping.

5. Is there anything else you would like to add?

private sector could do more to provide employment.

Thank you again for the interview and being willing to share this information with me.

APPENDIX F- Assessed participant observation sheet

MA Degree DFPSY 95 JP Henderson 2010
Observations

Q seen as more complex than low-income

Hi-income group - more considered answers (data-driven processing)
= less dependence on [illegible] processing.
(except for LSM - visual [illegible] - simple Q.) ✓

Low income
focus on immediate needs

Response
especially politicized subjects (even middle income)

Middle income very quick response to [illegible] if [illegible] are... (no) [illegible] also [illegible]

middle income politicians (City C.)
good cognitive/[illegible]
data-based [illegible]

x Middle income grant
for grant?

diff. perceptions on safety + security
even with security [illegible]
(High income managers differed
radically — official vs. personal views?) (Political).

due to then
"you'd do [illegible] then"

will PTSB crime

Most Police seemed to adopt very optimistic
view of s + security.
(official Police policy + perspective?)

Phoned Gavin - club manager of Virgin Active [illegible] Lucia
refused placement of questionnaires due to matters
of privacy.

hi-income usually engage in discussion
able to recognise ambiguity of some Q

before [illegible]

Police officers followed official policy on safety + sec - even noted

health [illegible]