

*Women's Career Advancement in the South African Mining Industry: Exploring the experiences of women in management positions at Lonmin Platinum Mine*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

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#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

There has been a considerable research interest in women's career advancement to management positions in many countries, including South Africa (Ngoako, 1999; Omar & Davidson, 2001; Singer, 2002; Tabudi, 2008; Shobhana, 2011). According to Omar and Davidson (2001), "the increased interest in the study of women in management around the world is due to the increase in women's participation in the labour market, in response to the changes in demographic, social and economic factors". Berstein (1985) argues that this interest has been a result of the changing dynamics of male governance, which historically rested in all organs of key decision-making and control, such as politics, the armed forces, economy and mining, from which women were excluded and even prohibited by legislation.

Bringing the topic closer to home, research indicates that South African women are facing a challenge in climbing the corporate ladder across all sectors (Ngoako, 1999; Tabudi 2008). South Africa's Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Lulu Xingwana, recently complained about the exclusion of women from the corporate arena. This statement followed the release of the 2011 results of the study done by the Business Women Association of South Africa (BWASA), which revealed that "women in South Africa hold only: 4.4% of CEO/MD positions; 5.3% of chairperson positions; and 15.8% of all directorships" (SANews, 2012). The Minister stated that: "The Business Woman Association and all of us who are committed to building a society based on equality are understandably concerned at the continued exclusion of women and the slow pace at which they are being incorporated into the corporate space at senior levels" (SANews, 2012).

The South African mining industry, in particular, is also receiving increasing attention regarding the low participation of women in general and their slow advancement into senior management positions. Mphokane (2008) argues that this interest in the mining industry is specifically due to the industry's major economic contribution, the potential the industry has for the creation of employment opportunities, as well as the transformational measures it has implemented to redress gender inequalities in the workplace. Following a negative review of the Mining Charter targets for women in mining and other transformation elements, in 2009, the Minister of Mineral Recourses also reiterated the growing concern regarding the pace at which women are being incorporated into meaningful key operational and strategic jobs at senior level and board level in the mining industry (Shabangu, 2011).

For purposes of the study, career advancement will be defined as the hierarchical advancement of one's career, with a particular focus of advancing from junior (first-line supervisory management) to middle, senior and executive management levels.

Historically, the mining industry has been described to be a male dominated environment (Mashiane, 2009; Calitz, 2004; Hamann, 2004; Benya, 2009; McCulloch, 2003; Singer, 2002). According to Benya (2009), the South African workplace is characterized by male dominance and racial division, with whites<sup>1</sup> in management and blacks in blue-collar and junior positions. Calitz (2004) explains that hard labour, long distance to walk to mining areas, hot temperatures and handling of heavy machinery required in the mining industry resulted in the association of the industry with male physical strength. Therefore, the industry became male dominated and was believed to symbolize a male rather than female form of endeavor (McCulloch, 2003; Calitz, 2004). This perception was further perpetuated by the socialization of gender roles that emphasizes different roles for men and women and which resulted in gender-related occupational discrimination, which inevitably made the mining industry a relatively hostile climate for women (Calitz, 2004; Mashiane, 2009; Benya, 2009).

Previous South African research indicates that apartheid significantly influenced the crafting of a male dominated mining occupational culture through policies and legislation, which were characterized by gender and racial inequality (Mashiane, 2009; Calitz 2004; Hamann, 2004; Benya, 2009; Singer, 2002). During the apartheid era, women were prohibited from working in the mines (underground and in the plants), except where they assumed support, administrative and other peripheral roles (Calitz, 2004; Shabangu, 2011). This prohibition was promulgated through the South African Minerals Act of 1911 and 1991, which specifically forbidden women from working underground and in mining plants (Benya, 2009; Cruise, 2011). However, research indicates that the apartheid laws were not applied equally to women of various racial groups (Ngoako, 1999). According to Ngoako (1999), white women had more privileges compared to black women (and other minority groups) and they were allowed to occupy administrative roles, whilst black women occupied other peripheral roles in most sectors. As a result of the discriminatory acts, integration and the involvement of women in the mining industry remains low, with females constituting only 12% in management positions, of which 8% are white females and 4% black females (Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector (SSP), 2011).

In 1994, South Africa elected a new democratic government, and apartheid was repealed and replaced by democracy. The Constitution of South Africa of 1996 was promulgated with the aim of promoting the rights of all its citizens, regardless of their race, gender, class and disability (Ngoako, 1999). Numerous legislative documents such as the Affirmative Action, Employment Equity Act, the Promotion of Equality and Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination Act were also put in place as measures designed to redress inequalities and to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> Whites and Black refers to classifications of colour based on the previous South African apartheid system. It is not my intention to legitimise this apartheid era terminologies but use this classifications/categories to highlight differences that could inform public policy decision-making.

meaningful involvement of the historically disadvantaged South Africans (HDSA) – including women. In the mining industry, the Minerals Act of 1991 was substituted with the Mine Health and Safety Act (1996), inter alia with the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) of 2002 to improve equity in the sector across employment and ownership categories.

The Broad-Based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining Industry of 2002 (referred to as the Mining Charter) was developed by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), as a tool to enforce transformation, and was designed to measure specific targets linked to license issuing and/renewal applications for mining rights by mining companies. The Charter was also developed to augment the social provisions of the MPRDA. Amongst the transformation targets as per the Amendment of the Mining Charter in 2010, are employment equity targets which provides reference to this study as they stipulates that mining companies are:

- *“To increase the demographic representation of HDSAs to a minimum of 40% in top management, senior management, core and critical skills, middle management and junior management occupational categories by the end of 2014”.*
- *“To increase the employment of women to at least 10% of their total strength by the end of 2014”.*

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Given the promulgation of South African post-Apartheid legislation almost two decades ago, one would expect that amongst other issues, a body of work focusing on attempts to redress gender inequality in the workplace has been established. Furthermore, given the promulgation of the Mining Charter in 2002, with targets directly linked to the renewal of the mining rights of all mining companies, one would have expected that women would now be reasonably represented at all levels of management. However, the 2009 review of the Mining Charter Targets revealed that the majority of mining companies did not achieve the set 10% Women in Mining target (Shabangu, 2011; Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011; Social Labour Plan Report, 2011).

Although women have made inroads in entering the mining industry, the majority of women are in support services, administrative roles and junior positions. Only a few have been able to progress to management and senior management levels (Mining and Mineral Sustainable Development (MMSD), 2001; Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011; Mphokane, 2008; Calitz, 2004; Cruise, 2011; Mashiane, 2009). Hopkins (2000) and Kimmel (2004) argue that although under-representation of women at senior management level in the mining industry can be attributed to several factors (including the low intake of females at tertiary education institutions), the dominance of an organizational culture that still upholds masculine values and behaviour largely continues to perpetuate the problem. Mathur-Helm (2006) argues, however, that women are not progressing to senior management level because of what he refers to as a glass ceiling effect. Contrary to Mathur-Helm (2006), Van Zyl and Roodt (2003) argue that the Employment Equity Act (1998) has caused

visible cracks to appear in the glass ceiling and that most women are aware of the cracks, however, only a few women are able to sneak through the cracks.

Previous studies focused on challenges faced by women entering the mining industry, particularly to work at entry level and junior level positions in core business areas, such as underground and in the processing plants (Calitz, 2004; Wynn, 2001). There is also literature on how women in mining are confronted by the male dominated organizational culture (Benya, 2009; Tsomondo, 2011; Shobhana, 2011). Mashiane (2009) investigated the “transformational barriers against women’s career advancement in the platinum mining industry”. Literature indicates that there is an increasing interest in the career development and progression of women in mining, however, there is a dearth of studies on how women in management positions describe their experiences and perceptions of their career progression in the mining industry – given the various interventions that have been run since the democratic government was elected in 1994. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the experiences of women in management positions in mining (junior, middle, senior and executive) and the perceptions of the career progression of women from one level of management to the next in the platinum mining industry.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research project sought to address the following questions:

- What are the experiences of women at different levels of management within the platinum mining industry?
- What factors facilitate or impede their progress from one level of management to the next in the platinum mining industry?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

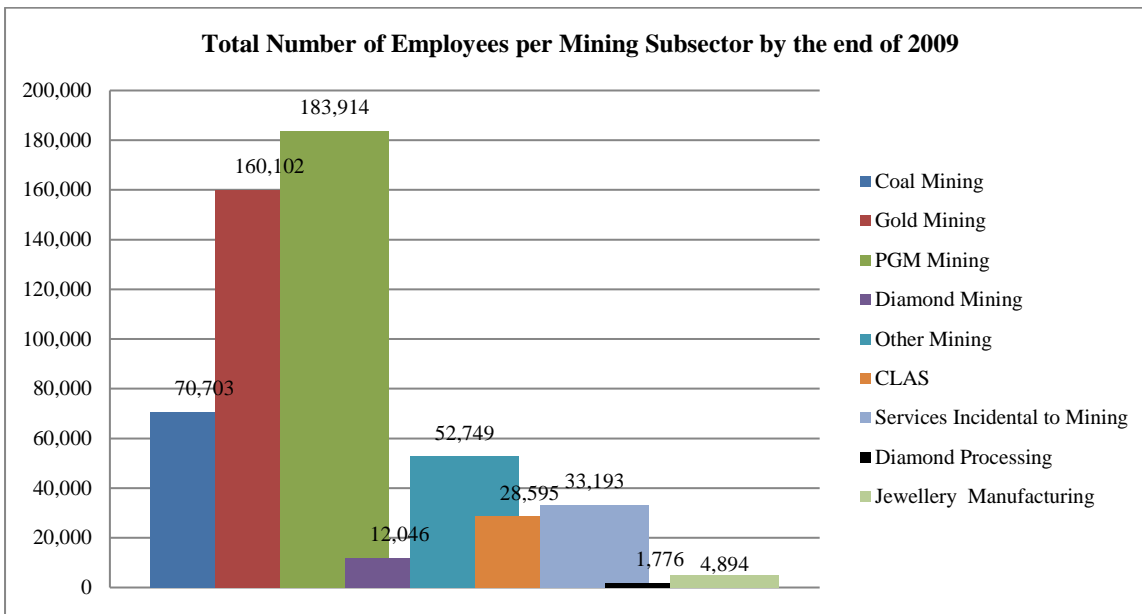
This chapter presents a review of literature on the plight of women in mining and their career advancement to management and senior levels in the industry. It provides a historical background of: the mining industry in South Africa; legislation and the Mining Charter that governs the mining industry; the mining organisational culture; gender and inequalities in the mining industry; women in mining; and a brief presentation of literature on women in management positions in the mining industry. Finally, this chapter will present a snapshot on Lonmin, the case study area and its progress on women in mining as well as the relevant theoretical background.

### 2.2 HISTORY OF THE MINING INDUSTRY

Mphokane (2008) argues that South Africa is renowned for its abundance in mineral resources, which account for a substantial proportion of the world production and reserves. According to the SA-Info (2013), “South Africa is projected to have the world’s fifth-largest mining sector based on its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) value and is also acknowledged for its leading role in the discovery of new mining technologies, such as a ground-breaking process that converts low-grade superfine iron ore into high-quality iron units”. Furthermore, SA-Info (2013) indicates that “mining contributes an average of 20% of South Africa’s GDP, it claims the total annual income exceeding Rand (R) 330 billion, it is one of the country’s largest providers of formal employment and it is the largest contributor by value to black economic empowerment in the economy”.

Mphokane (2008) further describes “the mining sector as a fundamental component that shaped the South African economy, contributed to the formation of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and has more than a million people employed within the mining sector”. Figure 2.1 below depicts the number of people employed in the different subsectors in the mining industry by the end of 2009. According to this report calculated from the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) data source, total mining employment at the end of 2009 was estimated at approximately 548 000, including both permanent employees and contractors (Skills Sector Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011:11). In terms of the subsectors, the largest sub-sector was the platinum group metals (PGM), with employees constituting 34% of total employment in the sub-sector; this was followed by gold mining (with 29%), then coal mining (with 13%). The other mining sub-sector employed 10% of total employment, followed by diamond mining at 2% and services incidental to mining employed 6%. The smallest sub-sectors for employment in the mining industry were: Cement, Lime, Aggregate and Sand (CLAS) with 5%; jewellery manufacturing (with 1%); and finally the diamond processing constituting less than 0.5%.

**Figure 2.1: Total Number of Employees per Mining Subsector**



Source: Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Resources (2011)

Although the mining industry has contributed significantly to the country's economy, industrialization and modernization, it has had a substantial impact on the social and cultural design of the industry and has perpetuated socio-economic inequalities. Benya (2009) describes the industry as being characterized by hard labour associated with the use of heavy machinery, extremely uncomfortable working conditions, thunderous noise, intense heat, humid environment and confined spaces. Singer (2002:2) and Heine (2008:36) summarised the mining environment as being characterised by physical strain from noise from blasting, ventilation and vibrating machines. These authors further described the underground heat to be another major form of physical strain that characterises the mining industry. Heine (2008) further explained that "the heat from the extremely hot underground temperatures in most shafts as deep as two miles below the earth's surface could reach 100 degrees".

Heine (2008) also identified material handling as another mining industry physical strain, resulting from lifting, pushing, pulling, lowering, and holding and dragging of loads without the help of mechanical devices or tools. Other distinctive characteristics of working conditions in the mining industry included: long rotational shifts, poor machines design and ergonomics; poor infrastructure and facilities and unsafe conditions – dark and isolated areas and small over-crowded and dark cages presenting issues relating to the safety and security of employees (Singer, 2002; Calitz, 2004; Heine, 2008).

Anon (2000), Singer (2002) and Calitz (2004) described core underground mining working conditions as gruelling and risky as they include activities such as: drilling through rocks to develop and mine in phases;

working with explosives (Ammonium Nitrate/Fuel Oil – ANFO) for blasting the rocks; placing pencil sticks and construct timber in stopes to create support structures; testing geological formations; and operating machinery such as load-haul-dump (LHD), scraper winches, locos, loaders and other heavy duty-machines. The conditions also include maintaining mining machinery particularly in conventional mines; installing ventilation and water pipes; scaling loose rock; cribbing; working in dark, cramped and damp conditions; and potential exposure to hazardous gases.

On the other hand, the mining processing plant environment includes working in crushers, the mill, slag plants, smelting and refinery areas, floatation units and tailings dams. In these areas, employees: handle heavy steel balls; work in noisy crushing and ore processing areas; and are exposed to heavy machinery, vibrations, heights and hazardous chemicals throughout the shift (Donoghue, 2004). Furthermore, mining processing plant work includes: carrying heavy objects; material handling (as in underground mining); working both inside and outside the plants; working in restricted spaces, often in hot conditions for over extended periods of time particularly in the refineries; taking samples and carrying them through the processing plant throughout the shift; using high-pressure hoses; handling and working with chemicals such as Xanthate and extremely hot temperatures in the mills, crushers, lab, slag plants, smelting and refinery areas (Wynn, 2001; Donoghue, 2004).

A body of work confirms that it is based on the harsh and risky conditions that the industry became increasingly associated with male physical strength and consequently became male dominant (Calitz, 2004; Mashiane, 2009; Forastieri, 2000; Benya, 2009). Forastieri (2000) argues that even the occupational safety and health standards, medical examination processes, procedures and norms, protective clothing and exposure limits to hazardous substances were designed for males. The industry was characterised by masculinity and became male dominant at both labour and management levels. Women were not employed in any of the underground and processing areas, which: denied them entry and exposure to the mining environment; and consequently deprived them of the opportunity to develop into management roles in these functional areas (Benya, 2009). Women were only allowed to be employed in positions that had less value, that were regarded as not being core mining and that did not require physical strength and sharing responsibilities with men (Calitz, 2004).

In South Africa, the mining industry was also influenced by apartheid laws, which supported not only gender, but also racial and socio-economic inequality. According to Hamann (2004:279), “the extent to which mining companies colluded with or underpinned the apartheid state is still a matter of debate; but most critics agree that the activities of mining houses were inextricably linked with colonial and subsequent apartheid policies, through the migrant labour system”. As a result, the industry became male dominated, with: white males occupying management and supervisory positions; black and other minority racial male groups in first entry positions; whilst women were forbidden to work in core mining functions, but were allowed to work in administrative and other menial positions that required less physical strength (Benya, 2009; Calitz, 2004; Singer, 2002; Hamann, 2004; Mashiane, 2009). These researchers posited that this exclusion of women continued to perpetuate the



gender and socio-economic inequalities, with women at the bottom of the ranks, as they were deprived of exposure and career development in the mining roles.

The adoption of the new South African Constitution and changes in legislation in 1997 resulted in the repeal of the discriminatory laws, in order to redress the gender and racial inequalities. However, Mashiane (2009) and Benya (2009) argue that, despite the establishment of human resource development functions and employment equity policies, most mining companies are still struggling to successfully implement transformation programmes as required by the Department of Minerals and Resources (DMR).

### **2.3 MINING LEGISLATION AND THE CHARTER**

*“During apartheid, blacks weren't the only ones who felt the sting of discrimination. Women could not drive trains, fly airplanes or enter combat. They were also barred from jobs in the nation's vast underground mining industry, one of the largest sectors of the economy” (Singer, 2002:1).*

Previous studies illustrate that the mining industry was shaped by apartheid laws that supported gender inequality, as well as racial and socio-economic inequality (Hamann, 2004; Calitz, 2004; Mashiane, 2009; Benya, 2009; Mlambo, 2011). Past discriminatory laws and legislation were designed to prohibit women from working in core mining areas (underground/ shafts and in the plants). Moreover, these legislative restrictions were introduced at international level as early as 1935, through the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 45 of 1935. In Article 2 of the ILO Convention 45 of 1935 it was stated that:

*“No female, whatever her age, shall be employed on underground work in any mine” (International Labour Organisation, 1935).*

According to the ILO Convention of 1935, exceptions to this rule only applied to: “females occupying managerial positions, not employed to work in manual labour roles and females in health and welfare services; females who spent a period of training in the underground parts of a mine as required in the course of their studies; and any other females who occasionally had to enter the underground parts of a mine for the purpose of a non-manual occupation” (International Labour Organization, 1935: Article 3). The implementation of this act formalised and further perpetuated the exclusion of women in mining and from gaining exposure and developing their careers in management within the core functions.

In 1998, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted at the 86th ILO Conference. This declaration was adopted to “promote and enforce the universal application of the four fundamental human rights principles: the abolition of forced labour; elimination of child labour; workers freedom of association and right to collective bargaining; and equality in employment and occupation” (Roy & Kaye, 2002:17-18).

The ILO asserted the obligation of all its members to work towards ratifying and fully respecting these principles, as embodied by the conventions (International Labour Organization, 1998). To ensure implementation and adherence to the above fundamental rights, the ILO introduced Annual Reviews and Global Reports to identify countries that had not ratified the principles; identify factors contributing to non-compliance; and support required from the ILO to ensure that all countries are able to ratify and implemented the four principles (Roy & Kaye, 2002). Embedded in the fourth fundamental principle, is the aim to redress inequality and discrimination of any kind in the workplace.

In South Africa, the South African Minerals Act of 1911, Section 8(1) states:

*'No person shall employ underground on any mine a boy apparently under the age of sixteen years or any female.'*

Consequently, this legislation contributed significantly to moulding the South African mining industry into an all-male domain, with little room for women to participate in what they viewed as the “men’s game” (Cruise, 2011:217). Furthermore, the industry became impenetrable for women as it was perceived and associated with masculinity, consequently women were denied access into mining roles particularly those in core business areas and were associated with status, masculinity, and authority. Women were only accepted into mining in menial jobs that were not regarded as fundamental and critical to the business which denied women opportunities for development and career progression (Cruise, 2011).

Furthermore, the South African mining industry did not only uphold gender discriminating laws, but racial discriminating laws were driven by the upper class, which was an ‘all-white’ network (Cruise, 2011). This racial discrimination was entrenched in what Cruise refers to as the ‘Colour Bar Acts’ which included the Mines and Works Act of 1911, the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 and the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1956 (Cruise, 2011). It was the latter Act that was promulgated to reinforce the gender and racial inequalities of the apartheid era in South Africa, preventing all non-white racial groups from obtaining any mining certificates of competency (Cruise, 2011). The Act specified that:

*“Any regulation under paragraph (n) of sub-section (1) may provide that in any Province, area or place specified therein, certificates and competency in any occupations likewise specified, shall be granted only to persons of the following classes:*

*(i) Europeans*

*(ii) Persons born in the Union and ordinarily resident therein, who are members of the class or race known as Cape Coloureds or of the class or race known as Cape Malays*

*(iii) The people known as Mauritius Creoles or St. Helena persons or their descendants born in the Union”*  
(Cruise 2011:217).

Based on this part of the Act, all non-white individuals were effectively prohibited from obtaining a Blasting Certificate, which was required for promotion into a Miner position. Without a Blasting Certificate, these individuals could not obtain the Shift Boss Certificate, or the Mine Overseer and Mine Manager Certificates and move up the ranks into mining management, as these certificates are requisites for obtaining qualifications and promotion to the next higher level jobs (Cruise, 2011). Consequently, the Act created a promotional ceiling for all non-white racial groups and they remained in first entry jobs as labourers and created a double barrier for women preventing them first from entry and then progression into management positions in mining. It is therefore not surprising that, for many years, the majority of mining professionals and management have been white males, with very few men from other minority groups in supervisory and management roles. The progression of the few non-white employees was only realised in 1998 following the review of the Mines and Works Act where the racial discriminatory section was revoked. The SSP (2011) argues that although the Act prevented non-white racial groups from obtaining a certificate of competence, these minority groups (men and women) alternatively pursued the formal education route and enrolled for engineering and mining related qualifications to obtain their educational freedom. “Whilst the first black South African male graduated as a mining engineer in 1986, the first South African woman only graduated in 1992” (Cruise, 2011:218).

In the post-apartheid era, Section 9 of the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the South Africa’s Constitution of 1995) “prompted the re-designing of relevant legislation to promote equal rights and freedom of all citizens and to protect or advance persons or categories of persons that were disadvantaged and unfairly discriminated against” (p. 1247). The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, the Labour Relations Act of 1995, the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Mine Health and Safety Act of 1996, and the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) of 2002, were adopted to redress the inequalities that existed during the apartheid era. With particular reference to the mining industry, the above mentioned laws were designed to compel employers to:

- *“Enhance equity in the sector across employment and ownership categories;*
- *Address social impacts associated with mining; and,*
- *Enable South Africans, generally, to benefit from the exploitation of mining and mineral resources”* (Hermanus, 2003:2).

The Broad-Based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining Industry (Mining Charter) was conceived in 2002 to intensify on the social provision of the MPRDA (Hermanus, 2003). The Mining Charter was developed by the DMR, as a mechanism to enforce transformation with specific Social Labour Plans (SLP) targets that are linked to application and renewal of mining rights licences for mining companies (Hermanus, 2003; Hamann, 2004; Singer, 2002). The elements of the Mining Charter includes the following areas that are targeted to create enabling environments for the empowerment of HDSAs and ensuring transformation in the mining industry: “human resources development; employment equity; ownership;

procurement and enterprise development; beneficiation; mining community development; housing and living conditions; sustainable development and growth of the mining industry; as well as growth and reporting” (Amendments of the Mining Charter, 2010:I). All these elements of the Mining Charter are meant to promote meaningful participation and engagement of HDSAs in the mineral and mining industry, as employees or entrepreneurs.

Relevant to the current study is the employment equity element of the Mining Charter, “which carries a total weight of 16% of the scorecard: (Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011:34). The SSP (2011) further explains that the employment equity targets compels the mining companies to prioritise and implement strategies for the development of black managers and promotion of HDSAs (including women) in occupations that are regarded as core and critically important to mining operations, which were previously dominated by men and white people (p.34). The National Gender Policy Framework (2003) was also developed to address gender issues relating to access to employment, economic empowerment, access to science and technology, access to political power and gender machinery to enhance for the meaningful access and involvement of women in the workplace, politics and in the economy. Following the Mining Charter Review in 2009, where the majority of mining companies failed to meet their employment equity and human resource development targets, the Charter was amended, with new targets set for the next review, scheduled for 2014. These employment equity targets reflected through the Mining Charter Scorecard indicating that mining companies are compelled to:

- *“Ensure demographic representation of HDSAs with a minimum target of 40% in each of the following: top management, senior management, core and critical skills, middle management and junior management occupational categories;*
- *Create an environment conducive to promoting and encouraging diversity, in order to increase and retain the requisite skills;*
- *Identify and fast-track the existing talent pool to ensure high-level operational exposure in terms of career path programmes; and*
- *Increase women in mining representation and participation by 10% of the total strength in the core business areas” (Hamann, 2004 ; Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011)*

Finally, the Social and Labour Plan (SLP) Reporting was introduced by the MPRDA to be submitted with the application for granting and renewal of mining (and production) licences. This reporting was also implemented to enforce effective transformation within the mining industry. Collaborating with the Mining Charter, the SLP report requires that companies applying for renewal of their mining rights to develop, implement and report on “full-scale human resource development (Learnerships, bursary & internship, and mentorship & career progression plans), employment equity (HDSAs and women development and promotions); community development (local community development programmes, and housing & living conditions), and downscaling

and retrenchment plans” (Revised Social & Labour Plan Guidelines, 2010). In line with other transformation initiatives, the objectives of the SLP were to ensure that mining companies: “promote employment and advance the social and economic welfare of all South Africans; contribute to the transformation on the mining industry; and that holders of mining rights contribute towards the socio-economic development of the areas in which they are operating as well as the areas from which the majority of the workforce is sourced through procurement, ownership and joint ventures and beneficiation” (Revised Social & Labour Plan Guidelines, 2010).

## **2.4 MINING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

In Shobhana (2011), it stated that organizational culture as a subject has become increasingly popular since the 1980s. O’Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) asserted that, despite the growing interest on this subject, there seems to be little consensus within the literature as to what organizational culture actually encompasses, consequently, different definitions and perspectives on this topic abound. However, there seems to be consensus in the literature that organizational culture has its roots (in the main) from the culture theory (Hofstede, 1991; McNamara, 2000; Schein, 2004; Johnson, Koh & Killough, 2009); hence it is imperative that one first understands culture as a construct.

Cooke and Rousseau (1988: 245) define culture “as a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit, which are acquired through social learning and the socialization processes”. According to Hofstede (1991:180), culture “is the collective programming of the human mind, which distinguishes the members of one organization from another”. Shobhana (2011) states that culture is not simply acquired overnight, but rather develops from a slow process whereby an individual grows into a society/ organization through: “learning values (dominant beliefs and attitudes); partaking in rituals (collective activities); modelling against heroes (role models); and understanding symbols (myths, legends, dress and lingo)” (p. 14).

In defining organizational culture, Johnson, et al. (2009:319) explained that “acquired past experiences are used as a basis for determining action and that these interactions become common knowledge over time and represent the beliefs and views of that particular organization”. These authors further explained that “the common knowledge is then used by organizational members to interpret past experiences and current situations and to guide present and future actions, thus forming the basis of the culture of that particular organization” (Johnson, et al, 2009). Based on the description of culture by Hofstede (1991), organizational culture therefore represents a collective phenomenon amongst members of an organization which manifest through shared values and practices (rituals, symbols and heroes) of that organization. Similarly, Wheelen and Hunger (2010) defined organisational culture as “the collection of beliefs, expectations, and values learned and shared by a corporation's members and transmitted from one generation of employees to another” (p.149).

According to Denison organizational culture refers “to the underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization’s management system, as well as the set of management practices and behaviour that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles. These principles and practices endure

because they have meaning to the members of an organization and they represent strategies for survival that have worked well in the past and that the members believe will work again in the future” (Denison & Neale, 1996:1-3)

According to Webster, Moodie, Stewart and Psoulis (1999:21), organizational culture refers to “the beliefs and practices that workers develop as appropriate ways of life to meet the demands of their particular occupations”.

Whilst McNamara (2000) defines organizational culture as the personality of an organization, Schein (1984) adopted the functionalist view, describing organizational culture as “a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (p.3).

Finally, Robbins and Judge (2007) also described organizational culture as “referring to a system of shared meaning, held by members, that distinguishes the organization from other organizations”. They further explain that the essence of the culture of an organizational culture can thus be captured through the specific elements of the organization such as: level of risk taking and innovation, attention to detail, orientation (outcome/people/team), aggressiveness and stability.

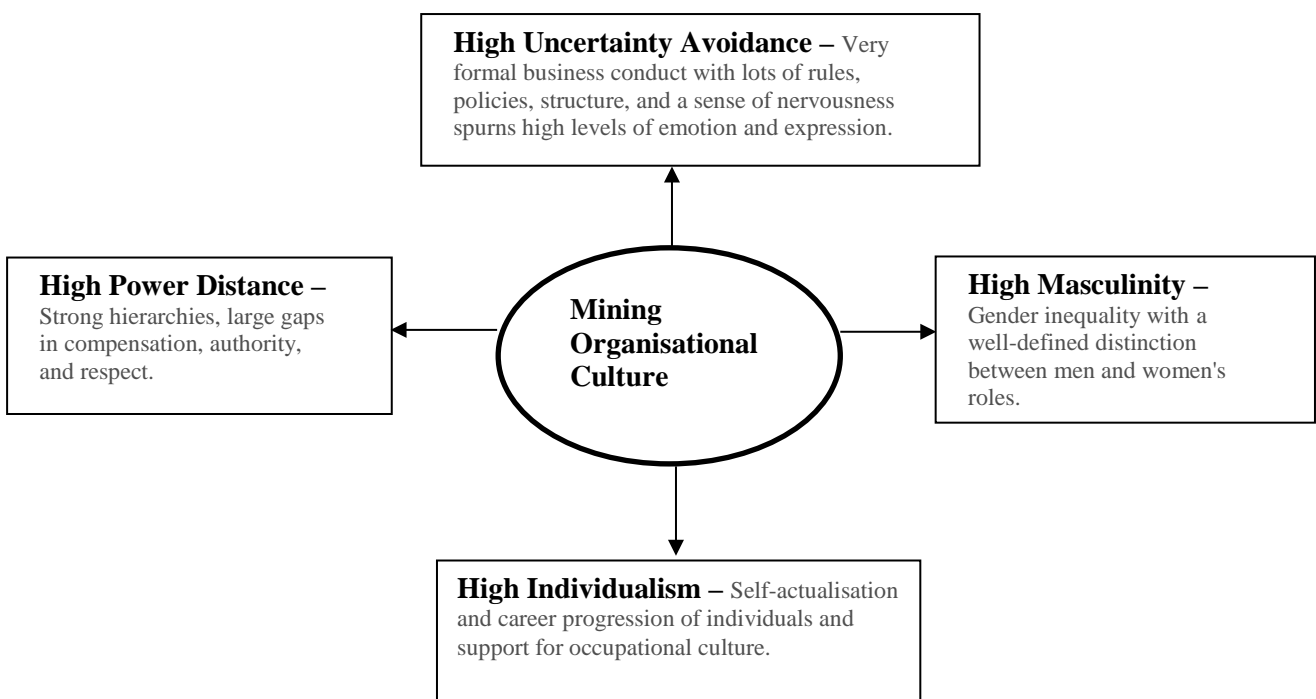
Regardless of the numerous definitions and viewpoints on organizational culture as a concept, one thing that is common is the notion of the shared nature of the beliefs, values and norms learned and transferred to all members, in order to enhance common understanding, behaviour and response to situations. As indicated in the literature above the organizational culture is acquired through socialisation, it is also enhanced and maintained through the implementation of programmes that communicate organizational values and goals, rituals and procedures and programmes such as on-boarding, induction, training, evaluation of behaviour and performance; and reward systems that acknowledge acceptable behaviour/conformance (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv & Sanders, 1990).

Nyambe (2005:25) finally conclude the discussion on this concept, arguing that although organizational culture is defined and enforced by organizations to employees about how to think, act and feel, it is also dynamic, fluid and never static. This means that organizational culture can change over time, as individuals and organizational circumstances change due to internal and external factors. The element of dynamism is of critical importance and relevance to this study, as it forms the basis for exploring whether or not the mining culture has changed over the years and how this change might have affected the inclusion of women in mining and their progression into management and senior management levels in the industry.

In describing the mining organizational culture, research suggests that the mining industry developed a strong culture characterized by a history of deep-rooted beliefs and values that manifested in practices that had been reinforced over the years. Most studies describe the mining industry as having a male dominant organizational culture, characterised by hard labour and working in risky conditions which had been historically and culturally associated with masculinity (Wynn, 2001; Alexander, 2007; Hermanus, 2007; Pyoos, 2008; Heine, 2008; Calitz, 2004; Benya 2009; Shobhana, 2011). Consequently, this association with the male strength influenced the recruitment of more males in core mining positions and this was further perpetuated by discriminatory laws that were drawn to regulate the industry and the manly culture was inevitably crafted.

Relevant to this study is therefore the understanding of how culture impacts on the meaningful integration and development of women in predominantly male organizations including the mines. Hofstede (1984) identified four dimensions of culture and how these dimensions influence culture and interaction within organizations. The prominent cultural dimensions that he identified were: masculinity, power distance, individualism and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1984). Figure 2.2 below illustrates the interplay between Hofstede’s work-related cultural dimensions in a mining organizational culture, where it is posited that male dominance in the mining culture leads to high masculinity, high power distance, individualism and high uncertainty avoidance (Mphokane, 2008).

***Figure 2.2: Hofstede’s work-related cultural dimensions (adapted from Mphokane, 2008)***



Mphokane (2008) described the mining organizational culture as being characterised by a high masculine culture, which favours male dominance and which is characterised by gendered roles, gender inequality and high stress levels amongst women, as they are expected to conform to the male model, which requires working

long hours and sacrificing quality family time. Benya (2009) and Tsomondo (2010) indicated that mining organizational cultures are driven by the stereotypes that display normative views of what is regarded as appropriate occupations for men and women, as well as the view of the appropriate behaviour acceptable for men and women at work. As a result of these stereotypes, men naturally occupy jobs that reflect masculine stereotypes associated with power, decision making, authority, being a provider and superiority over women. This created a barrier for women to successfully penetrate the industry and occupy core mining roles, as they were only considered for roles that held insignificant status and authority (Tsomondo, 2010).

According to Wu (2006), Mphokane (2008) and Shobhana (2011), the mining organisational culture is characterised by high power distance between superiors and subordinates, hence it has a strong hierarchical structure, which clearly indicates levels of authority associated with salary, power and respect. Webster, et al. (1999), Calitz (2004) and Benya (2009) argued that the hierarchical nature of the mining industry is also rooted in the political history and the inequalities of the apartheid era in South Africa, during which white males gained superiority over men of other racial groups and over women and created structures and regulations that strengthened and ensured that the hierarchy was respected, adhered to and unchallenged. In addition, Benya (2009) explains that miners<sup>2</sup> had to learn to speak Fanakalo<sup>3</sup> to maintain a relationship with the white supervisor, including the mine bosses in a most impersonal way.

Wu (2006) and Mphokane (2008) further described the mining culture as individualistic, as it is characterised by highly individualistic values: where people tend to value themselves and their close groups, concerned about self-actualization and career progress in the organisation, and view conflict and disagreements as a natural part of social life. Whilst white males in the mining industry enjoyed superior benefits, which included obtaining mining certifications that enabled them to progress their careers, other racial groups remained in lower level positions and they developed high levels of solidarity in resistance to the theoretical knowledge and authority of white managers, which was controlled and channelled through regulation and discipline by management (Mphokane, 2008).

Finally, literature describes the mining culture as associated with Hofstede's high uncertainty avoidance work related cultural dimension. This dimension "is associated with people's tolerance of ambiguity and in high uncertainty avoidance organizations; there are more written rules" (Wu, 2006:34) and policies in order to reduce uncertainty. According to Hofstede (1991), uncertainty-avoiding cultures are active, aggressive, emotional, compulsive, security seeking and intolerant to uncertainty - hence there are strict rules, regulations, safety and security measures, and a view that a belief held is the absolute truth. Literature describes the mining culture as being characterised by strict rules regarding behaviour, performance and safety regulation. Although these seem

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<sup>2</sup> "Miners" is a term that is used broadly to refer to all employees working in underground in the mines - regardless of specific role or section.

<sup>3</sup>"Fanakalo" is: a language described as a pidgin language without nuance or subtlety; it was and still is widely used by supervisors to ensure that relationships between bosses and workers on the mine are as limited and impersonal as possible (Moodie, 1994; Benya, 2009).



to prevent safety-related risks associated with the industry, these also provide structure and control imposed by management to maintain authority and levels of control and certainty (Mphokane, 2008; Pyoos, 2008).

Furthermore, the following characteristics have also been reported as additional elements that describe the South African mining organisational culture: an element of risk taking; the need for workers to rely on their implicit knowledge; disregard of danger and discomfort as a coping strategy used by men to manage and camouflage their fears relating to the risks associated with mining; solidarity amongst all those regarded as members or insiders (miners - underground/ shaft and plant workers) and isolation of those who are considered as outsiders (surface and all workers not in core mining roles); a combination of fear and close solidarity amongst black underground workers coupled, with resentment of white authority and the racial hierarchy (Webster, et al.,1999; Lee, 2000; Robbins & Judge, 2007).

It is also imperative to note that the design and enhancement of the mining occupational culture relates to Foucault's theory of knowledge, power, discipline and governmentality. Foucault, in Townley (1993), argues that "power is exercised by virtue of things being known and people being seen" (p.520) and it defines an analytical space and establishes a field of knowledge. According to McDonald and O'Callaghan (2008), knowledge constantly prompts effects of power and knowledge of what is real and what is driven by the dominant ethical and moral codes of present culture. Hence power/ knowledge is a source of conformity and social discipline. Foucault argues that once knowledge, power and discipline have been established, the element of governance can be established (Townley, 1993). According to Townley (1993), elements of "government include vocabularies, ways of representing that which is to be governed, and ways of ordering populations; i.e. mechanisms for the supervision and administration of individuals and groups", (p.520). Townley (1993:520) therefore argues that "governmentality is thus a reference to those processes through which objects are rendered amenable to intervention and regulation by being formulated in a particular conceptual way".

In application to this study, the masculine occupational culture was created and made known, hence its power prevails. Based on the knowledge that the industry required male physical strength, women were excluded and prohibited from working in core functions. To determine capability and employability, the mining industry implemented systems and procedures such medical fitness; heat tolerance and physical ability tests which norms were established from male employees. Governance is controlled through: human resource management processes of recruitment, talent management, remuneration and retention schemes, training and development of employees; management of employee relations, the hierarchical (organisational) structures that maintain administration of individuals; and the mechanisms of supervision and authority that determine upward movement in the hierarchy.

Literature suggests that the mining occupational culture has been maintained and reinforced through socialisation in the form of recruitment and selection procedures, training programs, policies and disciplinary

procedures (following deviation from policies), fitness, and job grading, performance evaluation and reward systems (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Hofstede, 2001; Calitz, 2004; Wu, 2006; Mphokane 2008; Benya, 2009). Following the promulgation of the new legislation and the implementation of the license renewal processes for the mining industry, the current study intends to explore whether or not and how the mining organisational culture has evolved to accommodate women and support their career progression.

## **2.5 GENDER AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES IN MINING**

The employment of women in mining has called for an exploration of the gendered nature of the mining industry. Butler (1990) contends that gender “is culturally constructed through the repetition of stylized bodily acts and in their repetition, these acts establish the appearance of an essential, ontological core gender”. Hinton, Veiga and Beinhoff (2003:1) define gender as referring “to the behaviour, attitudes, values and beliefs that a particular socio-cultural group considers appropriate for males and females”. In Mphokane (2008:9), gender refers to “the social differences and relations between men and women of all ages”. Unlike sex which refers to “the biological differences between men and women which is universal and does not change, gender is a socially constructed belief system that shapes the lives and behaviour of men and women within a particular group of culture” (Mphokane, 2008:9). According to literature, these beliefs, values and behaviours are acquired, contrast within and between cultures and are fluid as they are subject to over time (Hinton et al, 2003; Rimer, 1987; Butler, 1990; Mphokane, 2008; Benya, 2009).

Constructed from gender distinction, “there was a clear general and universal division of roles for men and women, with: men encouraged to perform tasks associated with physical strength and power, including agricultural work, physical work in the household kraal, woodwork, mining and hunting; whilst women were encouraged to engage in household construction, child care, household craft and preparation of food” (Reimer, 1987). According to Lee (2000), “men had always been involved in economic activities outside the sphere of the household while women were not”. Furthermore, history scholars argue that some societies went even further and prohibited women from partaking in any form of work outside their households, whilst other societies were more lenient and only restricted women from working in the sectors identified as male sectors (Zaretsky, 1976; Benya, 2009). It is in these male sectors where production and hard labour were the driving forces that there was male dominance, masculinity and male supremacy – “where attributes such as physical strength, danger and dirt - were revered, emphasized and attributed significance” (Zaretsky, 1976 in Benya, 2009).

Reimer (1987) argues that, “in Africa, policy-makers and missionaries further protected, segregated and domesticated women, in order to reinforce gender inequalities”. Mphokane (2008) also posited that job allocation in the different male dominant sectors was not primarily based on skills, training and education, but to a larger extent included consideration of the ascribed characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, age and the networks individual belonged and affiliated with. According to Peck (1996:38), gendered roles resulted from

“patriarchal oppression, regulated by customs and historically embedded practices of capitalism”. This author further contends that women were associated with social reproduction whilst men were associated with the production sphere in the labour markets, resulting in women being appointed in domestic and subordinate roles as their skills were underrated by the labour markets (p. 38). Peck further argued that women’s subordinate position within the family and the social reproduction sphere became both cause and effect of their constitution as cheap and contingent labour supply (Peck, 1996). In the mining industry, women were considered for surface administration jobs and menial positions outside the core functions, whilst men were considered for the heavy, critical and high paying jobs in the core functional areas underground (Calitz, 2004; Benya, 2009). Owing to the gendered roles and inequality principles, women automatically assumed a low social status, consistent with their undervalued work.

Furthermore, literature suggests that another element that played a key role in the allocation of jobs in the labour markets was race (Glenn 1985; Benya, 2009; Ngoako, 1999; Mathur-Helm, 2004; Tabudi, 2008). In apartheid South Africa, the workforce was divided along racial lines, with: whites in white collar and management positions; and people of colour generally allocated in dangerous, demeaning and hard labour positions (Benya, 2009; Glenn, 1985 & 1991). Glen (1985) further explains that “below the black and minority racial male groups, white women became the next preference whilst black women were seen as a source of cheap labour and, as a result, suffered discriminatory pay scales where they were paid lower salaries than their white female counterparts and white graduates in the garment industry for example” (p. 101). Despite the fact that black women are the majority in South Africa and are under-represented in managerial and executive positions, they are over-represented in service production jobs and other low skilled jobs (Glenn, 1991; Akande, 1997; Ngoako, 1999).

In Benya (2009:16), it is posited that “since the 1940s, black women have earned less than men (between 57% and 65% of what men earned), and also less than what white women earned”. Although the current study intends to establish the experiences and challenges of all women, it is equally imperative to highlight the fact that literature indicates that, in employment, white women received first preference over both black males and black women.

## **2.6 WOMEN IN THE MINING INDUSTRY**

Studies on gender and labour markets attributes the call for the meaningful inclusion and integration of women in formal employment – particularly in roles that were predominantly reserved for men - to political (world wars) and economic reasons (Bradley, 1989; Glenn, 1985; Alexander, 2007; Benya, 2009). Bradley (1989) and Alexander (2007) argue that “in countries such as Germany, India and Belgium, women worked in underground mines up to the twentieth century”. In Benya (2009), Bradley further argued that the world wars called for the increase in the employment of women in the labour markets including the mining industry where in the coal mines for example, “women worked as coal carriers, sieving coal, loading and unloading coal and weighting

coal, and performed heavy duties such as dragging and pushing trucks or covers of coal”. “In China, women had been encouraged to enter the mines in the 1970s, as part of the drive for equality that occurred during the Cultural Revolution, but in 1991 a ban on such work was introduced” (Yao in Alexander, 2007: 202).

Calitz (2004) indicated that “the annual report of 1954 of the Department of Mines and Industries revealed that: 274 women were employed in the South African mining environment at that stage; and in 1963 almost 594 women were employed in different mines”. However, an article by Singer (2002) explains that, “during apartheid, women also felt the sting of discrimination by being barred from jobs in the nation’s vast underground mining industry”, hence the numbers dropped drastically until the election of the country’s democratic government. The discriminatory laws were repealed and since then women are now employed in mining core functions such “as operators of huge trucks that are used in open-cast mining; supervisors; geologists; underground locomotive drivers”; among others (Singer, 2002).

According to the SSP (2011), in the mining and minerals sector, women now constitute 10% of total employment and men 90%. Table 2.1 below reveals the numbers and percentages of men and women employed in different categories within the mining and minerals sector. Table 2.1 further illustrates that 12% of managers and 23% of professionals are women. Regarding the core functions in mining: 9% of women are Technicians and Trade workers; 4% are Machinery Operators and Drivers; and 9% are Elementary Workers. The majority of women are still in support services: 51% as Clerical and Administrators; 33% in sales; and 25% in Community and Personal Services in the sector. It is important to note that, almost a decade after the inception of the Mining Charter, the percentage distribution continues to reflect women as a minority and that the majority of women are still in non-core mining jobs.

***Table 2.1: Gender distribution of employees according to occupational group – 2009***

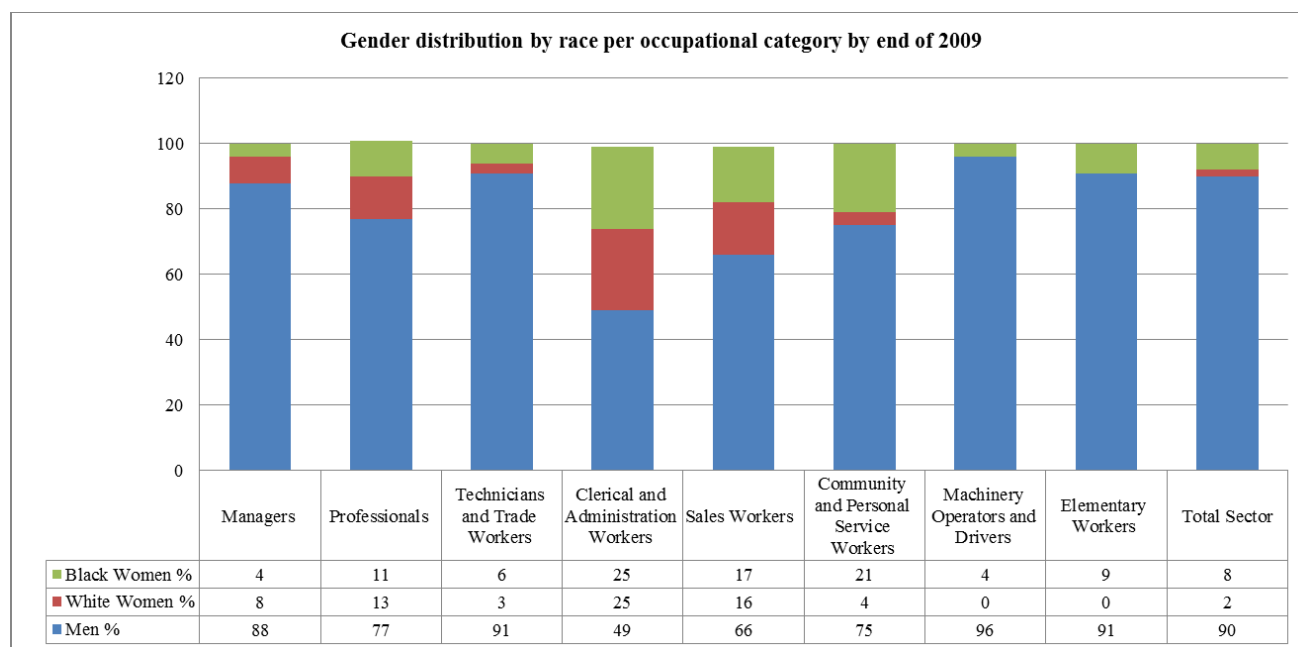
Occupational group	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Managers	9 669	<b>88</b>	1 300	<b>12</b>	10 969	<b>100</b>
Professionals	15 969	<b>77</b>	4 852	<b>23</b>	20 821	<b>100</b>
Technicians and Trade Workers	71 962	<b>91</b>	7 010	<b>9</b>	78 971	<b>100</b>
Clerical and Administration Workers	13 122	<b>49</b>	13 501	<b>51</b>	26 623	<b>100</b>
Sales Workers	1 379	<b>67</b>	693	<b>33</b>	2 072	<b>100</b>
Community and Personal Service Workers	5 962	<b>75</b>	1 981	<b>25</b>	7 943	<b>100</b>
Machinery Operators and Drivers	191 004	<b>96</b>	7387	<b>4</b>	198 391	<b>100</b>
Elementary Workers	183 366	<b>91</b>	18 816	<b>9</b>	202 183	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>492 433</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>55 540</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>547 973</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Sector Skills for the Mining and Mineral Sector (2011:21)

The position of women in mining in South Africa is evidently superimposed by the country’s apartheid legacy characterised by discrimination and inequality. The SSP (2011) illustrates how the apartheid laws impacted women, not only in terms of gender, but through racial preferences as well. Figure 2.3 below reflects the

percentage of black and white women and their distribution in the various occupational categories in the mining and minerals sector, compared to their male counterparts.

***Figure 2.3: Gender distribution by race according to occupational category***



Source: Sector kills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector (2011:19)

Figure 2.3 illustrates that of the total percentage of women in mining, black women constitute 8%, whilst white women constitute only 2%. However, it is imperative to note that of the 12% of women in management positions in the mining sector, the majority (8%) are white women and black women constitute only 4%. The table also illustrates that more white women (13%) occupy mining professional positions “including mining engineering, metallurgy, chemical engineering, geology, rock engineering, ventilation, electrical and mechanical engineering” (Cruise, 2011), compared to black women (11%). Figure 2.3 further indicates that although there seems to be an equal distribution of both white and black women in clerical, administration and sales roles, black women remain in the majority in roles that require manual and hard labour.

Figure 2.3 further indicates lower numbers of women hired in core and technical mining roles such as technicians and trade workers, machinery operators and drivers and elementary workers, compared to their male counterparts.

Despite the legislative changes and support that was introduced in the mining industry, literature shows that women in mining still experience acceptance problems and structural disadvantages as workers (Benya, 2009). Reich cited in Benya (2009) posited that the challenges around getting women employed in the mining industry and other male dominant sectors is just the tip of the iceberg; the real challenge is what happens to these women

once they are in the industry. It is imperative to note that most of the literature available explored and identified the challenges of women entering the mining industry; however, the focus has been more on women at entry and operational level positions. Benya (2009), for example, found that once they are in the mines, “women experience problems relating to income differences, sexual harassment, bullying, humiliation, patronising superiority and physical threats” (p. 18). Below are more challenges that were reported by women in mining, particularly from those working underground and in the processing plants at operational levels (Hermanus, 2003; Calitz, 2004; Benya, 2009; Mashiane, 2009):

- Resistance – where men resist to accept women appointed in predominantly male departments and roles subjecting women to negative and unfair evaluation where they see and highlight their weaknesses than strengths;
- Lack of support and protection from the already existing male employee structures such as the unions or employee representative groups;
- The perceived physical inability of women to carry out certain tasks required of them within various occupations on the mines;
- Lack of suitable facilities for women such as the change rooms and ablution facilities underground or on surface due to costs related to erecting or reorganising existing facilities which were designed for men;
- Inappropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is usually the one-piece overalls that are inappropriately designed for the women physical structure and are not user-friendly for use by women;
- Exclusion from the ‘old boys’ network’, which formed basis for solidarity amongst the men, create structures for social support and platforms for information sharing on organizational changes and career opportunities;
- Lack of appropriate awareness and knowledge of the industry which exposed most women to possible inappropriate placements, setting them up for failure;
- Insufficient pools of qualified female to be recruited into key mining roles in engineering, geology, technical services and production;
- Lack of role-models and mentors for women;
- Lack of fundamental social support facilities such as crèches and child care institutions, family units to allow for family life balance and medical facilities suitable for women
- Lack of interest amongst women to work in the mining sector due to the perceptions created about the mining industry and working conditions; and
- Prevalent incidences of sexual harassment and violence against women on the mines, particularly underground and the hostels as a result of gender based violence and stereotyping.

It is based on these challenges that programs like WIM were initiated to further identify challenges, propose solutions to counter the challenges and to provide support for women in the mining industry. However, a gap in the literature on the experience and challenges facing women in management positions still exists. The current

study envisaged first exploring the experiences and challenges that exist once women progress to the different levels of management and to then establish to what extent the challenges impede women's career progression into senior and executive levels of management.

## **2.7 WOMEN IN MINING MANAGEMENT**

*“Whether in business, law, medicine, or academia, women are not advancing at the same rate as men. They are not paid as well, they occupy less-powerful positions and they are not as respected ... For instance, we think: men are logical, women are social; men are competent women are flaky. As a result, men are consistently over-rated and women under-rated by co-workers, bosses and themselves. The resulting advantages and disadvantages may be small, but they accrue over time to create large gaps in advancement” (Valian, 1999:2).*

Literature indicates that there has been an increasing number of research conducted on women in mining in South Africa and in countries such as Canada, Australia and India (Minerals Council of Australia, 2005; Benya, 2009; Mphokane, 2008; Shobhana, 2011; Alexander, 2007; Women in Mining Canada, 2010). These studies provide inter alia: a background to the history of the employment of women in mining; barriers to their employment; their career development and retention once employed in the mining industry. Recent literature indicates that there is remarkable growth in the number of women employed in mining; however, it is contended that there is still a significant gender imbalance in the industry. The Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (2009) attributes the gender imbalance “to the fact that the mining industry is the most highly “sex-segregated” industry in Australia”. In other countries, such as Canada, India and South Africa, “workplace culture in mining is the major vehicle for gender inequality resulting into poor reception, development and career progression of women in the mining industry” (Women in Mining Canada, 2010; Tsomondo, 2010; Mphokane 2008; Alexander 2007; Piterman, 2008).

*“Organizational culture impacts on the experiences of women in management. It can impede female advancement and exercise of authority” (Piterman, 2008:27).*

Literature on women in senior management and executive positions indicates that the numbers remain low in many countries - including Australia, India, the United Kingdom, the United State if America and South Africa - despite decades of the promulgation of non-discriminatory and affirmative action legislation (Marongiu & Ekehammar, 1999; Valian, 1999; Combs, 2003; Piterman, 2008; Wood, 2009; Tabudi, 2009; Ngoako, 1999; Tsomondo, 2010; Benya, 2009; Mphokane, 2008; Shobhana, 2011; Hughes, 2012). There is a number of studies on the meaningful integration of women and the pace at which women advance into mining management positions, however, there are different views on what perpetuates this on-going phenomenon.

Parker and Fagenson (1994) posited that “the rationale for the low numbers of women in senior managerial positions was that women were perceived less likely to possess the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil the management roles in male dominant organizations, compared to their male counterparts; hence they were automatically perceived to be unsuitable for such roles”. According to Eagly and Karau (2002) and Kabacoff (2010), the workplace still expects men and women to hold gendered roles and, where women are appointed into the highly male dominant management roles, they are susceptible to “prejudiced evaluations and lowered effectiveness”.

In Eagly and Karau (2002), it is posited that “gender roles are influenced by the injunctive norms which they describe as referring to the consensual expectations about what men or women ought to do or ideally would do” (p. 574). In this study, these authors explain that “the societal beliefs pertain to communal and agentic attributes which becomes the source of prejudice and gender inequalities in the workplace”. Communal attributes are ascribed strongly to women and primarily reflect concerns with the welfare of other people whilst agentic attributes are strongly ascribed to men and primarily reflects assertiveness, control and confident tendencies and are regarded as important attributes for successful management in the workplace (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Kawakami, White and Langer (2000) also describe women as warm, nurturing and caring; and men as cold, competitive and authoritarian (critical ascribed attributes for management). Jogulu and Wood (2011) described the distinction between men and women attributes as referring to gender stereotypes, as they represent strong societal beliefs that women need to comply with their social roles and continue to prioritise family obligations over seeking formal employment and desire for further career advancement.

Evidence abounds that it based on these normative attributes that women’s potential, ability, management behaviour and skills has been unfairly evaluated in the society and in organizations (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kawakami et al, 2000; Jogulu & Wood 2011). These studies suggests that there are gender status differences in the workplace with men having superior and ascribed status eligible to fulfil the role of primary decision-making - bestowing an assumption that women are inferior and have less accredited status in the workplace and will therefore have lower success rates in their management roles than men (Valian, 1998; Woods, 2009; Tsomondo, 2008; Benya, 2009; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). Valian (2005), explains this phenomena from a social cognition account which refers to stereotypes as gender schemas that are shared amongst employees and result in under-evaluation of women, which in small and subtle ways perpetuates the gender inequalities in the employment and career progression of women in the workplace. Literature further illustrates that gender stereotyping/schemas significantly influence the career advancement of women in management positions, as they form basis for the instinctive underrating of women and bias decisions in recruitment and selection, identification of talent for development, promotion, salary allocation and performance appraisal (Valian, 2005; Woods, 2009; Tsomondo, 2008; Benya, 2009).



Still (1994) presents a cultural perspective, in which he argues that the inclusion of women in organisations and their progression into management and senior management levels constitutes a cultural dilemma for most organisations. Still (1994:3) argues that a “cultural dilemma exists when something is not part of, or presents a threat to the established order, meaning, values, etc. of an organization, society or nation”. According to Still (1994), “translating this definition into acceptable organizational terms, means managing the inclusion of previously excluded individuals (such as women and ethnic minorities) so that the dominant culture, or accepted ways of doing things, is not altered in any way. In other words, the existing paradigms or status quo continue to exist, because the outsiders learn to adapt to the prevailing culture in order to both function and to be accepted, even if only in a cursory way” (p.3).

In his study on women in management, Still (1994) posited that majority of organizations were designed and formalised when the workplaces were predominantly male dominant, as a direct result, they embody a male managerial culture which has continuously been regarded as the main professional management model. Regardless of the engagement of women into the workforce; promotion in to management positions; promulgation of anti-discriminatory, equity and affirmative action legislation; literature illustrates that there has been minimal fundamental changes to the historical workplace culture. As an alternative to giving women full recognition, a gendered sub-structure determining work activities exists, with men in decision making roles whilst women support and implement decisions that have been made by the men. Reich (1986) argues that women in mining and other male dominant organisations still have to fight for recognition, acceptance and visibility, because decisions for hiring, meaningful integration, development and career progression are largely influenced by gender schemas of the men as primary decision makers. Humphrey (1987) further argues that, regardless of the length of their stay and experience in mining, women rarely get promoted. Peck (1996) argues that this demonstrates how the markets treated women (and other minority groups) “as if they have a weak attachment to the labour market”.

Still (1994:4-5) provided the points below as core elements of organisational culture that have been utilised to directly encourage and influence the on-going exclusion of women from management levels in masculine cultured organisations, i.e.:

- *“Shared background and experiences – in many cases, the inner circle of male senior level executives and professionals have many shared experiences such as school, sporting activities, the armed services (depending on age), company boards and community and professional associations. Subsequently, a certain amount of bonding and trust builds up and the circle operates like a “club”, which women cannot penetrate easily, except in appendage roles such as wife, secretary or personal assistant (and all these roles have a limited perspective);*
- *The male managerial culture is the only model that exists in organizations and has to be understood if an “outsider” wishes to operate within this milieu. For women, who are attempting to climb the managerial*

*ladder, there are no assimilation or transition models (such as may exist for an immigrant to a new country) or alternate models, so women have to submerge their own natural instincts and conform to the prevailing paradigm;*

- *The masculine model is considered to be the professional model: this applies to communication, standards of behaviour, processes and practices in organizations. The cultural view is that the man's way of doing things is the standard or norm. The male-as-standard norm affects notions of leadership, which are typically linked with masculine modes of communication, for example, assertion, independence, competitiveness and confidence. On the other hand, the qualities of deference, inclusivity, collaboration and cooperation - which are associated with feminine modes of communication - are linked with subordinate roles, rather than with leadership; and*
- *At senior levels, "style", rather than "substance", becomes a deciding factor; hence, negotiating skills, "old boy's network", "teamwork" and whether or not a person "fits in" to the team becomes an important criteria for success and progress. Aspiring managerial women do not generally meet these criteria, largely because of differing cultural interpretations. For instance, "teamwork" in the male domain means letting the leader lead and being a good follower. The female interpretation usually means "making a contribution" and "speaking up" – the exact opposite to what is required in the male version. Because of this "difference", women are often criticized for not having "people skills" and are omitted from the inner circle. Women are further not accepted in these echelons because it is believed they do not know how to behave (according to the male standard) and do not understand the rules (according to the male standard): a woman is therefore perceived as a "loose cannon", who is unpredictable and difficult to control" (p. 4-5).*

As a direct impact of the above views on women in management positions in male dominant organisations, research indicates that women have reported they encounter common challenges by virtue of entering management and senior management levels (Frankforter, 1996; Ngoako, 1999; Omar & Davidson, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Catalyst, 2004; Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005; Mathur-Helm, 2006; Tabudi, 2008; Kabacoff, 2010; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). Amongst other challenges, sticky floors, the glass cliff and the glass ceiling have been identified as major challenges for women's career advancement. Wohlbold & Chenier (2011) describe the sticky floor as referring to a gender barrier to the advancement of women at lower levels, creating challenges for women from the onset of their careers. These authors describe the glass cliff as the next challenge that women face in advancing their careers. According to Wohlbold and Chenier (2011), women in senior management experience a glass cliff when they are appointed in unwarranted or trivial positions that "have a higher risk of failure, either because the organization is in crisis or because they do not have the support they need to succeed" (p. 9). These authors further explain that when women eventually fail in these trivial positions, the organizations attribute the failure to their gender defects instead of the conning circumstances or lack of support.

The glass ceiling, on the other hand, is described as “barriers that prevent women from progressing to senior and executive levels in organisations primarily on the basis of their gender, rather than their lack of ability to handle jobs at higher levels” (Frankforter, 1996; Ngoako, 1998; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). Mathur-Helm (2006) describe the glass ceiling effect as referring to the “failure of women and other minority (or vulnerable) groups to climb the corporate ladder, despite seeing the top jobs but still not reaching them due to discriminatory barriers” (p.311). Dickens and Dickens, in Tabudi (2009:14), define the glass ceiling as:

*“An invisible barrier encountered by blacks, women and other marginalised groups as they seek advancement towards the boardrooms and the top levels of management”.*

Common to these definitions is the obvious element of hindrance that impact on the career progression of women in climbing the management ladder. Mathur-Helm explains that although the glass ceiling “is perceived to be a myth by many, it is real and is nurtured by organizational culture, strategies and policies” that impedes on the career advancement of women (Mkhize and Msweli, 2011:2). Van Zyl and Roodt, in Tabudi (2009), assert that “although employment equity has created visible cracks in the ceiling of male dominance and women are aware of these cracks; there are still not enough women crawling through the cracks due to the deep-rooted cultures and policies in organizations”.

Kawakami, et al. (2000) described the gender role congruence hypothesis as another challenging element for women entering and progressing in management level positions. Nieva and Gutek (1981), cited in Kawakami, et al. (2000), argue that the “gender role congruency hypothesis states that behaviour that is congruent with one’s gender role will be evaluated more favourably than gender role incongruent behaviour” (p. 51). Bradley (1980) asserted that “job assignment was based on the principle of men as superordinate and women as subordinate and role congruency was critical to ensure that the status quo persisted. In support for Bradley’s principle of gendered roles, literature indicates that women managers who were perceived to be “acting out of role” or displaying masculine tendencies were found to be valued less positively, to be less effective, not well liked by their peers, and perceived to be more hostile than male leaders” (Haccoun, Haccoun and Sallay, 1978; Bradley, 1980; Kawakami, et al, 2000:51). Eagly and Karau (2002) and Peggy Layne (2010), posited that these findings illustrates how females in management or aspiring roles in male dominant organizations are “devaluated if they act feminine as this is associated with non-effective leadership, but also devaluated if they act masculine or unfeminine, subjecting them (women) to a double-bind effect in which women are unsure of how they should behave”.

It is imperative to note that there is still very limited research done on women in mining management positions. The majority of the literature available was focussed on other sectors, i.e. construction, engineering, finance, business, and private and public institutions (Ngoako, 1999; Mathur-Helm, 2006; Tabudi, 2008; Wood, 2009; Peggy-Lee, 2010; Jogulu & Wood, 2011). The Ngoako (1999) and Tabudi (2008) studies identified the

following challenges that women encounter when in management positions in male dominant organisations – which also impede development into senior management levels for women:

- Gender discrimination – by virtue of their gender, women are immediately perceived not capable of effective leadership and management and they are subjected to negative evaluation and unfair discrimination wherein they have to prove themselves to the men to gain their respect and recognition in their roles.
- Race discrimination – minority racial groups, particularly black women are subjected to increased levels of doubt and distrust in their capabilities and they have to prove themselves twice as much as their male and white female counterparts.
- Multiple roles – women have multiple roles (being managers, students and having family responsibilities, which include being a wife and/or mother) that they have to juggle simultaneously, which creates doubts and lack of trust amongst men as women strive to balance their different roles.
- Age and culture – women are subjected to cultural expectations when relating to older people and when addressing/confronting/reprimanding men which continuously require doubled efforts to gain respect, support and recognition from the men.

A few studies have been conducted on the South African mining industry; however, the focus has been on challenges facing women entering the industry – hence the emphasis has been on the physical and infrastructural issues women encounter to fit in the mining industry (Benya, 2009; Calitz, 2004). Mashiane (2009) investigated the barriers that prevent the advancement of women in the coal and platinum mining industries. However, his study was based on the perceptions of all women, including those not yet in management position but who had aspirations to progress to management level – which does not capture the experiences of those women already in management. There is also a dearth of literature on how the amended Mining Charter targets and its link to the licence renewal of the mining rights has influenced the mining industry's approach to improving the numbers of women in mining management positions. There is also a dearth of literature on how the changes in legislation and implementation of supportive programmes have influenced the experiences of women in mining at the different levels of management positions as mining companies strived towards achieving their 2014 targets. The current study is thus designed to establish the general experience and challenges of women at different levels of management positions the mining industry – particularly following the strict implementation of the Mining Charter targets and other legislative changes aimed at redressing the inequalities in the industry.

## **2.8 WOMEN IN MINING AND LONMIN**

Women in Mining Organization<sup>4</sup> (WIM) “was established in 1972 in Denver, Colorado, by several women, whose primary intention was to ascertain interest in developing an organization to provide education about the industry” (WomenInMining.org, 2012). Based on the fact that the mining industry is a male-dominated environment, the founders believed that their purposes could be achieved better through an organization composed predominantly of women who shared the same sentiments. In South Africa, although the WIM structures were also initiated with the legislative changes, its visibility grew with the introduction of the Mining Charter in 2002. Mining companies now have WIM projects that are focused on implementing WIM strategies and ensuring that more women are employed, developed and promoted within the mining industry. In line with the SLP targets, the strategies are more concerned with both WIM<sup>5</sup> in core functional areas and (WAM)<sup>6</sup>.

*“Lonmin’s aim is to create an enabling environment for women to not only pursue careers at the mine, but also thrive in the mining profession,”* said Barnard Mokwena (International Finance Corporation Press Release, 2010:1).

Lonmin is the third largest primary producer of the Platinum Group Metals (PGM) in South Africa (Mbhedhi Information Services, 2012). According to the International Finance Corporation (2009), “Lonmin entered into a three-year partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC - a member of the World Bank Group), in an attempt to achieve the Mining Charter targets set for mining companies which included the employment of at least 10 % (of total company strength) of women by end of 2009”. The set goals of the partnership amongst others included: “assisting the company to promote sustainable development of its workforce and local communities that surround its mining operations and to meet the 10% target set by the Mining Charter and the DMR” (International Finance Corporation, 2009:5). However, the main focus of the Lonmin-IFC partnership was to achieve the women in mining target and thus the plan of action was to develop a WIM program aimed at promoting the employment and retention of women in mining core positions within the Lonmin workforce. According to the International Finance Corporation (2009), the program was designed and implemented with the following three phases:

- *“Preparing Phase - the most crucial phase of the program included: securing management commitment; establishing policies; management and monitoring structures; preparing the company for a culture change; analysing barriers to women recruitment; and creating an appropriate social and physical environment for women.*
- *Recruiting Phase - involved setting recruitment targets for women, screening and selecting female candidates and induction training for women.*

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<sup>4</sup> Women in Mining Organization refer to the organization that was formed by women to provide education about the mining industry (WomenInMining.org, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> WIM – refers to women in mining core functional areas

<sup>6</sup> WAM – refers to women at the mine in support and administrative functions

- *Retaining Phase - included developing key initiatives for increasing retention of female employees, such as: options for alternative placement of pregnant and breastfeeding women removed from underground or hazardous areas; creating an environment that is conducive to meeting needs of women by providing changing rooms, sanitary facilities and lifestyle support facilities like day care and counselling; and a good feedback and dialogue mechanism” (p. 7-8).*

Lonmin has also implemented the career progression planning and mentorship to enhance employee development and career progression. Career progression planning includes the mapping of career paths, which indicate the minimum requirements position (qualification and experience), as well as the entry and exit level positions for each career path. This information is used to form the basis of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) which is used to prepare an employee towards the next position of each career path. According to this report, Lonmin offers employees the opportunity to receive mentoring or coaching in accordance with organizational requirements. It is reported that both these processes are to help with fast tracking and career progression of HDSA employees.

It is imperative to note, however, that regardless of the Lonmin-IFC partnership, Lonmin failed to achieve the Mining Charter targets in 2009. Below is Table 2.2 that indicates Lonmin’s status on WIM, compared to other mining companies, as at their annual review in 2011. Table 2.2 below indicates that Lonmin had 3.76% of women in mining positions whilst its major competitors (Anglo Platinum and Impala Platinum) had 10% and 7.80% respectively. The table also indicates that Lonmin had the lowest women in mining figures across the mining industry compared to Anglo Gold at 5.50%, Harmony Gold at 9,30%, Anglo Coal at 11,80% and Kumba Iron Ore at 10.54%.

***Table 2.2: Report on WIM figures in the top 5 mining companies***

	Lonmin	Anglo Gold Ashanti	Anglo Platinum	Impala	Harmony	Anglo American Thermal Coal	Kumba Iron Ore Group
WIM	3.76%	5.50%	10%	7.80%	9.30%	11.80%	10.54%

Source: SLP Report, 2011

The current study envisages to establish the impact of the transformation manual, the implementation of WIM Program and how the programme have contributed to the career advancement of women at the different levels of management at Lonmin (post 2011 review).

## **2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

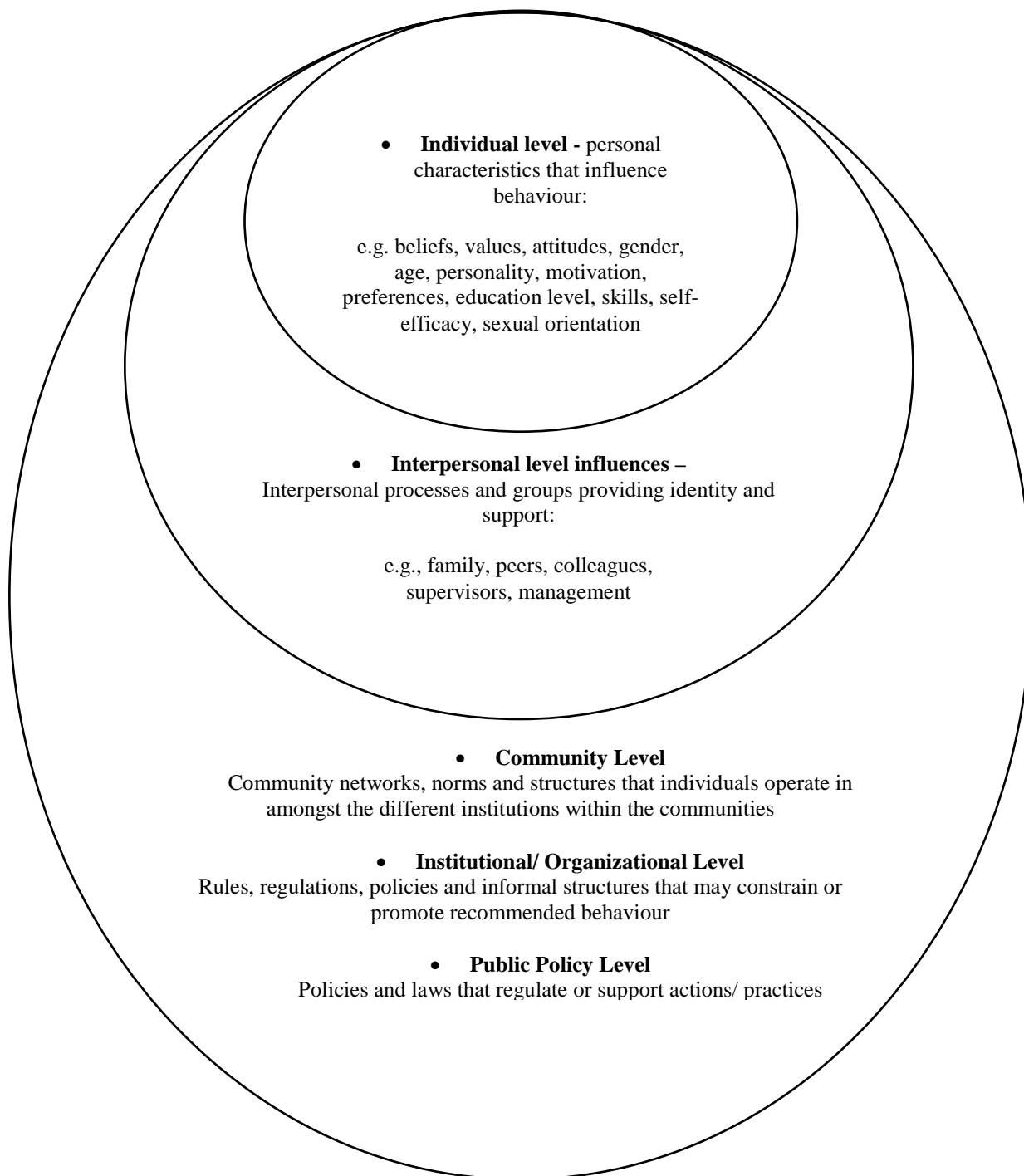
An ecological perspective was adopted as a theoretical framework for this study to enhance understanding of the interplay between culture and individual behaviour. The framework illustrates how an individual's behaviour shapes and is in turn shaped by the social environment. Literature on this framework “illustrates how human behaviour affects and is affected at various levels of influence, i.e. the individual, intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, organizational and policy levels” (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz, 1988; Cook, Heppner & O'Brien, 2002; Glanz and Rimer, 2005; Swartz, De la Rey, Duncan & Townsend, 2008; Petersen & Govender, 2010).

### **2.9.1 Ecological Theory**

Cook, et al. (2002) described human behaviour as “a result of a multiplicity of factors at the individual, interpersonal and broader socio-cultural levels”. They explained that “behaviour can be considered as an act-in-context, in which the context is essential to the naming and meaningfulness of the individual's behaviour, rather than the context being seen as an external force impinging on the action” (p. 296). Based on this premise, Cook, et al. (2002:296) indicated that “a person's behaviour is therefore a representation of the complex interaction of the myriad factors that constitute her or his life, which they referred to as the *ecosystem*”. In explaining the interplay between culture and individual behavior, the ecological approach views “cultures as evolving adaptations to ecological and socio-political influences” (Erez & Gati, 2004). Individual behaviour, on the other hand, is viewed as “an adaptive means to the individual's cultural context, as well as to the broader ecological and socio-political influences” (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992; Erez and Gati, 2004; Assessing Women in Engineering Project, 2005).

Literature on the ecological theory identified five levels of influence as illustrated in Figure 2.4 below: 1) individual or intrapersonal level, which is concerned with the individual influences a person brings to a situation; 2) interpersonal level, which is concerned with the protective influences of significant others and relationships on the individual; 3) community level, which is concerned with community and societal influence through group processes; 4) institution/ organizational level, which is concerned with regulatory influence through organizations; and 5) policy systems level, which is concerned with policy influences at national and global levels (McLeroy, et al., 1988; Erez & Gati, 2004; Swartz, et al., 2006; Petersen & Govender, 2010).

***Figure 2.4: Ecological perspective levels of influence (McLeroy, 1988)***



### **2.9.1.1 Individual Level**

The ecological model describes the individual (also referred to as intrapersonal) level to “include the individual characteristics that influence a person’s behaviour, such as knowledge, attitudes, personality traits, motivation, beliefs, preferences, sexual orientation” (McLeroy, et al., 1988:354). At this level, ecological framework views



the individual as an independent system, with the individual influences which articulates the culture of the individual.

### **2.9.1.2 Interpersonal Level**

The interpersonal level “assumes that individuals exist within and are influenced by their social environment” (Glanz & Rimer, 2005:19). McLeroy, et al. (1988) argued that at this level behaviour is influenced by “interpersonal processes and primary groups such as family, friends, peers, colleagues, individuals/ groups that provide the individual with support, role definition and a social identity” (p. 355). Glanz and Rimer (2005) further argue that at the interpersonal level, “behaviour has a reciprocal effect as it is believed that the opinions, thoughts, behaviour and advice from people surrounding the individual shapes the individual’s behaviour, which in turn shapes the behaviour of those people surrounding the individual’s social environment”. However, the need for social identity, support and acceptance by one’s environment may impact on the reciprocal effect. Literature cautioned that resulting from the need for support, social identity and belonging, acculturation may result (McLeroy, et al., 1988; Berry, et al., 1992; Coatsworth, Maldonado-Molina, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2005). In Coatsworth et al. (2005) acculturation was “originally described as a process whereby minority racial or ethnic group adopts the cultural patterns of the dominant group” (p.157). Erez and Gati (2004:586) and Berry (2005:698) define acculturation “as a process of cultural and psychological change and adaptation that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members”. McLeroy (1988) and Berry (2005) argued that acculturation can impact on interpersonal interactions as it occurs at different rates and with different intentions which may result in conflict amongst the individuals and complicates adaptation.

### **2.9.1.3 Community Level**

The community level of influence takes into account linkages between the sub-systems that indirectly influence an individual (Cook, et al., 2002). McLeroy, et al. (1988) posits that the community level of influence is characterised by three distinct types of communities that individuals may operate within and elements, i.e., mediating structures and face-to-face primary groups such as families, personal friendship networks that an individual belongs to; relationships with groups and structures such as schools, media, networks and associations (social and professionals) within a defined area; and defined geographical and political entities characterised by one or more power structures (p.363).

### **2.9.1.4 Organizational Level**

McLeroy, et al. (1988) posited that the institutional or organizational level of influence covers the way relevant institutions are organized and managed. Cook, et al. (2002) posits that at this level, organizational factors refers to the ideological components of a given organization, such as norms, values, customs, race and/ gender stereotyping, class bias, and structure of opportunity. (McLeroy, et al., 1988: 360) further argue that at this level “organizations uses strategies such as incentives, management and supervisor support, changes in rules and regulations, changes in benefits and changes in the structure of work to influence behaviour changes”.

### **2.9.1.5 Public Policy Level**

McLeroy, et al. (1988) posited that this level of influence occurs through national/ public policies and regulations that legalise or support action and the practices of individuals and the institutions in which they operate. According to Petersen and Govender (2010), at policy level, individuals operate under societal pressure, influence and policy (national and global).

### **2.9.2 Application of the Ecological Framework**

In the context of the current study, the ecological framework was adopted in order to explore the multiple levels of cultural influence on the career advancement of women in management positions in the mining industry.

At an intrapersonal level, the study would explore issues pertaining to gender socialisation of women and how this influences the participants' individual characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, personalities, career choices and preferences associated with their social identities. At the interpersonal level, some of the issues to be explored include how socialisation and the social identity of women influence their relationships with men, peers, family, colleagues and superiors in the mining industry. Furthermore, this level explores how maintaining interpersonal relationships impacts on the roles and performance of women at work, their perceptions of their career progression, and aspirations and efforts towards their career progression in the mining industry.

At the community level, common knowledge and beliefs translate into common practice, rules, regulations and informal structures that may restrain unwanted or promote recommended behaviour. This forms the basis of social/ professional networks, wherein groups of individuals with similar beliefs, backgrounds, strengths and shared values meet to affirm their social identities. At this level, the current study will therefore explore how women in mining management positions gain access to industry networks and how they adapt to their social environment.

At an organisational level, the researcher will explore organizational influence on the career progression of women into management levels and into senior management levels. This would include exploring measures and processes employed by the organisation to influence the experiences of women in management positions and the pace at which women progress to senior management levels in the mining industry and at Lonmin.

At policy level, new laws and legislation has been promulgated to redress gender and racial inequalities of the past era. However, the career advancement of women remains a point of contention in the South African labour market – particularly within historically male dominated sectors, such as mining. At this level, the study will explore how the national legislation and industry policies have influenced the experience of women in management positions and the perceptions these women have of their career progression.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

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#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the research methods of the study, including: research design, population, sample, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

In view of the aim and objectives of the study (exploring the experiences and challenges of women in mining management positions and their perceptions of career advancement), the researcher opted for a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell (2007:36), qualitative research is:

*“An inquiry process which consists of a set of interpretive material practices that makes the world visible”.*

Creswell (2007) explains that qualitative studies seek to construct a framework or picture, particularly when the inquiry embraces meanings, personal responses or values. Mouton (2001) and Schurink (2003) argue that one of the significant characteristics of qualitative research is that it seeks to understand people according to their own understanding and perceptions of the world. Creswell summarizes the usefulness of qualitative approaches as follows:

*“We conduct qualitative research, because we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue, by talking directly with people and allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what we expect to find” (Creswell,2007:40).*

The study employed the phenomenology qualitative tradition in conducting the research to explore the experiences of women in management positions in the mining industry. Smith and McIntyre in Robinson (2002:69) define phenomenology as “a study of the intrinsic structures of consciousness, or contents of experiences”. Smith & Osborn (2003:53) explains that “the aim of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social world and its main currency is the meaning particular experience, events and states holds for the participants”.

##### 3.2.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

The IPA was applied as it strives to understand a particular topic or concept from the participant’s perspective, regardless of the researcher’s view or knowledge of the topic or concept. This reference is based on Smith and Osborn (2003) explanation that “the approach is phenomenological in that it involves a detailed examination of

the participant's life/ world; it attempts to explore personal experience; it is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself" (p. 53).

Smith and Osborn (2003) further posited that "the IPA involves a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, wherein the participants are trying to make sense of their world and the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (p. 53). Based on this description, Smith (1996) recommends that "IPA be applied when one has a research question that aims to understand what a given experience was like (phenomenology) and how someone made sense of it (interpretation)". The concepts of phenomenology and interpretation (hermeneutics) are therefore regarded as the cornerstones of IPA as they signal the two features of this approach (Smith, 1996; Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). In Griffiths (2009), it is explained that "these concepts stem from the belief that human beings are not bystanders in an objective reality, but are beings who formulate their biographical stories by interpreting and understanding the world around them in ways that make sense to them" (p.38).

### **3.2.1.1 Phenomenology**

According to Ashworth (2003), "phenomenology as a concept is described as a philosophical approach that is concerned with understanding the experience which focuses on understanding the essential nature of an experience or the essence of a phenomenon" (cited in Maunders, 2010). Maunders (2010) further contends that phenomenology is concerned with individual's primary experiences of the world as it appears in their consciousness or reality then in abstract concepts about the world itself. Furthermore, Maunders (2010: 17) argues that, "the object of our perception cannot be separated from our experience of it, hence, an object's manifestation in our consciousness constitutes its reality". Maunders (2010) and Griffiths (2009) posited that central to phenomenology is the concept of intentionality, "which is the essence of consciousness which relates to the fact that every experience is an act of consciousness and an experience of something, whether we see an object visually, hear a sound or think something".

Literature explains that in phenomenological studies, the researcher works towards understanding the subject or phenomena in question, based, as much as possible, on the perspective of the participant being studied. However, literature acknowledges that it is challenging for researchers to completely overlook their own perspective and interpretation of the phenomena in question (Smith, 1996; Robinson, 2002; Maunders, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2003). In phenomenology, the researcher needs to apply bracketing in order to avoid imposing any preconception on the data collected and to allow participants to be fully appreciated (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Whilst Smith (1996) argues that bracketing refers to laying aside the researcher's perceptions and knowledge of the topic, Griffiths (2009) contends that bracketing "involves researchers' reflecting on their past and current experiences, so as to keep their personal experiences separate from those revealed by the participants". Bracketing therefore allows the researcher to create fresh meaning about the phenomena, as the

researcher will be able to appreciate and represent the participants' experience adequately and free of personal interference.

### **3.2.1.2 Interpretation (Hermeneutics)**

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) posited that another key concept “underpinning IPA is hermeneutics which they described as referring to the theory of interpretations” (p.21). These authors acknowledge that understanding cannot take place without some form of interpretation. Blore (2010) argues that a central element of interpretation (hermeneutics) is a method of understanding a text and thereby interpreting its meaning”. Studies further explains that hermeneutics involve two interpretation processes referred to as “double hermeneutics where the first interpretations process is about the participant interpreting and making sense of their own world; and the second interpretation process happens when the researcher interprets or make sense of the participant’s account of their world” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:53). In a study by Smith et al (2009), it is posited that “the circularity of the process involved in the double hermeneutics includes questioning, uncovering meaning and further questioning in order to interpret and understand a phenomenon, hence they refer to this process as the hermeneutic circle”. Similarly, Gadamer in Blore (2010) explained that “interpretation is a circle closed by the dialectic of question and answer” resulting in a hermeneutic circle as the researcher tries to explore understanding of a particular phenomenon. According to these researchers, in order to understand the part, the IPA researcher looks at the whole phenomenon and vice versa (Smith et al, 2009; Blore, 2010). However, Blore further explains that the interpretation obtained can only be valid in its cultural and historical context.

The study sought to explore the experiences and challenges of women in management positions in the mining industry from their subjective accounts. It also sought to explore perceptions held by these women regarding their career advancement into senior management levels at Lonmin and in the industry at large. IPA was therefore employed in the study, as it holds the view that “human beings are sense-making creatures and therefore the accounts that participants provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of their experiences” (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

### **3.3 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The research population for this study comprised all permanent female employees in core<sup>7</sup> business managerial roles (supervisory to senior levels) at Lonmin Platinum Mine, Marikana, South Africa.

The participants were selected based on the idiographic principle of IPA, which focuses “on a detailed case-by-case analysis of participant transcripts in order to provide a detailed account of the perceptions and understandings of a particular group, rather than prematurely making more general claims” (Smith & Osborn,

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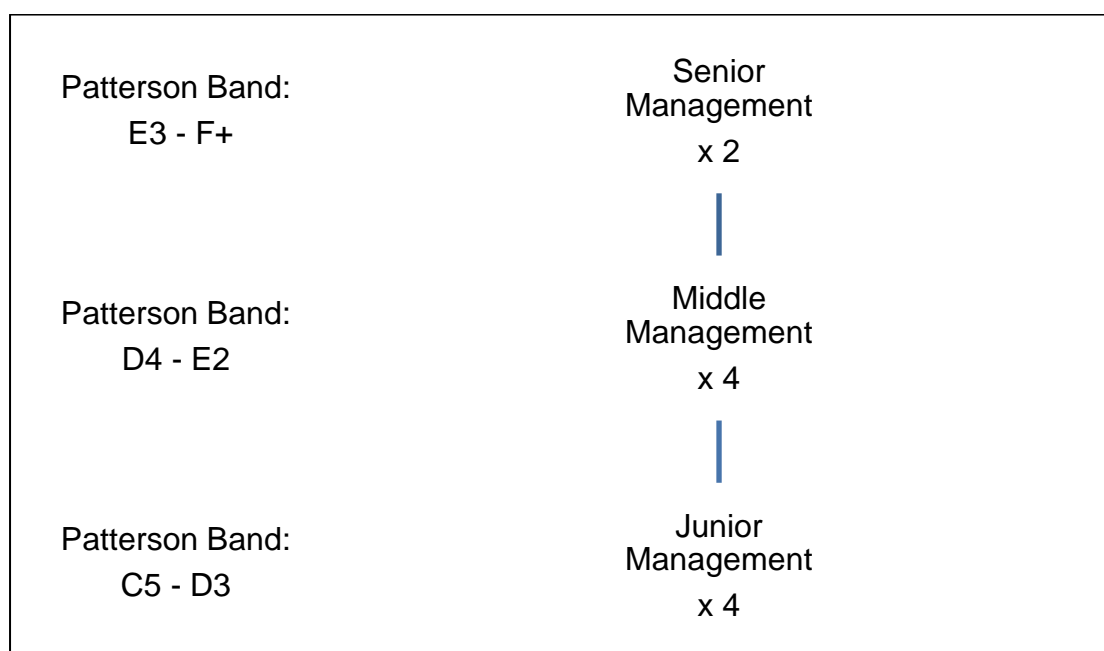
<sup>7</sup> Core business areas refers to the technical areas (with impact directly on production) associated with mining and processing, excluding all support functions.

2003:55). As described in Smith and Osborn (2003), this kind of approach “requires a small number of participants”, as it involves a painstaking case-by-case analysis that takes longer to complete. The sample was selected using the purposeful sampling method to identify a more closely defined group of individual which the research question was relevant. As per the IPA guidelines, the participants were therefore selected “based on the insight that they could offer into the phenomenon under investigation, thereby meeting the criteria for homogeneity” (Maunder, 2010:23). The study participants were selected from a list of women in management positions, which was obtained from the Human Capital Department. Participants had to meet the following criteria in order to be selected:

- Permanent employee at Lonmin
- Female
- In a management role from C5 (Supervisory Level) to F (Senior/ Executive Level), according to the Paterson Job Bands, which indicates levels of complexity, decision making and authority of a position.
- Have at least two years of experience in the current role, as they would have been in the role reasonably long enough to have experiences to share.
- In core functions, i.e. mining and processing technical areas, as these were the areas from which women were historically forbidden from working in the mining industry.

Only 10 female participants in management positions were identified across Lonmin’s core business functions. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the distribution of the sample per management level and in terms of Paterson Job Grades:

***Figure 3.1: Sample Distribution per Management Level***



### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data “as these interviews are considered to be the most appropriate and effective form of data collection for IPA” (Smith, et al., 2009). These interviews were applied because “they allow the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue wherein initial questions are modified in light of the participants’ responses and the researcher is able to probe interesting and important areas that arise” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:57). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews as they were found by Smith and Osborn (2003) to be useful in that they: “facilitate rapport/ empathy; allow greater flexibility of coverage; allow the interviewer to go into novel areas; and tend to produce richer data” (p. 59). According to IPA researchers, these interviews also permit the researcher to make interpretations which reflect the participants’ accounts, based on the subjective responses of the participants, thereby providing descriptive insight, rather than statistical significance (Smith, et al. 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003; Maunders, 2010).

An interview schedule was used in conducting the interviews. An initial interview agenda was prepared and then reviewed subsequently. The interview agenda was further evaluated during the pilot interviews and was then modified before being used with all successive participants. The agenda included the following topics/ themes:

- Family Background and decision regarding career choice.
- Experiences of the mining industry at Lonmin – in general and as women in management roles.
- Challenges encountered by women in mining management roles at Lonmin/ in the mining industry.
- Influence of the women’s experiences on the advancement of women in management to senior levels of management.
- Participants’ perceptions on the pace of their advance into senior management roles.
- The mining industry’s response to women in management roles.
- Benefits of the Lonmin WIM program.
- What women in management roles need to survive and advance further?

Each interview took between 50 – 90 minutes to complete. All interviews were conducted in English, as all participants were in management positions and could communicate fluently in English. Interviews with the senior and middle management participants took place in their offices. Junior management participants were interviewed in the Human Capital offices, the boardrooms in their respective work areas or in the researcher’s office, because these participants shared offices (open plan spaces) with fellow employees. In all the venues utilised, the researcher ensured minimum interruption and selected venues with no significant noise levels, to allow for clear audio recording. Where clarity was required, follow up interviews were conducted with relevant participants telephonically.

Prior to the interviews, the title, nature, and purpose of the study were explained to participants to obtain their informed consent to participate in the study. The interview schedule and how data was to be collected was also explained to the participants and consent for recording of the interviews was obtained.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and were transcribed verbatim. In analysing the data, the IPA approach was followed, as described in Smith and Osborn (2003).

#### **3.5.1 Systematic Search for Themes in First Case**

The process begins with searching for themes with the first case or participant before moving on to other cases. As described in Smith and Osborn (2003:67), “each transcript is read a number of times, the left-hand margin being used to note what is interesting or significant about what the respondent said”. Maunders (2010) explains that this step is crucial in that “it allows the researcher to analyse and make notes on the data, which can be broken down into three types of comments: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments: the descriptive comments merely describe the content of what was said; linguistic comments focus on the participant’s use of language; whereas the conceptual comments move to a more theoretical interpretation of the data” (Maunders, 2010:26).

Once this process has been applied through the entire transcript, the researcher revisits the data and the notes to identify any connection between the notes and to develop emergent themes, by capturing the essence of what was said by the participant (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Therefore, the “skill at this stage is finding expressions that are high level enough to allow theoretical connections to be made within and across cases, but which are still grounded in the particularity of the specific response” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:68).

#### **3.5.2 Connecting the Themes**

“This stage involves a more analytical or theoretical ordering, whereby the researcher attempts to make sense of the connections between themes, as they emerge, however, some of the themes will cluster together; some may emerge as superordinate concepts” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:70). In searching for connections between themes, there are two specific methods to be applied, i.e., “abstraction and subsumption” (Smith, et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2003; Maunders, 2010). Whilst “in abstraction, higher order themes emerge as a result of putting themes together and developing a new name; in subsumption, an emergent theme becomes a master theme itself, as it draws together related themes” (Maunders, 2010:26).

Smith and Osborn (2003) explained that once the connections have been drawn between the themes, “the clusters are themselves given a name and represent the superordinate theme”. Finally, an ordered and coherent table of themes is drawn that reflects the list of themes that belongs to each superordinate theme.



### **3.5.3 Move across Cases**

The next step involves identify and connecting themes as explained above on each case. Central to this step is idiography, “which is concerned with the distinct experiences of particular people and the particular contexts in which those experiences occur” (Maunder, 2010). Based on this, each case is therefore central to the analysis and it is important to understand as much as possible about each case, before moving on to the next, “in order to maintain sensitivity to each person’s unique story” (Smith, et al., 2009). Although Smith and Osborn (2003) suggested that “themes from the first case could be used to inform subsequent analysis of the other cases”, Smith et al (2009) contends that “a firmer commitment to the case-by-case idiographic approach has been articulated in more recent writings to ensure that each participant’s story is understood”.

### **3.5.4 Establishment of Superordinate Themes**

According to Smith and Osborn (2003:70), “once each transcript has been analysed and a table of themes drawn for each case, the next stage is to look for patterns across cases”. These authors explained that “some themes will represent higher order themes shared by more than one case and based on the cross case analysis and clustering, a final table of superordinate themes is constructed” (p. 70). Furthermore, these authors explain that “the themes are selected not purely on the basis of their prevalence within the data, but the richness of the particular passages that highlight the themes and how the theme helps illuminate other aspects of the account, are also taken into account” (Smith & Osborn, 2003:74). Maunder (2010) and Smith et al (2009) posited that the establishment of superordinate themes “helps to highlight the differences between participants, as well as the similarities that they may share and identifying connections and renaming themes as a deeper understanding of the data is developed”.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Ethics Committee, prior to embarking on the study, to ensure that the study would be conducted with consideration given to the subjects human rights and that these would not be violated (Appendix 1). Written permission was obtained from Lonmin’s Human Capital Department to embark on the study and to obtain the participant’s list with personal details (Appendix 2).

Before the interviews, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and that a copy of the final thesis would be submitted to the company for business improvement purposes. Participants were also informed that their decision to participate in the research was voluntary, that their responses and personal details would be kept anonymous and confidential, and that they had a right to withdraw from participating without fear of victimization or penalty. The researcher’s identity, the supervisor and researcher’s association with the institution, and their contact details were provided to participants. During the introduction to the interviews, it was specified to the participants that there were no direct benefits or risks associated with participation in the study. Verbal consent were obtained from the participants first and later written informed consent issued to

participants for sign-off to confirm their consent for participation and for recording of the interviews (Appendix 3).

The interviews were conducted in private offices at Lonmin to ensure confidentiality was maintained. Participants were also informed that the research material (transcripts and recordings) would be: accessed only by the researcher, the supervisor and the University of KwaZulu-Natal; stored by the university after the study for five years, after which the material would be destroyed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the reporting tradition of IPA, each theme will be introduced and demonstrated with quotes from the data. It is important to note that in the demographic table below, the participants were given pseudo names to protect their identity. The participant's demographic characteristics are presented on the table below:

*Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample*

<b>Socio-demographic characteristics</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Race</b>	
Black	5
White	4
Indian	1
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
Tswana	2
Zulu	2
Venda	1
Afrikaans	4
English	1
<b>Age Group</b>	
20-29	2
30-39	6
40-49	2
<b>Level of Education</b>	
Matric + Mining Certificate/ Ticket	1
Diploma	1
University Degree	4
Honors Degree	2
Master's Degree	2
<b>Management level (Paterson Grade)</b>	
Junior Management (C5 - D3)	4
Middle Management (D4 - E2)	4
Senior Management (E3 – F3)	2

<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single (Never Married)	2
Engaged	2
Married	5
Divorced	1
<b>Religion</b>	
Christian	10
<b>Period in current position</b>	
0 – 2 years	2
3 - 5 years	7
5 years +	1
<b>Period in Mining Industry</b>	
2 – 5 years	2
6 years +	8

Table 4.1 illustrates the demographics of the ten (n=10) female research participants in management positions at Lonmin. The table indicates that participants were selected across all management levels in the organization and across all races. The table also presents additional information regarding participants' socio-demographic background, which was taken into consideration in the discussion chapter.

## 4.2 ANALYSIS

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim for all 10 interviewed participants, following the IPA approach. Following the IPA principles in Smith and Osborn (2003), the idiographic approach was also applied, “with a detailed case-by-case analysis of individual transcripts” done in order to provide a detailed account of the experiences of women in management positions at Lonmin and their perceptions of their career advancement. As illustrated in Maunders (2012), “each transcript was read through and notes were made in the left margin, in order to reflect: the researcher’s general impressions of issues discussed; the tone and emotions of the interview; the respondent’s ability to retrieve information for discussion”. As described in Braun and Clarke (2006), non-verbal cues were also noted and registered on the transcripts during transcription whilst the experiences were still fresh in the researcher’s mind. Table 4.2 below demonstrates the initial noting stage of analysis after reading of the transcripts and it is imperative to note that the multiple levels of influence, as per the ecological framework applied in this study, were also identified for the discussion section.

***Table 4.2: Extract from an interview – drawing notes from the transcript***

*A pseudonym (Tania) has been used to protect the identity of the participant, the researcher’s coding is shown in italics on the left margin and gestures and non-verbal communication are shown in bold)*

<b>Researcher’s analysis/ notes from the transcript</b>	<b>Transcription of interview</b>
<p><i>Adjust to the environment or leave, do as/ what we do – organizational influence</i></p> <p><i>Sources of the business attitude: industry background, inflexible, male dominance, does not embrace change – organizational influence</i></p> <p><i>Women need to: adapt, prove themselves, expect to be challenged and to defend themselves, women challenged to prove weakness/ failure</i></p> <p><i>Black women not trusted even if qualified - appointed because of affirmative action and not merit: gender and racial stereotypes - individual, interpersonal and community influence</i></p> <p><i>Men: common understanding, social identity, support networks/ circles – community influence</i></p>	<p><b>Tania:</b> Yeah, the attitude in the company is “fit in or go home” (<b>shrugs her shoulders</b>). The main goal is production, then safety - everything else is not that important. You are to learn to adapt quickly and on your own; the focus is on achieving production targets.</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> Where do you think this attitude comes from?</p> <p><b>Tania:</b> There are many sources ... the industry itself is demanding and is production driven. Mining is also a man’s world and they don’t care about anyone else and they want things to remain the same. They don’t easily welcome changes and want things to be done the same way as they were done some twenty years ago (<b>shaking her head and rolling her eyes - sounding sarcastic</b>). If you are different or want to change things, people assume you don’t know your job or you will not make it in the company ... they look at you like: Who the hell do you think you are? (<b>sounding annoyed and shrugging her shoulders</b>).</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do these factors impact on you and your role in management?</p> <p><b>Tania:</b> As a professional woman, one has to adapt and learn fast to be able to work with men. You first have to prove yourself: that you know your job and that you understand mining. If you are black, you are in a more disadvantaged position – no one trusts you or expects you to have expert knowledge or reasonable experience, though you may have the qualifications. In most cases, because white people do not trust your cognitive abilities, your appointment is questioned. As a woman, you get challenged in meetings and people look for weaknesses ... most importantly you always have to prove that you are tough enough to crack the whip and not to crack or breakdown after a tough meeting (<b>laughs</b>).</p> <p><b>Interviewer:</b> So women need to put in more effort than men?</p> <p><b>Tania:</b> Yeah, women need to work harder to prove their worth beyond affirmative action (<b>laughing</b>). Men do not have to put in extra effort. Men understand each other better and relate well to each other. They support each other and look out for themselves ... especially if they are from the same circles and networks that have support from the senior managers.</p>

<p><i>Social networks amongst men seem to influence career advancement decisions</i></p> <p><i>Company and industry history perpetuates gender preference and selection processes - organizational and policy influence</i></p>	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you mean by: same circles and support from senior managers?</p> <p><b>Tania:</b> There are many cliques and social networks and being in the right cliques with influence is all the men need to build successful careers in mining - within and outside the company. They (men) meet each other outside work, through the close social networks formed, where they usually discuss business and sometimes decisions are made - and you can hear in meetings that issues had already been discussed and decided upon. Even career plans are discussed over family dinners or golf sessions ... out of the blue, a colleague gets to head up a project and present it at Exco, then writes a monthly report for the division and next he is promoted into senior management. In some cases, men get headhunted from other companies as a Specialist, but we later discover he worked with some senior person previously and is recruited here to strengthen the empire ... <b>(laughing and shaking her head)</b>. This is how things are done in the mining industry and they have been like this for many years. The industry is tough for women and even worse for the few in management.</p>
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Table 4.3 below illustrates the next stage which involved re-reading of the scripts and the notes made to draw out emergent themes- elevating the analysis to a more conceptual level - while remaining relevant to the participant's subjective responses.

<b><i>Table 4.3: Extract from an interview – drawing emergent themes from the notes</i></b>	
<b>Researcher's analysis/ notes from the transcript</b>	<b>Emergent Themes</b>
Adjust to the environment or leave/ do as/ what we do.	<i>Resistance to change, adapt to the environment, acculturation</i>
Sources of the business attitude: industry background, inflexible, male dominance, does not embrace change.	<i>Mining culture, male dominance</i>
Women need to: adapt, prove themselves, expect to be challenged and to defend themselves, expect to be challenged to prove weakness/ failure.	<i>Pressure, demand, expectations, lack of trust, gender stereotypes, acculturation</i>
Black women are not trusted, even if qualified; appointed because of affirmative action and not merit.	<i>Racial and gender stereotypes</i>
Men - common understanding and social identity. Networks/ circles amongst men seem to influence careers, advancement/ development decisions; company and industry history perpetuates gender preference.	<i>Interpersonal relationships, gender stereotypes, career development and employment opportunities based on network connections, company and industry culture</i>

Table 4.4 below illustrates the step in which connections between the emergent themes were drawn and organized into superordinate themes that highlight the main aspects of the participant’s account of the research phenomenon. As described by Smith and Osborn (2003), a list of themes and grouping into clusters of related themes was done, and then given a superordinate theme that captures the essence of the themes.

<b><i>Table 4.4: Superordinate themes drawn from the emergent themes</i></b>		
<b>Researcher’s analysis/ notes from the transcript</b>	<b><i>Emergent Themes</i></b>	<b><i>Superordinate Theme</i></b>
Adjust to the environment or leave.	<i>Resistance to change, adapt to the environment</i>	<i>Mining Culture (community and organizational influence)</i>
Sources of the business attitude: industry background, inflexible, male dominance, does not embrace change.	<i>Mining culture, male dominance</i>	
Black women not trusted, even if qualified; appointed because of affirmative action and not merit.	<i>Racial and gender stereotypes</i>	
Men - common understanding and social identity. Networks/ circles amongst men seem to influence career advancement/ development decisions; company and industry history perpetuates gender preference.	<i>Interpersonal relationships, gender stereotypes, career development and employment opportunities based network connections</i>	
Women need to: adapt, prove themselves, expect to be challenged and to defend themselves, expect to be challenged to prove weakness/ failure	<i>Pressure, demand, expectations, lack of trust, acculturation</i>	<i>Nature of work (individual, interpersonal and organizational influence)</i>

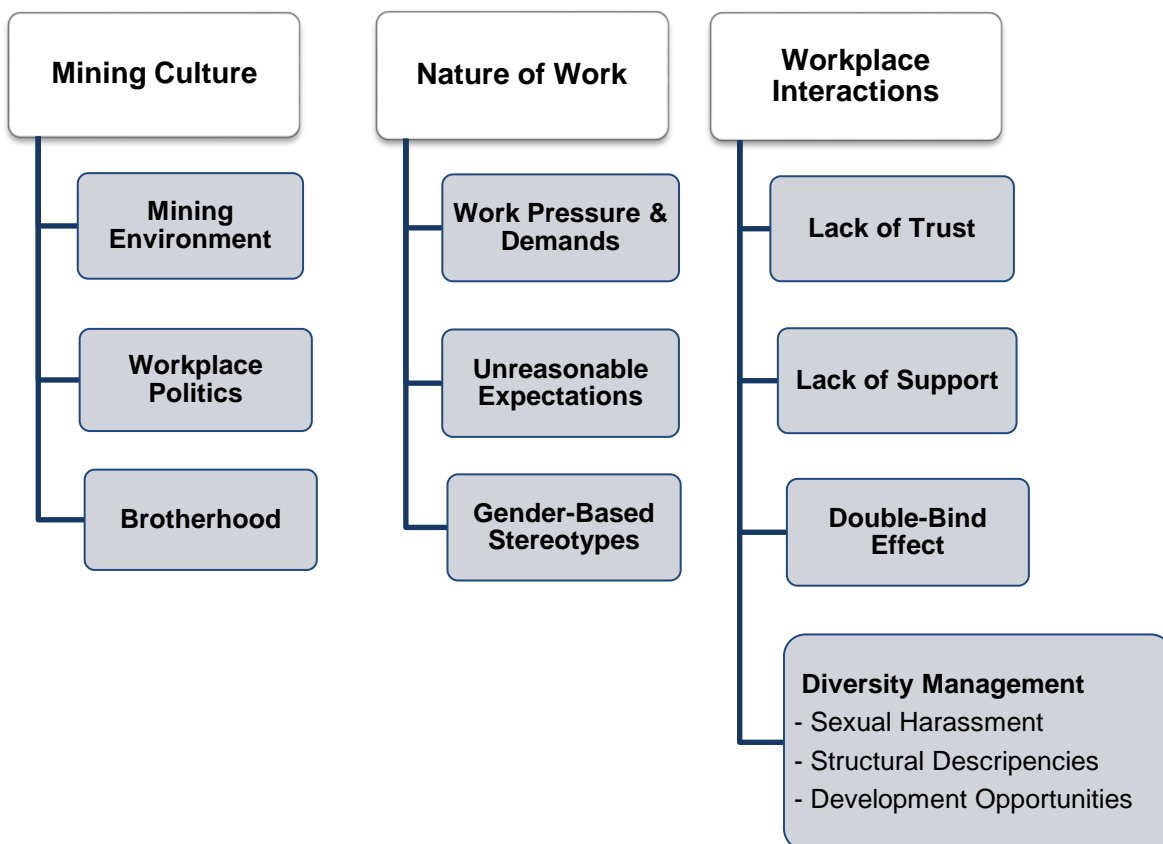
Once completed with the first case, a similar process was followed on each case of all participants. On completion all the case analyses, the next step involved looking for patterns across cases which led to a table of superordinate and subordinate themes from all the transcripts. As in Maunders (2012), only the most salient themes were included in the final write up; those themes that were not well supported by the data were dropped.

### 4.3 THEMES

An in-depth presentation of the research findings has been centered on three (3) superordinate themes that were identified. Figure 4.1 below presents an overview of the three superordinate themes and the subordinate themes drawn from the research finding:

1. **Mining Culture:** for the purpose of this study, “mining culture” refers to those factors that are caused by, associated with, or reflect the nature of the organization and/ or the mining industry.
2. **Nature of Work:** for the purpose of this study, “nature of work” refers to the characteristics such as working conditions, role description and scope of the position. This theme also reflects participants’ perceptions, observations, interpretations of their roles as women and managers by their peers, supervisors, organization and the industry in general.
3. **Workplace Interaction:** for the purpose of this study, “workplace interaction” specifically refers to the experience of the participants based on their interpersonal interaction with their peers in management, with senior management and with the different departments in the organization.

**Figure 4.1: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**





### 4.3.1 MINING CULTURE

This superordinate theme encompasses the factors that participants reported as associated with, or reflecting their perceptions and experience of Lonmin and the mining industry. These cultural factors were reported to result in exclusion, discrimination and less recognition of women; and they impacted on their career advancement into management and to senior levels. These were grouped into three (3) subordinate themes, i.e.: (1) Mining Environment; (2) Workplace Politics; and (3) Brotherhood.

#### 4.3.1.1 Mining Environment

Research participants described the mining atmosphere (at Lonmin) to be characterized by racial disparities, unfair labour practices and perpetual gender inequalities. Participants (both black and white) view the mining industry as promoting a culture of male dominance, with white males occupying the majority of senior management and executive positions. As one black middle manager put it:

*“The mining industry is a man’s world - tough, brutal and the majority of management are old white males that have been in the industry for years, with a few black males in management. Women are a minority and only a few are in management”.*

A white middle manager shares a similar view:

*“Mining is male and Afrikaans dominated environment, with very few black males in powerful positions. There are too many large male egos and they all want to be seen and respected and they have no respect for women. The attitude towards women is “respect our space and do as you are told”.*

Participants also reported that although the industry has acknowledged the gender and racial inequalities and has been forced by national legislation to commit to transformation targets to redress the inequalities, progress is very slow, as the culture is deep-rooted in the apartheid era of gender and racial inequalities. The majority of participants reported that racial discrimination and bias are still rife and black women are subjected to a double impact of being judged against their gender and their race. One black participant in junior management stated that:

*“Mining is hard and difficult if you are not white. I think racial discrimination is the reason most ambitious black engineers leave formal employment and become independent consultants. You are always made to feel like someone is doing you a favour and you need to always show how grateful you are for the promotion, whilst being used to demonstrate successful transformation in the company”.*

A black middle manager expressed her frustration regarding both race and gender bias:

*“As a professional women, one has to adapt and learn fast to be able to work with men. You first have to prove that you know your job and that you understand mining. If you are black, you are in a more disadvantaged position – no one trusts you or expects you to have expert knowledge or reasonable experience, though you may*

*have the qualifications. In most cases, because white people do not trust your cognitive abilities, your appointment is questioned”.*

Furthermore, majority of participants added that mining organizations continue to reflect habits from the “old apartheid” South Africa, which continues to maintain fractions and the exclusion of minority groups. These participants reported that the company is too tolerant of the Afrikaans language over other official languages, including English, which is widely recognized as a business language. The participants reported that since the majority of management is white, the use of Afrikaans is broadly acceptable in operational areas, in meetings and in some business communication methods, particularly where the most senior people are Afrikaans speaking. One black junior manager expresses her frustration:

*“They all speak Afrikaans and nothing will change, as the language is accepted at all levels, because in meetings there are usually more whites than other races. In meetings, especially the mining pre-planning and planning reviews, the meetings are conducted in Afrikaans. Even underground, Fanakalo<sup>8</sup> is mixed more with Afrikaans – forcing most black supervisors, mine overseers and miners to learn to speak Afrikaans and to report in Afrikaans”*

Similar treatment was experienced by another black junior manager who described her ordeal as follows:

*“Here, it’s like they use Afrikaans just to spark divisions. When I joined my department, I was the only black female and they (colleagues and management) always spoke in Afrikaans in meetings and in the department and I would be excluded from the conversations, developments and even some assignments”*

The alienation (through the use of language) was even reported by white employees who are not Afrikaans speaking. An English speaking junior manager shared her experience:

*“I am white and English. I have a completely different culture and way of thinking from the Afrikaans people. When I joined the company, people assumed I speak Afrikaans and were disappointed and irritated that I don’t speak Afrikaans. I had to learn to speak Afrikaans quickly to be included in discussions and to be able to socialize with colleagues”.*

Apart from the language and racial issue, the majority of participants described the mining industry as characterized by an autocratic and disrespectful culture, which involves managing with fear and intimidation through dictatorship, shouting and swearing at people to get results. According to the participants, this management style is used as a tool to avoid confrontation or being challenged by subordinates and has, over the years, been used as the standard for effective management, which all managers should demonstrate.

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<sup>8</sup> Fanakalo is a pidgin language, primarily based on Zulu, English and Afrikaans; it was predominantly used in the mining industry as a medium of communication between illiterate miners and management.

One black middle manager painted a disturbing picture of the sort of culture tolerated in this industry:

*“I don’t like mining and I feel they don’t respect people. I don’t want to be part of them, because I don’t want to swear, undermine, intimidate or belittle people to get what I want, or make people scared of me, so that they can’t challenge me or raise issues with me, like they (managers) do here and expect everyone to do- otherwise they say you can’t manage”*

Another white middle manager stated:

*“People use vulgar language in mining and scream and shout all the time. They intimidate and show no respect to their teams. They believe if people are afraid of you they will give you the results you desire and treat you with respect. If you have a friendly relationship with your team, it is believed that you will not make it as a manager, because you don’t know how to command respect. A popular question that managers ask jokingly when discussing candidates being recruited into the organization is “Does he or she have the killer instinct?” or “Can s/he kill and eat the prey?”, or they check if one is able to “crack the whip”.*

Finally, despite a conspicuous need to embrace change and redress gender inequalities, most participants feel that the mining culture is so deep-rooted that efforts to change are always blocked and hierarchy is used to perpetuate the inequalities. A frustrated black middle manager sums up the situation this way:

*“I think professional career women in mining are not wanted: they don’t like working with women. The attitude is “fit in or go home”. You have to understand who you are dealing with or reporting to and fit in with their style to get their attention”.*

This sentiment is also shared by one white middle management participant, who confidently asserts that:

*“If men had an option, they would not have women in the mines, particularly in management. You are regarded as a good manager if you behave as expected; and if you don’t and want to be unique, they set you up for failure, take away the support and expose you”*

#### **4.3.1.2 Workplace Politics**

Research participants describe the mining industry as characterized by politics and abuse of power emanating from various networks/ cliques and circles, especially at management levels – and more so at senior management, where the power of these networks reside. These invisible voices, minds and forces are reported to be embedded in the organization and can sometimes be influenced by external powers. These forces are reportedly so powerful that they have a strong influence over internal processes such as promotions, development, transfers and terminations. A white senior manager describes the situation in her submission:

*“There is a lot of frustration and it all has to do with politics. There are more cliques everywhere and these cliques extend from previous companies to influencing people’s movement within the company and in the industry. Because I don’t belong to any clique, I’m always on the outside and over-looked when important decisions are made”.*

In the eyes of many participants who took part in this study, politics was highlighted as a serious barrier to the advancement of women in mining. The power squabbles that exists between the cliques and networks results in factions, which determine the political climate. These factions and the social networks amongst males was reported as a major concern, mainly because they involve decision makers who are tasked with the responsibility of making decisions pertaining to recruitment, promotions and other succession management related opportunities. One of the black junior managers put it this way:

*“Understanding the politics is very important, because you might step on the wrong toes without being aware of doing so and that could limit your career. So I make sure I understand the company politics. My mentor told me to always know and study the politics of any environment, as it could impact on one’s career growth”.*

This seemingly widespread culture of internal politics and cronyism was reported across management levels, as one Indian middle manager participant indicated:

*“The politics that I have experienced here in the mining industry, I have not experienced anywhere else. People work in silos and are on their individual power trips and building own empires by surrounding themselves with their trusted individuals through promotions or even appoint their allies from previous companies. The mining industry to me is a ruthless industry, if you are not part of the power hungry pack, you are outside the circle of trust and you are invisible. There are a lot of cliques and certain groups within Lonmin that have a power struggle going on between themselves and other parts of the business, making the environment quite political and volatile”*

However, there were different views amongst the women on the impact of these networks, especially on the influence they have on recruitment and career advancement processes. The majority of non-white participants perceived these networks to be political and to have a direct impact on career advancement. On the other hand, the majority of white participants acknowledged the existence of the social networks and the influence it has on the career advancement of certain individuals. However, these participants’ view is that any individual seen by senior management to be suitable for a position may be appointed or promoted as long as processes are followed to recruit or promote individuals. A white participant in middle management participant presents her view:

*“Most people say there is a lot of politics regarding promotions and who’s needed where and why. People call it politics, but I think there is nothing wrong if you want to appoint someone in a position because you believe he’s going to the job - but the process should still be fair. It should be about the value that person is going to bring to the workplace.”*

Another participant, in the same category shares the same perspective:

*“I don’t see anything wrong or political in appointing people you regard as suitable for positions, who would be able to support you and your plans for your area, whether male or female. In management you need people*

*who can support your strategy and run with it to be successful and this goes beyond just the requirements for the position - it's more about relationships, trust and support"*

#### **4.3.1.3 Brotherhood**

Most of the research participants described the mining industry to be characterized by what they referred to as "brotherhood" or solidarity amongst men - irrespective of race. To most, the term refers to a behavior or lifestyle characterized by common understanding of certain concepts, codes, sport concepts and jargon used in mining. This includes a connection or association based on gender and power. A white junior manager participant painted a picture of the situation:

*"There is always cohesiveness and understanding amongst men, such that even when they don't agree or have different opinions, they conceal their differences when a woman is around. No matter how much you try and learn, they use "guy codes", which makes it difficult for women to follow or catch up with conversations and may result in exclusion from participating in discussions or influencing some decisions if you don't fully appreciate the context".*

A black junior manager added:

*"Most men relate well to each other and they socialize a lot outside work, which strengthens their relationships. They meet outside work with managers, senior managers and even families (particularly the white males). I have been with them, but it was difficult to relate with them: there is not much to talk about, because either the cultural issues or the tendency to switch into hobbies or cars/ bikes or sports conversations or boardroom reviews gets in the way. It feels like you are intruding and you feel left out, which defeats the purpose of being with them anyway"*

This assertion is supported by an equally frustrated participant, who is a black middle manager:

*"Not being able to socialize with men is an issue, because business decisions are made there – especially at the golf course. I don't play golf, but I know that usually, on golf days, senior management and executives attend and some managers invite people they want to introduce and showcase. Business issues also get discussed, formally or informally; and the winning strategies are formulated and team members are identified and recommended on the golf course".*

Another interesting view came from a white female senior manager who remarked:

*"Men always support each other. They socialize together and stand together when discussing issues. They support and look out for one another and cover for each other's mistakes, especially when I'm around. It is the "brotherhood" that's keeping them in charge of the industry and making it impenetrable for women. With women being few in the boardrooms, at times it makes you feel alien and sometimes stupid because you are always questioning or presenting a different perspective, when everyone has a sense of direction. Only when*

*there are obvious differences on issues that you are drawn in the politics or your view is valued instead of the other party otherwise, you just watch the show”.*

### **4.3.2 NATURE OF WORK**

Generally, nature of work refers to the characteristics, working conditions, role description and scope of the position. For purposes of this study, “nature of work” is extended to reflect participants’ perceptions, observations, and interpretations of their roles as women and managers by their peers, supervisors, organization and the industry in general.

#### **4.3.2.1 Work pressure and demands**

Research participants described Lonmin as a results-driven organization. They believe production and sales targets are management’s main concerns. Decisions regarding appointments and promotions are based on whether or not decision makers believe you can drive processes, focus and continuously deliver on your targets. The participants believe this impacts on career advancements processes, as decision makers often select people they know and trust for specific roles. One black junior manager put it this way:

*“Lonmin is more production driven. What is important is what has been produced. Are we meeting our targets? If not, why and no matter what, how it’s done but one must produce results which often creates pressure, anxiety and the screaming to ensure that targets are achieved. The other question becomes: Who you have in your team to guarantee your success? Most managers want to surround themselves with people they know and can depend on to push hard and produce the results; men are often the obvious choice, because they are assumed to be better equipped and command respect quicker to drive performance”.*

Another participant, who is Indian and in a middle management role, explains:

*“The attitude in the company is “fit in or go home”. The main goal is production, then safety everything else is not that important, except how we achieve results. As a result, the decisions on who drives these results are important and the preference is that men can do the work, because they do not have a split focus like women, and they know how to drive and work with experienced miners to get them to produce expected results, so the senior guys stay on top”.*

The majority of the participants indicated that the above put women under pressure to prove themselves worthy for consideration against their male counterparts. The perception is that women should prove themselves (beyond reasonable doubt) and work twice as hard to be considered for a management role – this required doubling the effort to be able to advance to senior levels of management. A black junior management participant explained:

*“The challenge is that, as woman in management, you always have to prove yourself beyond doubt that you deserve your position; you must be ready to be challenged all the time in terms of your knowledge and how well you know your area, especially in meeting. You are expected make people believe you are worthy; most of the*

*time it's not just about performance, but sucking up: getting people convinced you fit in and you are doing things the way they are supposed to be done, whilst men do not make any effort, as they naturally fit in".*

Furthermore, women in middle and senior management reported that they are expected to be “all-rounder’s” (know more than their specialty) to enable them to deal with the pressure. One of the participants, a black middle manager, shared her frustration:

*“I'm in engineering, but I'm expected to know details of production issues and the production lingo, environmental specifics and other areas, when there are specialists in those areas in the shafts. This creates so much pressure when going to a meeting or presentation, especially when senior people will be sitting in because they judge you on the impression you make. In as much as it's important to know the value chain, my performance as a manager should be judged as per my role and not impressions made, when my male colleagues are assumed to know everything and not feel the pressure”.*

#### **4.3.2.2 Unreasonable expectations**

A significant number of participants reported that the major challenge is that they are expected to exhibit certain qualities in the industry, if they are to be considered for career advancement and as successful in their management roles.

Firstly, the participants reported that the main expectation is that women are supposed to show masculine behaviour to fit in and gain respect from their male counterparts, including their superiors, otherwise they are regarded as emotional and too weak to take the lead.

*“To fit in and be respected in mining you have to behave like men. As a female manager, you need to forget that you are a woman and do what they (men) do and talk like they do. They expect you to show leadership by shouting, disrespecting others and showing no emotions at all in discussions”,* said one participant in junior management.

Another junior management participant added:

*“They would tell you that mining is not for girls and sissies. To fit in you must behave like the men. You are expected to adapt to the way they do things – speak and understand their language, swear and intimidate others to show potential and leadership skills, otherwise you are not ready for promotion because you'll never know how to command respect and results. A male colleague advised that if I want the respect that he gets, I must “kick some ass”. Without even realizing that I had achieved better results than him, he told me that I must not listen to excuses and discipline people, because if you are not like that, you are regarded as soft and weak and they (workers and colleagues) will not respect you”*

Secondly, participants reported that in order to progress to other levels of management, which are regarded as having more responsibility, women are expected to work equally long hours (and sometimes be on stand-by) as

do their male counterparts – regardless of the level of their position and the multiple roles that women play at work and outside work. A white senior manager described the situation thus:

*“The industry requires a lot of time from management or leadership. I think the industry is very taxing and because it is still stuck on the fact that you have to be physically at work to make an impact, even when at management and executive levels. The fact that the industry is male dominant especially at senior management makes it even harder for women because at this level a lot is delivered through meetings, dinner presentations, after-hours engagements and networking. This is a challenge for women – particularly if you don’t have the support that handles your roles outside work”.*

This participant further mentioned that when there is labour unrest or serious industrial action-activity, strategy sessions and other significant activities, senior managers are booked in for sleep-overs for the duration of the activity, which compromises the other responsibilities that women have outside of work. She further explained that to make a successful career in mining, women must be willing to sacrifice and compromise other roles, as work must take priority or decisions will be made without you. An Indian middle manager describes her frustration:

*“At management level, you get requests for information, reports or presentations at any time. Meetings are scheduled as urgent and last for as long as business require and if you excuse yourself, you get ‘the look’ or get excluded from major projects because you are not ‘dependable’. Here at Lonmin you’re expected to be available 24/7, 365 because of poor planning and a general assumption that at management level, your work is everything. I mean, we get leave on the condition that our cell phones are on - because the company needs us and we need to always be available to help with information for critical business decisions”.*

A black junior management participant supported the view:

*“Women are also expected to work or respond to emails even after hours, without recognizing the fact that when I get home my role and priorities change. Men always have time, even at home, so they have perpetuated the expectation that we should also be as available to work, respond to emails and answer phone calls that might take an hour or more, attending to work related queries or feedback/ reporting, even when at home. You are also expected to be seen all the time; if they don’t see you on a few occasions, you start hearing comments like: “Are you on leave again?”; “Is your phone or outlook (email) working properly”; “Women are hardly at work”; “Was your child sick again?”*

A senior white manager describes how she copes with the demands of her job and also acknowledges that the industry is not sensitive to and supportive of women.

*“I think one important factor is the support that you get from your family or any other sources. I have my family front taken care of by my parents, my domestic helper and my husband, who understands and helps out with the kids and other responsibilities. I think these are the most important elements that distinguish us as women from the men. However, I think the industry has not actually thought and planned for the integration of women into*



*the industry because support structures are not in place and have not been identified. As senior management and the government, we want to bring women in and expect them to be productive and as efficient as men; however, without strong social support, women will always be subjected to the family life balance dilemma.”*

#### **4.3.2.3 Gender-based stereotypes**

Research participants discussed some of the stereotypes that exist in the mine. These are conventional, fixed and over-simplified conceptions, opinions, or beliefs emanating from gender orientation and perceptions, thereby creating room for discrimination, bias and gender based preference.

##### **4.3.2.3.1 Performance and capabilities of women**

Some participants indicated that they are subjected to certain stereotypes in the workplace by virtue of being female. The most common stereotype reported was about performance required in relation to the physiology of a woman. Women are perceived to be physically weak and emotionally unable to handle the pressure than men.

As one black junior manager explains, the stereotype exists across most sections of the mine, particularly underground, where females are discouraged from working on stopping<sup>9</sup> areas and on day shifts. The critical part of this process is the blasting, which happens during the day shift and which is directly linked to production targets.

*“I was told that I can’t work on the stopes, because: women don’t work on the stopes because it’s dangerous and you need muscles to work in the stopping area; and you must know how to address the men, to give you the results you want. I was told that women assist with the cleaning and actually do it better than men. My colleagues advised that I should rather supervise the night shift because there is no blasting at night, which makes it less dangerous and there are more women on night shift to clean up, to ensure that that the day shift find the phases clean and ready to produce more.”*

A white female middle manager shares her experience:

*“I was considering applying for a senior management role and shared my thoughts with my male colleagues and they laughed this off. They told me I would not even get an interview for the role because the business cannot afford to move me from my role because women only go as far as my current level in my department as beyond this level only the sharks can swim and survive the amount of heat and pressure.”*

A black middle manager described her account of the gender stereotype regarding her technical and physical abilities:

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<sup>9</sup> Stopping is the process of extracting the desired ore or other mineral from an underground mine, leaving behind an open space known as a stope.

*“I had instructed the engineering team to check if the lining of the mill was not faulty, as I had heard some noise in the morning. When I asked for the report at the end of this shift, they all confirmed that it had been checked and found intact. They were all shocked when I went inside with the supervisor and did a physical test and discovered that it was indeed worn out. I was asked how I picked up the error because I had never been seen inside the mill. They told me that women are good at theoretical explanations but they have no proper experience of the plants and upon realizing that I knew what I was talking about, they confessed that they did not check it because they didn’t believe the liners were faulty as the noise was unusual”.*

#### **4.3.2.3.2 Emotional intelligence**

Participants also reported that women in management roles were believed to be emotionally unstable. Women are described as unable to cope with the highly pressured and critical mining environment and, as a result, they get emotional and crack easily, particularly when in management. One black middle management participant expressed a widely held stereotype:

*“The general perception is that all women are naturally emotional, take things personally and cannot handle the harsh and tough reality of the mining industry. In meetings, some senior managers would remind the floor to be sensitive, because there is a woman around and they should be careful of how they talk or criticize - which means we need some special treatment or we are weak”*

A white middle manager also gave her account:

*“They (the men) always say women are emotional and because we can’t take the pressure we always complain and moan about how they don’t accommodate us or how they are doing everything wrong and not supporting us. I’m not sure what they mean about women being emotional. Everything we do they say it’s our emotions or hormones or we are stressed! If you get sick, they say it’s stress or it’s because you can’t take the heat. However, contrary to this belief, almost all the managers in mining scream, shout and throw tantrums and they claim it’s how the mining industry is. If a woman does the same, she is emotional or can’t take the heat”.*

#### **4.2.2.3.3 Reliability of women**

Participants mentioned that another general perception is that women are unreliable and can’t be easily promoted to senior positions where there are more responsibilities and reliability is key. The participants further explained that the element of unreliability comes from the fact that men are uncomfortable with family responsibility leave and maternity entitlements. These rights/ entitlements are recognized by labour laws but in the workplace, men in mining view them as an interruption and would rather avoid dealing with them. A white middle manager stated:

*“I sit in budget planning meetings, where labour and vacancies are discussed. My male colleagues often emphasize the fact that with critical skills, legal appointments and management vacancies, employment equity will not be a priority, because these are important roles and candidates must be able to go the extra mile, be dependable and consistency is important. Women’s issues (like pregnancy) impact on projects and target*

*monitoring, because once pregnant and they are not productive for half a year and it has legal and financial implications for the company. I always remind them that management levels should not even be questioned as these are not underground positions and pregnancy does not determine women's performance and potential as managers; but most men still view women with tinted glasses (with preconceived ideas based on gender stereotypes) because of this issue".*

A black middle manager also stated that:

*"Pregnancy and family issues are serious concerns in mining. They have policies that govern these processes but always have to think it through before deciding to appoint women in positions they regard as important. Management positions, I think, are even more of a concern but these are often downplayed because of legislation; but we know that they don't want to deal with these issues and they associate them with being unreliable and not dependable because you might get pregnant anytime and cause interruptions. They jokingly ask if one is still planning to have kids or ask to be notified in advance when one is planning to get pregnant so they can prepare for the interruption".*

### **4.3.3 WORKPLACE INTERACTION**

Workplace interaction refers to experiences of the participants based on their interpersonal interaction with their peers in management, senior management and the different departments in the organization.

Research participants reported a strong link between relationships in the workplace and career advancement opportunities.

#### **4.3.3.1 Lack of trust**

Most participants expressed their level of dissatisfaction regarding the level of trust from their male counterparts – women are perceived with some level of suspicion when it comes to service delivery, i.e. that they cannot be trusted with certain positions or projects. One of the black middle managers explains:

*"In getting them to trust you and believe in you and your capabilities, you need to work extra hard as a woman. If you are to be a manager you have to prove that you can and that you are worth it. You get micro-managed so that you don't get a chance to mess up or you are given a difficult area to clean up - and if you struggle then you have provided proof that women are not good enough. So you have to prove that you can do it even better than they (men) do. You must be a go getter and make them uncomfortable for them to keep you at the same level ... make it impossible for them not to recognize you and not to trust your ability".* A white participant in junior management, whose technical report and recommendations were ignored because she was perceived to be inexperienced, added:

*"They went ahead and mined an area I had closed down because the ground was not stable. I gave them all the facts. They claimed to have many years of experience as men in the shaft and went ahead and mined in that*

area - and unfortunately there was a fatal accident. Unfortunately it took someone's life to get them to listen and trust my judgment. Although they now consult me before making important decisions, I know they still confirm my input with my male colleagues and other senior managers who entertain it because they get to keep track of my performance and the decision I make”.

A white middle manager, who is the only female in her area and at management level, expressed how an award for her extensive research expertise changed perceptions and gained her respect from her male counterparts and senior management:

*“At first they would second-guess my decisions and run to executives or my male colleagues for second opinions or confirmation. Then they heard of my other projects with tertiary institutions and my research achievements outside the mine, where my work was recognized by one of the tertiary institutions - and their attitude changed. I get the respect and acknowledgement now because I have been endorsed by my projects first, not because they saw me and engaged with me to realize my worth. It is unfortunate and frustrating that women have to prove their worth but we do it to show them we are capable and it's the only way they will learn to recognize women”.*

#### **4.3.3.2 Lack of support**

The findings presented also indicated that women managers at Lonmin do not get proper support from senior management to help them succeed in their management roles. A black middle manager expressed her view on the issue:

*“Women have no support from senior management, unless you belong to a certain network. It feels like we (women) are promoted into positions so that management can prove that women cannot survive or succeed in senior roles. I don't expect hand-holding at my level but people succeed at Lonmin because their areas and initiatives have support from senior management”.*

A white senior manager concurred, as she shared her observation:

*“I know of a few women who have left Lonmin because they were put in positions where they were bound to fail without support from senior management. In such roles, all you can do is to keep the area on care and maintenance, which, in most cases, doesn't last long, because the heat gets turned up; and if you have no support or a stronger voice to speak on your behalf, then you fail and you would have given proof that women cannot make it as managers in mining because they lack innovation or they are too soft to stand up for what they want. The real questions should be: Why give such positions to women then? or Why the senior manager (usually male) that the role reports to never gets to account for the failure?”*

The participants further reported that the organisation is crafted in such a way that there is no support from female senior management or amongst the women in management, due to the importance of nurturing the networks and maintaining the relationships and acceptance already established with senior male management. A few participants reported that this strategy helps keep women apart (and other minority groups including

black men), which ensures that the status quo remain in terms of numbers and decision making. A black middle manager explains:

*“Women in senior and executive levels surround themselves with men and they do nothing to pull other women up, by giving them exposure through acting on senior positions or engage them in projects. Once they are in top management, they lose focus and forget about women in positions below them and they never think of creating a close network for women, like the men do. They socialize with the men and think like men do and they don’t push or make things happen for other women”.*

Another black middle manager shares her frustration:

*“Once you are in senior management, all your time is consumed at that level and the politics is rife, keeping your networks happy and to continue to trust and support you as a business person and other elements of priority get compromised. I’ve seen this with the few black senior managers in the organization who we expect to drive transformation but the system does not allow them. These executives have no support unless they belong to networks, they are used against each other to get the attention or support from white senior management. I think it’s all about keeping the numbers of the minority groups limited and to keep the power and authority where it belongs (with white males)”.*

One white senior management participant also expressed her concern on the same viewpoint:

*“There is no “sisterhood” for women in mining management positions, which should form the support base for women and help in penetrating the strong male network. There should be that link through the sisterhood to keep the female perspective. So the women’s perspective in top management is not there because once they are at the top, their approach to anything is very similar to that of the men - and maybe it’s because of the pressure and wanting to belong. We actually don’t feel the benefit of having a female executive. It’s like all other minority groups that have no voice, and the system keeps them apart so that they never find or hear their voice”.*

Poor mentoring and coaching programmes for women in management positions has also been noted by many participants. Although Lonmin has a mentorship programme, the respondents felt it was just a paper exercise for reporting purposes. The participants reported that it does not address the challenges facing women in management and it is not linked to their career advancement. A white senior manager explained:

*“There is lack of relevant mentorship in general in the organization. Technical support and coaching can be obtained from the men, but women also need mentoring and guidance on issues like: how I sorted out my family life; how I sorted out my social issues; and challenges to get to the top. Men can’t help with that information, they can’t think or initiate social support structures and initiatives or flexibility to allow women to successfully manage all aspects of their lives without compromise”.* A black junior manager shared her experience:

*“I have been in a mentorship relationship for more than two years with a white male. He has helped me understand the business, the dynamics, workplace politics, and taught me how to play the game. Our*

*relationship is, however, not directly linked to my career advancement. I have worked my way up to where I am and I think my coach has contributed more in terms of support and learning how to deal with the racial struggles in this industry”.*

Poor or lack of professional and emotional support from line (senior) management was also reported by the majority of participants. This lack of support was however attributed not only to gender: racial preference was indicated as playing a significant role that disadvantaged the black women as they had no connections to the networks. This was also consistent with the different opinions the participants reported during the interviews.

A black middle manager expressed her frustration:

*“I fight my own battles because there is no one to run to. If I report, it’s like I’m escalating and that means I can’t deal with and solve problems on my own. White colleagues, on the other hand, quickly run to the senior guys and their networks for information, support and protection, and the next thing you are chopped off or moved to another project or section. As a black person, you can’t just run to your manager for support, because it might just be interpreted as inability to solve problems or to handle pressure”.*

The participants further reported that they don’t receive any support from non-white male senior management, as they (non-white management) are also still seeking recognition and acceptance into the white senior management networks that hold power and authority in mining. A black junior manager explained:

*“In the workplace, we don’t get much support from our senior management, including our black senior managers, because they don’t want to upset their superiors or be seen as challenging authority. Whilst it is easy for our white colleagues to escalate and ask for support, we are to deal with our own issues and fend for ourselves as our black senior managers conform to the rules and look the other way or scream even louder to be seen as exercising power, which they don’t do with white colleagues. As black people, we get support from our teams and let our work speak for us”.*

A black middle manager shared a similar experience:

*“I speak for myself and fight my own battles. One would expect my senior manager to understand the pressures we go through in the organization as black employees but he does not. The black managers never protect or support us in public, at work or in meetings, and they gain popularity for being hard and objective. Sometimes when you discuss the issues with their senior managers, you are amazed at the little support we get or how cheap they sell our performance and capabilities in senior meetings, when, on the other hand our white colleagues are show-cased as being brilliant and innovative. On the other hand, you are also amazed at how little the white senior guys also think of their black colleagues; and it makes one wonder if we will ever be seen beyond race and gender”.*

The perceptions and experience of the white participants were interestingly consistent with the views of the black participants. These participants reported to have received support from senior management (black and

white) in developing their careers and nurturing their current skills for optimal performance. A white middle management participant explained:

*“My manager and I get along well and he gives me opportunities for exposure – I have presented at Exco and he was there to support me. This is also part of my development plan and succession in the department”.*

The same sentiment was shared by another white participant in middle management reporting to a non-white male manager:

*“I feel the company is supportive and management is supportive and understanding (both black and white). I once requested assistance with my project and he obtained resources from other teams and supported my project all the way. I have been given resources to study further and colleagues look after my area when I need to attend to my studies or write exams. My manager also supports me and backs me up more often”.*

#### **4.3.3.3 Double-standards**

The majority of women indicated that, more often than not, they battle with comprehending and defining expectations because of the haziness that characterizes relationships and standards for effective management. Participants stated that although women are expected and advised to exhibit masculine behavior and tactics, they are still criticized when they challenge certain decisions, dictate or show independence. Those who “play ball” are sidelined and labeled as trouble-makers. As a result, many women get frustrated because of the confusion and end up leaving the company. One of the junior black managers explained the frustration:

*“I think, in mining, you are not supposed to be soft: like they say mining is not for girly girls. However, if you are not afraid to challenge, you are also seen as a menace. They control you by keeping you ignored and isolated, until you feel frustrated and decide to either conform or leave. There is always a hidden element of respect that women have to show, like they are expected to do at home to the head of the family. However, when you do that, they think you are soft, or you are not decisive and assertive enough”*

A white senior management participant added:

*I’m seen as a trouble-maker because I speak my mind out and I’m not afraid of anyone because I do not subscribe to any network. You get isolated and never invited to meetings or sessions that matter, but your ideas and performance are acknowledged because they know you make them shine. The power game is very frustrating and not knowing how to behave is confusing for most women - and they end up leaving”.*

#### **4.3.3.4 Diversity Management**

Participants indicated that Lonmin has not fully progressed to embracing gender diversity. However, the participants reported that the company has implemented a few initiatives aimed at addressing employing women in the organization. These initiatives include: the launch of the Women in Mining (WIM) program; amendment of the recruitment and selection procedure, in order to give preference to women who meet vacancy requirements; consideration of women in succession plans, training and development programmes, such as

Learnerships, Bursars and the Graduate in Training program. On the other hand, the participants reported that even though these initiatives have been implemented, they are not properly communicated, managed or followed through. The participants reported that, as a result, these programmes remain a paper exercise used for SLP reporting for the DMR.

The participants attributed the effectiveness of the above mentioned initiatives to the minimal participation and poor commitment of senior management (particularly men) who are the majority decision makers and who influence all human resources related processes. The participants reported that senior management is only involved at the strategy level and does not ensure that implementation is effective or relevant to purpose, that supporting programmes are put in place, and that the organization is able to realize its return on investing in these programmes. As a result, the participants believe that the current initiatives, in their current form, do not directly contribute to their career advancement, as they have (and continue) to make an extra effort and fight for recognition. A white senior manager described the situation:

*“Lonmin does have an idea of diversity management in general; but I don’t think that it is related to women in mining and or even pushing for women beyond middle management level. It is individual women driving their own careers or certain managers who recognize talent and decided to develop it. I think Human Capital, in general, at Lonmin, is ineffective and has no direction; the Human Development plan is pathetic because I don’t think there is a plan that’s capturing the development of women properly, so there is no way it can help with the WIM and the career advancement of women into senior management levels”.*

Another black middle management participant added:

*“For now, I think the main driver of the Human Capital department is the DMR reporting, more than offering genuine gender diversity management and development programmes. According to Recruitment, qualifying women should get preference in positions, but still not many of us get through to middle and senior management. There are talks about succession plans, but nobody knows who’s made the list or how to get on the list or how the succession process is applied and if it is working for the organization or not. It is just another tick box on someone’s to do list”.*

The majority of the participants reported that due to poor gender diversity management, the organization is faced with prevalent issues relating to career development opportunities, structural discrepancies and sexual harassment of women. The participants reported that these issues contribute significantly to the career advancement of women into management and senior management levels and reflect the company’s inability to embrace women and allow women to share authority with men.

#### **4.3.3.4.1 Career Development Opportunities**

Research participants highlighted various concerns about talent management and training & development programmes that appear to be ineffective at Lonmin. These programmes are reported to be ineffective in



addressing developmental gaps within the company. Most participants believe the processes should be centrally coordinated to improve the selection criteria, the training scope and evaluation, as well as succession management. Due to loopholes in the system, participants believe too much power and discretion is given to senior managers to decide on the career development of their teams, which gives way to favoritism and discrimination, particularly against women. One black junior manager remarked:

*“Women are not developed at Lonmin and there is no focus in training and developing a pool of skilled talent with more women to succeed in senior management roles. Talent Management recruits graduates and issues some guidelines for the program but there are no mechanisms or penalties set to ensure compliance. As a result, line managers tend to use their discretion and preference on who gets full exposure - and white males and then white females usually get preference before other categories”.*

The majority of the participants further raised concerns about the training and development programmes as they believe that there are no measures in place to follow through on the success of the talent management programmes. They also reported that there are no supporting programmes in place to enhance the career progression and retention of the trained employees once they have completed the programmes and are absorbed into operations. Consequently, career progression remains at the discretion of senior management and women are consistently at a disadvantage. One white middle management participant explained:

*“The lack of talent nurturing and development of all potential employees, irrespective of race and gender, at Lonmin, is a serious concern. There is no identified central pool with skills and potential to choose from; hence management positions are filled with external people through network connections; or the decision to develop or promote is line management’s prerogative and they obviously choose from their own circles or network. Women do not need any special programmes or treatment, other than equal opportunities for development, exposure and showing off their potential, so that they can fairly compete with men for positions”.*

The participants also reported that Lonmin has a tendency to create opportunities for lateral development which is used to delay the upward career advancement of individuals (particularly women). One black junior manager who believes she is a victim of the system shares her experience:

*“I (and the women at my level in my technical group) have been developed laterally and moved from one area to the next – from one project to another. I have been entrusted with acting as Manager on several occasions and made big decisions and improvements with measurable returns. I am part of the WIM program and we showcase how we made it to junior management and how the company has changed to implement initiatives to accommodate women in core areas. However, I have been over-looked on several occasions for the same Manager position that I’m good enough to act in and a male candidate was appointed instead. To contain us from complaining about being promoted, they created several layers for our role, with minimal differences, to make us feel we are being considered”.*

Another black junior manager shared the same view:

*“Lonmin has a tendency of moving and developing people in different areas, but keeping you at the same level for years. In as much as there is significant benefits from this, they also move us laterally to keep us quiet, because when you perform and excel in your role, they don’t have reasons for not considering your promotion, so they move you to another area where you are regarded as new in the role or they say you need to learn strategic thinking. However, the majority of our male counterparts get exposure to present and report to senior management and promotion becomes the obvious move”.*

A white senior manager explains that this problem seems to cut across all managerial levels:

*“One would think that I should (with conviction) be in a position to know that I’ll be considered for the next level position if opportunities arise. However, I collate information, compile reports and facilitate things laterally but I don’t get to present my own reports and be exposed to the next level of senior leaders. If I don’t sit and be exposed to Exco, how will I get there without being known? One would assume that reporting to a female executive would make a difference but my male counterparts get the exposure and support, and are being groomed in front of me. We all know that women get lateral exposure and then remain in positions longer than men; as a result, women progress by changing companies for better and senior roles and the cycle repeats itself. It’s the order of the day in the mining industry”.*

Finally, the research participants indicated that another contributing factor to the slow pace in career progression is the outdated career development guidelines that were based on years of experience and not on level of education. Based on the unclear recruitment and career development guidelines, there are perceptions that employees must be with Lonmin for at least 3-5 years, in the same position, to be considered for promotion - which negates experience obtained at other organisations. The lack of clear development and promotional guidelines perpetuates these perceptions, which places women at a disadvantage because mining companies only recently started to employ women in core areas and women are set up to move frequently between organisations and departments to drive their career progression. An Indian middle manager shares her experience:

*“I wanted to apply for a senior position and I was told by a senior manager that I was not ready for that level because I had not been in my current role for at least 5 years at Lonmin. I was also told that my previous experience does not count because companies operate differently and I need to learn the Lonmin way of doing things first which is more important than my expertise”.*

#### **4.3.3.4.2 Structural Discrepancies**

According to most participants, there are some career advancement opportunities at junior and middle management levels, but the situation is different at senior level. Participants indicated that there are fewer positions as you climb the management ladder which makes it even tougher for women due to compounded competition and pressure. A white middle management participant explains:

*“There are fewer opportunities at management level and there are more men than women, which makes it easy for decision makers to go for the known and obvious choices. Due to the fact that there are no guiding processes for promotions or central talent pools, senior managers habitually and subjectively promote whoever they want and trust”.*

A similar point of view was highlighted by a black participant in middle management who puts it this way:

*“The structures get thinner towards the top and only a few are able to push through the cracks and get into senior levels. If they are not able to promote people they want, senior managers chop and change role descriptions to suite the identified ‘blue-eyed boys’ (favourites). All management and senior positions require more years of experience and qualifications; however leniency in terms of the qualifications is usually exercised. Considering the history of women employment in the mines, the processes tend to favour men and they get promoted quicker – especially the white males as they have more management experience and women have to be put on relentless mismanaged development or mentorship programs to learn the ropes”.*

Another deterrent with significant impact on the development of women in the company was identified as job grading and how senior management have the discretion to re-grade a position at offer stage, after the full recruitment process has been completed. Related to the grading issue are salary packages and levels of authority. It was reported that when women (and other minority groups) are appointed or promoted into management, there is a tendency to appoint them at entry level salary ranges or to down-grade positions to reduce the level of authority. Although individual salary details are confidential and the company governance procedures are meant to enhance confidentiality of such details, participants indicated that the information is somehow known, as employees often discuss their salaries and benefits for comparison because of the prevalence of salary disparities. The salary concerns persist, even though an exercise was done to redress the disparities. A white senior manager confidently revealed:

*“You should look at the people that were promoted in the last year and those that were upgraded and got salary increments: I can tell you that it was not primarily women. Women get appointed at lower grades and lower salaries and are not considered for ad hoc salary upgrades – it is the order of the day in mining. A male employee worked in our department at the same level as my Specialists, but when transferred into another area without reason, his position was upgraded and he was given a huge salary increase. I have submitted a request to upgrade my team on two occasions and each time a promise to review is made, but never acted on”*

A black middle manager shared her experience:

*“I was appointed into a position following a successful recruitment process, only to discover that the role was down-graded on the offer of employment compared to what was advertised. The salary was also reduced to the middle range of the lower grade I was offered. When I challenged this, I was told this was done because I was new in the role and that the grading and salary would be reviewed at the next performance appraisal, based on my performance in the new role. Following a minimal salary review, I accepted the role, knowing I would be*

*the lowest paid manager and would never catch up to the same level of my male colleagues. I knew I had to excel in my role and let my work speak for itself; and although the upgrade was done eventually, my salary is still lower than that of my male colleagues, whom I outshine with performance.”*

#### **4.3.3.4.3 Sexual Harassment**

Research participants reported that there are sexual harassment elements at their workplace, which needs to be investigated and properly managed, as these impacts directly on career progression. It is reported that the majority of these cases are never reported due to intimidation and poor or no follow-up on reported cases. A black middle management participant shared her experience:

*“I have been sexually harassed and I reported the matter. Unfortunately, things got swept under the carpet because these cases are usually reported to men anyway; and they either convince you to drop the issue to secure your career or the perpetrator is moved to another area or consents to resigning, which allows them to walk free and still get all their benefits. Women are seen as sex objects and if promoted, the skeptics quickly assume that one got promoted as a result of a sexual favour and not on merit. The boardroom experiences are intimidating as we are the minority and exposed to abuse or victimization. Some women even defer their career ambitions because of fear of exposure and the practice of dealing with sexual harassment issues. Most cases are not reported because of a fear of losing our jobs and because there is no support/ effort to end the abuse”.*

Another black woman in junior management presented a similar argument:

*“I was harassed in the lift and when I reported the matter I was told that the mining industry is tough and men touch women all the time, which means nothing and that I should be tough to be able to understand and accept the environment. There is a lot more harassment underground than reported. Most of the sexual offences underground do not get reported; but, if reported, the victim gets moved into a different area, where you might be victimized and punished for causing trouble or they leave you alone but continue doing it to other women”*

A white senior manager sums it up:

*“I think, in general, a lot of the mining guys have absolutely no respect for women and they see a woman as something to be used for their entertainment. Also because there are very few women in management, most men take advantage of this. Sexual harassment happens more often but cases are not reported because: there is no support for women in management; and if you take it up, it's career suicide. This is because the offenders are direct senior managers with decision making powers and influence over our career growth and performance management. So most women remain silent and frustrated and they eventually leave the organization, hoping for better prospects elsewhere.”*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. DISCUSSION

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to explore the experiences of women in management positions and the factors that influence their career progression to senior management levels in the platinum mining industry.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion covers the three superordinate themes identified, i.e.: (1) Mining Culture; (2) Nature of work; and (3) Workplace Interactions. The researcher used the ecological model to both guide and illuminates the discussion.

##### 5.1.1 Individual level

On an individual level, the finding that women are not motivated by human resources and talent management programs (because they are perceived to be ineffective) means there are insufficient support structures to facilitate career advancement in the organization. Participants indicated that decisions regarding training and development are at senior management's discretion at Lonmin and that women benefit less from these initiatives than do their male colleagues. This means that female managers (regardless of their qualifications, experience and performance) are disadvantaged by existing learning programmes because these are naturally designed to favour male managers, creating frustration and a career ceiling for women.

Consistent with the literature on women in management positions, the poorly designed and mismanaged employee development and talent management programmes has led to career limitations for women in the organization, as too much discretion is given to senior managers to decide on the career development of their teams, which makes way for favoritism and discrimination, particularly against women (Mphokane, 2009; Tabudi, 2008; Kabacoff, 2010; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011).

The company should consider centralizing coordination of the training and development function to provide guidelines for fair selection criteria, similar training scope and evaluation, as well as equal opportunities for succession management. The company should also ensure that a training committee is fully functional and that quarterly reports are sent to the relevant executive to improve and promote accountability from the talent management and transformation departments. Progress reports should also be published within the organization for visibility and to build confidence in the succession planning system. Also, the composition of the talent management committee should include women in management, to ensure the interests of women in the company are represented.

### **5.1.2 Interpersonal level**

On the interpersonal level, the finding that certain managers are reluctant to promote women into higher positions (due to the fact that women sometimes interrupt operations because of maternity leave and family responsibilities), is not only unfair but unconstitutional. This means female employees are likely to be excluded from career opportunities due to work-life balance issues. This also means that instead of proper workforce planning, some managers opt for easy solutions, thereby avoiding the challenges.

This finding is consistent with the finding in previous studies on women in mining studies which suggest that “work-life conflict can have significant negative consequences for workers and organizations, as employees try to balance increasing demands from both their personal and professional life” (Women in Mining Canada, 2010; Minerals Council of Australia, 2005; BC Mineral Exploration and Mining Labour Shortage Task Force, 2011),.

This suggests that women are perceived as unreliable and a risk to the business and production, as a result, they could be denied opportunities to learn and grow. Discriminating against women for reasons of pregnancy may not only further weaken the development and advancement of women in the company, but may also lead to lawsuits against the employer.

This study also found that the use of Afrikaans in the organization is broadly accepted in operational areas, in meetings and in some business communication methods, particularly where the most senior people are Afrikaans speaking. This finding suggests that non-Afrikaans speaking employees are excluded or limited from taking part in mainstream daily engagements, which may subsequently affect their participation, growth opportunities and overall engagement in the organization. This may also impact on and limit their interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and superiors, which may consequently hinder their career advancement.

In an effort to address this situation, the “first port of call” should be the company’s Code of Conduct. The need for employees to adhere to the use of English as a “medium instruction” should be highlighted in the document and other related guidelines that govern behavior in the organization. Management (including senior management) should take a leading role in modelling appropriate and inclusive engagement of all employees. The company’s management should, in addition, roll out awareness campaigns to encourage employees to adhere to the Code of Conduct, stipulating repercussions for non-compliance; otherwise these documents remain a paper exercise that means nothing and that is not of benefit to those employees affected by bad/ unjust behaviour.

Furthermore, the use of intimidation tactics, abusive, obscene and derogatory language by most managers, indicates the masculine nature of the culture at Lonmin - where ascribed effective management is associated with the autocratic management style. This suggests that abuse of power and authority perpetuates gender

discrimination and subjects women to prejudiced evaluation, which could impact on their interpersonal relationships and development prospects, and subsequently hinder career advancement. This also indicates that senior management at Lonmin still use their power and authority to perpetuate acts that are incongruent with the Lonmin Charter, which advocates workplace decorum. The charter promotes respect for each other, openness, sharing, trust, teamwork and involvement, which is intended to facilitate inclusive and positive interaction within the organization (Lonmin Charter, 2009).

This culture of swearing at people to get results and managing by fear may have a negative impact on the employee-employer relationship and may go as far as affecting, not only the morale, but the general well-being of staff. If not well managed, the impact of this might severely affect operations, as there is overwhelming evidence suggesting a relationship between wellness, performance and productivity. Consistent with this finding, Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) state that “individuals are influenced and motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in the career decision-making process, however, when there is a lack of motivation (whether it be intrinsic or extrinsic motivation), employees may feel dissatisfied, which could lead to stress, lower work engagement, inability to cope and, in some instances, even burn-out (if individuals feel over-loaded)”.

In order to redress gender stereotypes and to transform the company into practicing its values, Lonmin management should reinforce business etiquette through change management programmes, mentoring, and management/leadership forums. These initiatives should also cascade through to induction programs and other company communication mediums. As most of the gender stereotypes and harassment incidents are kept secret for fear of victimization, management should also introduce a hotline dedicated to this project, where employees could anonymously report incidents of abuse, lack of professionalism and discrimination, until there is a shift in behavior.

Furthermore, the study found that Lonmin’s male managers do not have enough confidence in female managers and use that to exclude them from career exposure and restrict them from certain aspects of the business. This finding means that women’s abilities are always questioned and that their contribution to business processes is undermined.

Consistent with the literature on the culture in mining indicating that “style” rather than “substance”, coherence and common understanding are often used as deciding factor for suitability or compatibility of individuals to teams or positions or projects, women are unjustly excluded from promotional opportunities – particularly at senior management (Still, 1994). Literature further shows that the masculine managerial style is still dominant in the workplace and this style advocates that “the man’s ways of doing things is the standard or norm” (Mathur-Helm, 2006; Still, 1994; Kabacoff, 2010; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). This view forms the basis for a lack of confidence in women as managers and automatically subjects women to discrimination and exclusion from

consideration for career development and advancement in senior management, as the preferred attributes and evaluation criteria tend to favour men.

Ngoako (1999) and Tabudi (2008) also identified “multiple roles” as one of the challenges that women encounter when in management positions in male dominant organizations – which also impedes the further development into senior management levels of women. They found that because of multiple roles (being managers, students and having family responsibilities, which include being a wife and/or mother) women are subjected to doubts and a lack of trust from male counterparts.

This could lead to women’s lack of interest in personal development plans, which could ultimately result in deteriorating career ambition and direction. Lack of trust amongst colleagues could also hamper interaction, productivity and performance, exposing the organization to internal conflict. This again underscores the need for the company to embrace change management programmes, such as team-building activities, so as to embrace and support change. This remains a dual responsibility for both management and employees to work together to embrace the change and to make it happen.

Furthermore, the finding that women at Lonmin are subjected to a lack of proper support structures, such as mentoring, coaching and role modeling, highlights the level of frustration of women pursuing careers in the mining sector. The mining environment is production driven and results driven and therefore creates pressure and demand from its employees. Most women indicated that they are required (more often than not) to work long hours and even compromise family life just to meet the expectations and standard norm set by the culture in the organization. Putting employees under immense pressure to surpass targets and expectations in an environment that lacks and does not inculcate a supportive culture could lead to stress, psychological burn-out and emotional breakdown. This does not only affect women’s behaviour and performance, but also perpetuates disintegration and unfair discrimination.

There is therefore an ethical obligation on the part of the employer to provide guidance and career support to women in management positions and to assist them to succeed without compromising their wellness. Women should also be encouraged to form informal support teams and fully utilize existing social networks to uplift each other. Employees battling in this regard should be identified and be sent to life-coaching workshops, and employee welfare programs and relevant interventions should be put in place.

Also, the company should seek the services of career-path specialists to assist with the development, monitoring and proper evaluation of personal development plans, as the existing process is reported to be inadequate and ineffective. Moreover, women should be encouraged to take charge of their own career programs. They should



be encouraged to initiate and participate in structures, programmes and campaigns that will increase their visibility, representation and integration in the workplace.

It is also important to note that a thorough investigation and analysis of the situation may be necessary to further comprehend the dynamics, as white female managers presented a slightly different picture from black female managers. The finding that white female managers receive proper mentoring and support, are assisted with their development plans and get exposure to different business committees, should not be seen as a contradiction, but rather as proof that these interventions can be successful. However, the factors underlying the different experiences of black and white females requires proper investigation, so that relevant interventions can be put in place and managed properly.

Hughes (2012) identified the influence of networks as instrumental in career progression, but very little has been done to study the relationship between the two topics. This is a potential area for more research, as this topic falls outside the scope and aim of this particular explorative study.

Consistent with other interpersonal relations, the study found that women are subjected to elements of sexual harassment and the majority of cases are never reported, due to intimidation and victimization and women are expected to compromise their dignity in exchange for career favours.

Gruber in Benya (2009) found that gender numerical predominance is a significant predictor of physical and sexual threats. Benya (2009:18) further explains that “when a workplace is dominated by men, hostility and intimidation towards women is heightened and women are more prone to be touched, grabbed or stalked”. Similarly, it was found that women in the mining industry were seen as sexual objects and were subjected to harassment, bullying, humiliation and patronizing superiority, which (in most cases) was used to determine their career advancement and also impacted the participants’ interpersonal relationships with other male peers and supervisors (Ngoako, 1999; Benya, 2009). This further supports participants’ perceptions of the organizational culture in Lonmin and numerous inequalities highlighted.

The culture described here could have serious implications for women’s career advancement in Lonmin. Most skilled and qualified women may feel uncomfortable with pursuing their careers in a company associated with such acts, either as a matter of principle or to protect their profiles. Furthermore, this could bring the company image into disrepute and damage the company’s image. The prevalence of such activities may also affect how the company is viewed in the marketplace and how investors react to such a culture. Most investors are very sensitive to bad publicity and have strict policies to protect their image and reputation.

It is therefore critical that: (1) management creates awareness in the organization about what constitutes sexual harassment; (2) a harassment policy is designed, maintained, published and made accessible to all staff; (3)

communication mediums are established to report sexual harassment offenders, including a hotline or anonymous email address, and; (4) disciplinary measures are taken against the perpetrators to build trust and confidence in the system, human resources and the company.

### **5.1.3 Community level**

At the community level of influence, the finding that the mining industry is characterized by politics and abuse of power (which emanates from various networks/ cliques – and more so at senior management level) supports the perception that women at Lonmin are victims of power struggles.

Foucault (1990:93) indicated that power “is not an institution and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with, that power is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization”.

This finding (on mining politics and abuse of power) therefore, contrasted Foucault’s interpretation of power, as it clearly depicts: an environment that is conflict prone and not conducive for career advancement; an environment wherein power is used in a negative and repressive way, instead of “as the ability to influence and modify the actions of other individuals in order to realize certain tactical goals” (Foucault, 1978:93).

This is also consistent with Benya (2009), who suggests that while racialized masculinities emphasize tensions between black and white men, what often unites them is their domination over women and their desire to marginalize women. In the mining industry, the historical exclusion of women should, therefore, not only be understood from a legislative point of view, but also from a racialized masculine perspective that seeks to marginalize and subordinate women. This further necessitates organization-wide awareness and education campaigns to alleviate this problem.

Davis (2012) also indicated that women in management experienced challenges and exclusion from the social networks, largely because of differing cultural and gender interpretations. It has been established that “whilst these networks allocate a variety of instrumental resources that are important for job effectiveness, career advancement, and expressive benefits such as friendships and social support, limited network access produces multiple disadvantages, including restricted knowledge of what is going on in the organization and difficulty in forming alliances” (Ibarra, 1993; Ngoako 1999; Perriton, 2006). This, in turn, is associated with limited mobility, and the glass cliff and glass ceiling effect (Ngoako, 1999; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011).

The impact of politics in the workplace and the emergence of cliques may have a negative influence amongst teams and may cause unnecessary animosity. This finding suggests that black females are severely affected, as they have the poorest access to existing cliques and thus find themselves with limited career advancement opportunities, as no one fights for their interests. However, the data shows that white females are, in fact, able

to access the powerful networks and that they may stand a better chance for development, support and career advancement, as benefits from being exposed to the network interaction (Combs, 2003; Bell & Nkomo, 1994; Cross & Armstrong, 2008).

This finding also supports the power distance element of Hofstede's culture theory, which "expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2001).

It is important to note that management that allows cliques to influence business decisions, such as recruitment, project/ development exposure and disciplinary actions, runs the risk of losing the trust of its own workforce. This kind of practice also exposes management to external influences that could reflect badly on the leadership and image of the company.

In line with the community level of influence, another issue with similar implications to the "clique issues" is the concept of "brotherhood", which was also highlighted as a hindrance to women's career progression. The brotherhood notion can be seen as just an extension of networks or cliques, except that the focus here is on "solidarity" amongst men - irrespective of race.

It is therefore critical for Lonmin to ensure that employees in senior management positions are made aware of good governance principles. Formal interventions that deal directly with issues of governance could be arranged as part of leadership training. The senior management training should be aligned to the guidelines contained in the third report on corporate governance, commonly known as the King III codes. In relation to leadership, the report states: "*Good governance is essentially about effective leadership. Leaders should rise to the challenges of modern governance. Such leadership is characterized by the ethical values of responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency and based on moral duties that find expression in the concept of Ubuntu. Responsible leaders direct company strategies and operations with a view to achieving sustainable economic, social and environmental performance*" (Engelbrecht, 2009:9).

#### **5.1.4 Organizational level**

At the organizational level, the finding that the mining environment is characterized by racial disparities, unfair labour practices and perpetual gender inequalities, means that women occupying managerial positions in Lonmin are not happy with the current levels of disparities. Most participants perceive the organization as promoting a culture of male dominance, indicating that a considerable number of white males occupy the majority of senior management and executive positions. Therefore, the perception is that the transformation progress is very slow, as the culture is deep-rooted in the apartheid laws of gender and racial inequalities

This finding is consistent with the literature, which describes the mining culture as a highly masculine culture that favours male dominance and which is characterized by gendered roles, gender inequality and high stress levels amongst women, as they struggle for integration (Mphokane, 2008; Benya, 2009; Tsomondo, 2010; Wu, 2006; Shobhana, 2011; Piterman, 2008; Tabudi, 2009; Ngoako, 1999; Hughes, 2012).

The finding also supports Hofstede's masculinity dimension of the culture theory, which suggests that society at large is more competitive and that "there is preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success; femininity, on the other hand, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life" (Hofstede, 1984 in Mphokane, 2008).

These perceptions could lead to frustration, lower staff morale and, possibly, a high female management turnover rate. Also, the inequalities may further perpetuate the numerical gap between males and females and between different races, particularly at senior management.

It is important to note that racial and gender equality issues are naturally sensitive matters that should be addressed with care to avoid undesirable outcomes. Lonmin should, as part of the human capital strategy, review and realign policies and procedures to protect the needs of women and other minority groups in the business. Consistent with McLeroy, et al.'s (1988) view of organizational influence, this process reengineering exercise should also be used to realign recruitment and talent management strategies/ policies to the overall organizational strategy, in order to influence a change in practices, norms, values and processes to introduce a supportive and inclusive culture that is free of inequalities. This process should also be conducted in line with the relevant legislation, including the individual's rights enshrined in the Constitution on the country.

Consistent with the organizational level of influence, this study also found that the company is too tolerant of the use of Afrikaans over other official languages, including English (which is widely recognized as a business language, particularly for management). This finding suggests that participants are not content with the fact that the company has not yet fully embraced other races and cultures, 20 years after democratic rule began. This supports the findings of previous studies that suggest that the hierarchical nature of the mining industry is also rooted in the political history and inequalities of the apartheid era in South Africa, when white males gained superiority over men of other racial groups and over women (Mphokane, 2008; Benya, 2008; Calitz, 2004; Tsomondo, 2010; Shobhana, 2011).

Furthermore, the finding that Lonmin is perceived as a results-driven organization, which places more focus on production and sales targets, depicts organizational pressures and, to a larger extent, the industry pressure faced by mining companies in South Africa. The participants' perception is that Lonmin, like many other mines in South Africa and around the world, places more focus on productivity and very little on advancement and career development.

“The exploitive nature of labour control in the South African mining industry has been well documented” and it illustrates how safety and productivity has been prioritized over human and social issues, such as transformation, diversity management, formal development and career advancement - particularly of minority groups and women (Benya, 2008; Tsomondo, 2010; Peck, 1996). In Benya (2008) it is illustrated how productivity and profit increase was driven by managers through control, pressure and repressive management style.

Peck in Benya (2009) describe the control in relation to mining management as referring “to a form of managerial despotism, where workers have no say in the labour process and instead being coerced into following instructions, delivering on production targets and respecting the defined protocol”. Market pressures are a reality, but how an organization reacts to such conditions (in relation to looking after its employees) is what will always set it apart. It has been illustrated that “companies that are proactive in providing formal mentoring and development opportunities, to enable women to progress through the ranks, delivered stronger financial performance, improved governance and reduced the risk of bankruptcy” (Women in Mining UK & PWC, 2013 and Burmeister, 2014). This highlights the need for Lonmin to respond to the market challenges in a manner that would, not only make provision for career development for women, but also ensure business stability and sustainability.

The organizational pressure and controls are further compounded by the finding that women are always under pressure to prove themselves worthy of consideration, compared to their male counterparts. The perception that women should prove themselves, work twice as hard to be considered for promotion into management roles, and work extended hours even when not required for the role and position level, illustrates the type of practices, norms and stereotypes that still exist in Lonmin.

This study further suggests that because women in management positions at Lonmin are few, it is always easy to notice and target them, compounding the pressure to perform beyond expectations. Hughes (2012) describes this as one of the subtler forms of stereotypes regarding women’s roles and capabilities in male dominant organizations, which results in exclusion from career advancement.

This could lead to unnecessary grievances and labour law cases of unfair discrimination and victimization, which can be time-consuming and costly for the company. In Hofstede’s theory of highly masculine organizations, the pressure leads to high stress levels amongst women, as they strive to conform to the male model which requires extended working hours, ability to deal with the demanding work pressures and continuously competing with their male peers for recognition (Mphokane, 2008). It is also important to note that these organizational issues may significantly affect employees’ family life, commitment and loyalty towards the company.

It is therefore imperative that meaningful and relevant support structures are put in place to support women in management roles to balance family-work-life. The company could create more awareness through internal wellness programs or outsourcing the service to a wellness organization.

Parker and Fagenson (1994) indicated that “the reason for the low numbers of women in senior management is that women are considered less likely to possess the required abilities, attributes and skills to fill the role of manager, compared to their male counterparts - hence they were perceived as unsuitable for such roles”. This study also found that gender stereotyping has significantly influenced the career advancement of women into management positions, as it subtly influences decisions in recruitment and selection, promotion and performance appraisal (Peck & Fagenson, 1994).

To mitigate the risk of further widening the career advancement gap between males and females, it is therefore important that the company creates an environment wherein all employees are allowed to perform all the functions that they are employed to perform and are afforded equal growth opportunities, regardless of their gender, provided all health and safety protocols are observed.

It is also important for the company to conduct random climate surveys/ assessments to establish whether or not there are valid concerns relating to emotional maturity issues. In addition, the training and development department should incorporate diversity management workshops as a pivotal program in their annual training plans, so as to create more awareness about stereotypes and the negative impact on team dynamics and performance.

The study also found that there are more career advancement opportunities for women at junior and middle management levels, but very few at senior level. This finding means that transformation is happening in the company, albeit at a very slow pace. Participants further identified structural issues, such as salary disparities and role grading, as factors negatively impacting their career advancement, with the data indicating that female managers are underpaid and are promoted at lower grade positions compared to their male counterparts (particularly at middle and senior management). This could lead to lower moral, low career aspirations and consequently, performance issues.

Wu (2006), Mphokane (2008) and Shobhana (2011) describe the mining organizational culture to be characterized by high power distance between superiors and subordinates; hence it has a strong hierarchical structure, which clearly indicates levels of authority associated with salary, power and respect. This view is consistent with Hofstede’s culture theory - power distance index (PDI).

The company should ensure that proper remuneration procedures are not only in place but followed. The company should also endorse salary benchmarking, as part of good practice in promoting transparency. Women

should also have representation on Employment Equity Committees and REMCO (remuneration committee, where salaries are discussed) to ensure that there is fairness when it comes to how employees are remunerated in the organization.

#### **5.1.5 Public policy level**

At the public policy level, the findings that the mining industry is still characterized by gender inequalities, unfair labour practices and gender stereotypes means that women occupying managerial positions in Lonmin are dissatisfied with the current levels of gender transformation and integration of women in the company and across the industry. The perception is that the industry is male dominant, with a considerable number of white males in senior and executive positions.

This is consistent with a study conducted by Hofstede where South Africa ranked amongst the top 15 of the 50 countries that held strong masculine values that ensured maximal distinction between what women and men are expected to do (Hofstede, 2001:286). In Mphokane (2008), South African mining industry was further reported to be characterized by high power distance which underpins the strong hierarchies associated with power, respect and the salary disparities.

This suggests that over 20 years after democracy women in South Africa are still excluded from strategic roles and subjected to discriminatory tactics in the workplaces. This is indicative of a bigger problem with the current government policies in place to drive transformation in this country. This suggests that policies in place are either not sufficiently enforced or generally ineffective, which could delay women's growth, and continuously alienate them from leadership roles in business.

The National Gender Framework (2003) and the Employment Equity Act (1998) were designed as enabling legislation to redress inequalities – particularly of race and gender. The National Gender Policy Framework (2003) is designed to ensure meaningful gender empowerment and support of the rights of women to access to employment, economic empowerment, science and technology, and to political power and decision making. Other legislations such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2013) were also implemented to empower previously disadvantaged groups, including black women. Furthermore, the Protection from Harassment Act (Act no. 17 of 2011) was also promulgated to protect the vulnerable. Although these legislations are in place, a lot still needs to be done to ensure that they are enforced, and realigned to achieve their goals.

Government should ensure that hefty fines are imposed on companies that are not complying with the law and company directors should be held accountable for gross violation of some of these laws. To achieve this, government should invest more in its monitoring agencies and institutions to ensure that transformation is prioritized in the workplace, and that companies are encouraged or even forced to develop sound and measurable transformation plans.

Also, government should ensure alignment of these legislations with the Mining Charter to ensure effective and meaningful implementation that would not only provide numbers but bring visible transformation. The Mining Charter is critical to this transformation as its targets are linked to mining rights and license renewal of all the mining organization. Clear targets on the total number of women and women in management should therefore be set for reporting and monitoring through the SLP targets. The government should also encourage that companies design, implement and report on diversity management programmes that serve to enable and integrate women – particularly women in management position. Like other development and training initiatives such as Learnership, rebates should be introduced as positive reinforcement strategy.

Women in mining (particularly at senior and executive levels) is no longer just a concept or strategy to redress gender inequalities, “there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that stronger financial performance, improved governance and reduced risk of bankruptcy are associated with the participation of women on corporate boards and in senior management positions” (Women in Mining UK & PWC, (2013). It is therefore part of the government’s prerogatives to ensure meaningful integration of women in mining through enabling legislation, supportive programmes and metrics to measure progress. Furthermore, the Women in Mining UK & PWC (2013) suggests that “increasing the understanding of the benefits of gender diversity in the mining industry and society, attraction of young women from school levels into mining or engineering studies, making the industry a more attractive place for women to work and compete fairly with their counterparts irrespective of gender/race would be a positive step in changing perceptions of the industry”.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that there are different levels of influence in the organization; similarly, the impact of the influence can be experienced at difference levels within the organization. It is also clear that employees and the organization react differently when dealing with the input, transformers and output of the ecosystem. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the nature of the work and the industry within which this study was carried out also affected the qualitative comprehension of the dynamics involved in analyzing and interpreting the findings.

The ecological theory was applied mainly to put a perspective on the findings, but also to outline levels at which different interventions should be pitched. In other words, the theory was not only applied to explain the findings, but also to reflect on appropriate approaches to be taken as part of the recommendations.

It is clear that in this study the major area of interaction between and amongst the participants was at the organizational level of influence, followed by the interpersonal level, the individual level, and the community and public policy level. The reason for that is because most of the factors that were researched fall within the organizational level; however the finding also indicates that ‘ordinarily’ these levels are interlinked. Cook, et



al. (2002) indicated that “organizational factors refers to the ideological components of a given organization, such as norms, values, customs, race/ gender stereotyping, class bias, structure of opportunity”. The findings of this study are centered mainly on these factors.

Hofstede’s work-related cultural dimensions theory was also instrumental in describing critical cultural aspects on this study. The findings indicate that female managers in Lonmin experience high power distance. Hofstede (2001) defines an environment with high power distance as masculine. Masculine environments are expected to have a significantly higher power distance than feminine work environments.

The study also demonstrate that as a direct result of the masculine occupational culture, the rate at which women advance to management levels would remain restrained unless interventions are put in place to address the barriers. Furthermore, the study illustrates that, over and above gender inequalities, Lonmin’s management culture still depicts racial inequalities impacting more on black manager’s career advancement - particularly black women.

Finally, although this study specifically dealt with career advancement challenges at Lonmin, most of the issues researched and analyzed are common in the mining industry. The findings and recommendations of this study can therefore be considered in other sectors and related industries.

### **5.3 General recommendations**

This research presents an opportunity for Lonmin’s management to review policies, procedures and guidelines that may not be in line with good governance, legislation or industry standards. The study found various discrepancies in procedures, systems and leadership which could negatively impact on performance and productivity in the organisation. Those gaps should be further examined and realigned to the strategic goals of the organisation.

This study also provides a substantive body of knowledge on: the influence of culture in organisations; the interpretation of masculinity in a male dominated environment; and the use and misuse of power. This information should be used to make sense of certain behaviour in the organisation and, most importantly, to plan future interventions.

It is clear from the finding that the company can benefit from interventions that are designed to promote diversity, break cultural barriers, improve personal growth (regardless of race and gender) and develop leadership capabilities in general.

This research also presents an opportunity for the organisation to commission follow-up surveys or validation studies to improve its understanding of some of the factors highlighted in this study. It also provides an

opportunity for participants to reflect on the findings, to do introspection and give feedback to management. Ultimately, the study presents a general basis for future studies in the talent management field, particularly in the mining industry, for researchers and other organisations interested in the topic.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

The timing for data collection of the study unfortunately coincided with the unforeseen strike at Lonmin that led to the Marikana Massacre and, as a result, this: impacted on the availability of participants; and restricted the researcher's options regarding follow-up interviews, as some participants resigned before the study was concluded.

The uncertainty in the mining industry at the time also contributed to the amount of value that participants attached to the process, as some were more worried about job security at that point than career advancement.

There were some indications during the data collection process that some participants were not entirely comfortable with sharing sensitive information for fear of victimisation, which again highlighted the culture in the organisation.

Some ideas needed proper feasibility studies and financial resources to carry out; hence it is recommended that more research be commissioned by the organisation to investigate certain issues that need greater attention.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Research Background Sheet**

### **Research Background**

Hello,

My name is Nompumelelo Khoza and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal. The main aim of the study is to explore the experience and challenges faced by both Black and White women in leadership positions in the Platinum Mining Industry.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study aims to investigate experiences and challenges regarding women's career advancement in the Platinum Mining Industry. The study also intends to ascertain if the organizational culture has improved to support women into leadership positions versus meeting the transformational targets set by the Mining Charter

### **Procedure**

You and other women have been identified to take part in these discussions. Participating in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Therefore you will be asked to complete consent forms to record the interview and to participate in the study. You will also be asked to complete a biographical information form that will be used for sampling purposes only. It is important to note that the interview will be audio taped, which is a requirement for the study participation.

### **Risks**

There are no risks involved in participating in this study.

### **Right to Withdraw**

Please note that participation in these discussions is entirely voluntary, you may refuse to participate. You may also, at any stage, withdraw from the study if you wish to do so. The decision not to participate or withdraw will not have any impact on your employment conditions or further career advancement as the study is only of the researcher's educational purposes and has no direct link with the employer.



### **Confidentiality**

Discussions will be conducted in a private setting. Your name will not appear on the study records and in the information gathered. Your information will be combined with that of other participants and will only be used for the purposes of research. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person, and will only be processed by myself. The tape records will be destroyed once they have been transcribed.

### **Who to contact if you have questions**

If you have questions about this research you can contact **Ms Nompumelelo Khoza** on 083 294 0264. For further information about the study you can contact the study supervisor **Dr O Akintola** on 031 260 7426.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated as this research will contribute to the minimal literature available on women career advancement.

**APPENDIX 2: Consent Form for the In-Depth Interview**

I \_\_\_\_\_ voluntarily consent to being interviewed by  
Nompumelelo Khoza for her study on:

***Women’s Career Advancement in the South African Mining Industry: Exploring the experiences  
of women in management positions at Lonmin Platinum Mine***

I have read the information / it has been read to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that:

- That I may refuse to answer questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- The interviews will be audio-recorded.
- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person besides the researcher.
- All tape recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Participant’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Interviewer’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 3: Participant Recruitment Log**

**Participant Recruitment Log**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number	Name	Occupation	Occupational Level	Race	Work Area		Interested in participation	
					Mining	Process	Yes	No
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								

Total Approached: \_\_\_\_\_

Total agreed to participate: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 4: Interview Schedule**

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the interview, please let me know and please ask any questions that you may have.

**Section A - Biographical Information**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Race:  White  Black

Marital Status:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widow

Division:  Mining  Processing

Employment Category:  Official  Management  Senior Management

Current position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration in current position: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Qualification:  Matric  Diploma  University Degree  Honours Degree

Masters Degree  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Mining related Certificate:

\_\_\_\_\_

Mining related Professional Registration:

\_\_\_\_\_

Year of experience in the Mining Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

How were you recruited into the organization? WIM Program, Normal recruitment, Headhunted or Referral:

\_\_\_\_\_

How were you recruited into current position? – Succession Planning/Internal promotion, Recruited from external, normal recruitment or secondment:

\_\_\_\_\_

If succession plan/internal promotion/secondment, describe your career journey:

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**Section B – Family Background**

May you please tell me about yourself and your family background?

Family background – Do you have any children? If yes, how many and what are their ages? Siblings and gender, parents and their occupation or career choices – has any of them worked in the mining industry?

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How did that impact on your career choice? Does your family background and upbringing have any influence in your career choice and resilience?

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**Section C – Work Related**

May you please explain to me the hierarchy of department and your team structure – also provide gender and racial split?

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What do you like about your position?

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What don't you like about your position?

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What has been your experience of the mining industry?

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What is it like to be a black or white woman of your position within a male dominated environment?

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What challenges are you facing in your role?

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Are these challenges gender and/race or industry specific or general?

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If you were of a different gender and/race, would you experience these challenges? – *Probe further if the response is yes*

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What gender stereotypes have you encountered in your position? – Ask for specific examples

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What racial stereotypes have you encountered in your position? – Ask for specific examples

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How would you describe your work environment towards women leaders – supportive, hostile, or teamwork?

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Do you think your workplace supports gender equality – qualify your response?

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What support do you receive support from your male colleagues?

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What support do you receive support from the organisation?

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What WIM programmes are there within the organisation and have you benefited from them?

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Do you network with other black/white women of your calibre in the industry? And how easy or difficult is it for you to network as black/white woman?

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Do you think other women in mining leadership positions go through the same experience and challenges as yours? If no, what would you say makes the difference?

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Are there more male leaders than females in your organisation? If yes, what do you think there are less women?

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Are there more male leaders than females in the industry? If yes, what do you think there are less women?

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What do you think the company should be doing to promote women advancement and gender equality?

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*Thank you for participating in this study*