

## **RESEARCH TOPIC**

**The Opportunities and Challenges facing Women in senior academic and managerial positions at a particular campus within a merging South African university.**

**Prepared for the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Psychology: In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in Social Science (Counselling Psychology).**

<b>Name of Student:</b>	<b>Bhavani Krishna</b>
<b>Registration number:</b>	<b>203503136</b>
<b>Name of Supervisor:</b>	<b>Dr. T.S. Magojo</b>

### ABSTRACT

Whilst there has been considerable research that has documented the barriers facing women (Cassimjee, 2003; Holland, 2001; Lyness & Thompson, 2000; De La Rey, 1999; Wood, 1993), little is known about the opportunities facing women, particularly Black women academics/managers, within tertiary institutions. In an attempt to facilitate such insight, the central aim of the study explores the subjective experiences of women academics/managers in terms of their academic development and career trajectory. This qualitative study was conducted within a particular campus within a merging South African university. Using convenience sampling, three women academics (two participants of African descent, one participant of Indian descent) and two managers (one participant of African descent and one of Indian descent) were selected. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed interviews followed by interpretation of the data, which was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of the study, rooted within the ambit of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). The analysis of the subjective experiences of women in this study revealed salient factors relating to the patriarchal nature of the institution of study, the legacy of apartheid and the issue of racism. The lack of overall institutional support and the absence of mentorship programmes were also prevalent. In addition, there emerged a shared ideology that 'academic life was a battle' to be fought. The acquisition of knowledge, constant empowerment and goal orientated behaviour with discipline; boundaries and strategies remained an overall theme to manage hierarchical career growth and development. Balancing work, academic and management roles together with the competing needs around family also posed a challenge. In sum, the implication of the study highlights the need to cultivate a non-racist, gender neutral and logistically supportive environment.

Keywords: opportunities, academics, managers, tertiary institutions, merging, subjective experiences, academic development, career trajectory.

## DECLARATION

The author hereby declares that the content of this Masters Thesis in Social Science (Counselling Psychology) is in the author's own unaided original work, except where specific indication is given to the contrary by reference. This work has not been previously submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal or any other university.

Signature: 

Name: Bhavani Krishna

Student Registration Number: 203503136

Date: 15 November 2007

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the contributions to the following persons:

Dr Sylvia Magojo, my supervisor for her intellectual support and encouragement;

Marisha and Dinika Krishna, my children for their love and tolerance;

My mother, Mrs Yeshoda Chinniah for her commitment and dedication;

The late Mr Narayanan Chinniah, my father for his imparting of wisdom for today, tomorrow and always.

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
TITLE PAGE	1
ABSTRACT	2
DECLARATION	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	8
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS	12
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	26
Chapter 4: METHODOLOGY	37
4.1. Data Collection	37
4.2. Sampling	38
4.3. Data Analyses	39
4.4. Research Participants	40
4.5. Procedure Followed	41
4.6. The Research Context and Interview Dynamics	41
4.7. Ethical Considerations	41

Chapter 5: RESULTS	43
5.1. The Challenges Regarding Institutional Culture	43
5.1.1. <i>The lack of Institutional Support</i>	43
5.1.2. <i>Racism within the Institution</i>	44
5.1.3. <i>Gender Discrimination</i>	47
5.1.4. <i>Lack of Organisational Support</i>	49
5.2. Opportunities regarding Institutional Culture	51
5.3. The Legacy of Apartheid	52
5.4. Power is Knowledge	55
5.5. The Domains of Family life	58
5.5.1. <i>Parental Influences</i>	58
5.5.2. <i>Dual Challenges regarding Familial needs versus Career Aspirations</i>	60
5.6. Proposed Strategies	62
5.6.1. <i>The Proactive Challenge</i>	63
5.6.2. <i>Power is Knowledge</i>	65
5.6.3. <i>Goal Directed Behaviour</i>	66
5.6.4. <i>Networking</i>	68
5.6.5. <i>Achieving a balance between familial and career related needs</i>	68
Chapter 6: DISCUSSION	70

## Chapter 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION, EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

AND RECOMMENDATIONS	93
7.1 Summary	93
7.2. Conclusion	95
7.3. Evaluation	96
7.3.1. <i>Methodological Strengths</i>	96
7.3.2. <i>Logistical Weaknesses</i>	97
7.4. Recommendations	99
REFERENCES	100

### APPENDICES:

Consent Form

General Outline of Interview Questions

Interview 1

Interview 2

Interview 3

Interview 4

Interview 5

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

South African women have a proud history of rejecting the status of powerless victim. “In unrecognised struggles the women of South Africa continually reclaim their power, in the face of worst aggression and excesses, women have not just struggled and wept, they have laughed and they have danced” (Pregs Govender, n.d.:1).

According to De La Rey (1999:37) “the systemic, institutional and psychological processes that impact on women undertaking academic careers has only gained research attention in the last two decades”. Moreover De La Rey (1999) challenges that women are not reaching professorial level in the numbers that they should, so as to allow patriarchal boundaries to be tested and broken. In support of this, Blocher (2000:216) reports that the “one area in which gender differences and gender-role expectations have been enormously important is in career development”. In this regard Blocher (2000) challenges traditional concepts of sex-role stereotypes and perceives this active presence in society as a significant contributing factor toward the economic exploitation and constriction of opportunity for women. Consequently resulting in a tremendous waste of human potential.

In support of the above, one may argue that academic research on career development can no longer afford to be blind to the social context and power relations in which many women find themselves. To assume a context free approach, as assumed by traditional psychology, not only blinds one to the meaning of behaviour as it occurs within the social, political, personal and

cultural context in which it is enacted, but also leads to the further disadvantage of women. This lack of vision serves and has served to reinforce the toxicity of patriarchal culture and resistance to the inclusion and promotion of women within the academic environment (Barnes, 2005).

Although women constitute more than half of the total South African population, women still have limited recourse to capital, credit, land and technology (Cassimjee, 2003). Despite the increase in the educational level and occupational structure of women, the existing gender based discrimination within the workplace remains. Hence women encounter problems that do not have much to do with their educational levels, skills, intelligence or work record but have everything to do with their gender (Magojo, 2004). The presence of other constraining variables including patriarchy, gender socialisation and stereotyping, gender identity and cultural/ethnic identification are some of the important variables offered by Kerka (2003) in this regard. As a result, women are over-concentrated in positions where there are few prospects for mobility, growth and participation in meaningful decision-making committees (Magojo, 2004).

The era has approached where universities around the world are facing significant new challenges and some rather fascinating opportunities in an increasingly competitive global context. The continuing under-representation of women at more senior academic and managerial levels is receiving renewed attention with the “recognition that neither institution nor the country in which they are located can afford to overlook neither their management abilities nor their leadership potential” (Ramsay, 2000:1).

Despite these challenges, many women have broken the glass ceiling. Hence, the central aim

of this research is to examine the opportunities, influences, experiences and helpful strategies that have helped women in senior academic and managerial positions in achieving successful career advancement. In particular, what makes these women who are on the fast track to the top so unique?

The specific objective is to identify the important strategies commonly used by the heads of schools, executive, senior and middle managers, in their quest for successful career advancement that might help other women reach this level and beyond. What did they deem useful and what can they recommend to other women who aspire to their inner need to succeed? To this end, the outline of the research focused on the route traveled by female academic and managerial staff members that have attained seniority positions on the professional hierarchy.

#### Rationale for the present Study:

Women who have achieved seniority and who are career driven, not only share biology and history but also a common culture and a struggle (Nicolson, 1996). In my research I have deliberately chosen 'the voice of women' in an attempt to discover what might be learnt from the positive and negative experiences and contributions of the uniquely female experience within the academic and management setting. In an attempt to do so, the key idea of my research is to put 'women' on the center stage, placing emphasis on the experiences of women and thus fulfilling the aim of giving 'women a voice'. The aim of the study is to identify the important strategies commonly used by women in senior academic and managerial positions, in their quest for successful career advancement that might help other women reach this level and beyond. The advantages of such strategies are three fold: (1) women learning and being able to benefit from

other women's examples, (2) being able to explore issues especially relevant to female academic and managerial staff, and lastly (3) being able to hear other points of view of women in executive managerial and academic positions.

To sum, the need to sensitize women to value the strengths that women possess, that are neglected and undervalued within the male culture. To assist women to see themselves through their own lens and in doing so, thereby undo the 'lie of patriarchal society' (Greenspan, 1983). To understand the crippling effects of gender oppression, accept the notion that discrimination does exist and develop an awareness of the road-blocks ahead.

Following is an outline of the literature review in Chapter 2, with an elaboration of the theoretical framework in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 offers insight into the research methodology implemented, followed by an intensive capture of the results in Chapter 5. An in-depth discussion in Chapter 6 concludes the unfolding of the participants accounts within the theoretical underpinnings founded within the ambit of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). This is followed by an overall summary, conclusion and evaluation of the study, concluding with recommendations for future research in Chapter 7.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- **Black:** The South African Department of Labour (2004) embodies the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, issued in terms of Section 25 (1) that defines the term 'Black' as designated groups including (African, Coloured and Indian) women and people.
- **Patriarchy:** the most commonly understood definition of patriarchy, as offered by Benjamin (2001:68), is as follows "patriarchy used to express the authority of fathers was extended to include the oppressive power of men in all social, economic and political institutions".
- **Gender:** Nicolson (1996:9) defines gender as the "social characteristics whereby women and men exist in a dynamic structural relation to each other".
- **Gender relations:** Nicolson (1996:10) sees gender relations as "power relations through whom men and male values have super ordinate status over women and female values".
- **Racism:** defined within the Dictionary of Psychology as "prejudice based on race and characterized by attitudes and beliefs about the inferior nature of persons of other races" (Reber, 1985:207)
- **Career:** according to Blocher (2000:184) "the term career as opposed to vocation connotes a dynamic but coherent process that operates in the life of an individual through time and across specific jobs".
- **Career development:** the American Psychological Association defines career development as the "the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and

significance of work in the total life span of any given individual” , Engels (1994 as cited in Zunker, 1998:7).

- Glass ceiling: the so-called glass ceiling refers to “invisible barriers that consists of subtle attitudes and prejudices that have blocked women and minorities from ascending the corporate ladder” (Zunker, 1998:375).
- Agency: Bandura (1997) refers to the nature of human agency as an intentional act in order to produce a desired outcome.
- Self-efficacy: refers to “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997:3).
- Triadic reciprocal causation: according to Bandura (1997: 6) “internal personal factors in the form cognitive, affective, and biological events; behaviour and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally”.
- Outcomes expectations: Bandura (1997) refers to outcomes expectations as the beliefs about the consequences of performance.
- Self-actualisation: As defined by Ross (2007) is the continuous process whereby one is able to fully develop one’s own personal potential. Most importantly, self-actualisation is described as a process, something of which one does, not a goal that one aims for.
- Goals: Bandura (1997:128) describes goals as a major cognitive instrument of self-motivation and directedness including the “ capacity to exercise self-influence by personal challenge and evaluative reactions to one’s own performances”

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The one area where women have long been under-represented is education management (Whitehead, 2001). In this light Barnes (2005) has suggested that African universities have invisibly added women to its structure and thus, should not be seen as static, gender-neutral places. In addition, conventional scripts upheld by the 'old boys club' have often thwarted the numerous efforts made by women, particular Black African academic women in their attempts to achieve the same professional recognition within the university community.

In support, the academic management context traditionally implied 'maleness' that entertains employment norms largely based on the male sex role stereotype dependent on the so-called 'male model' (Cassimjee, 2003; Wood, 1993). This context has carried with it throughout time, particular managerial and leadership qualities that women are assumed to lack, hence, once again resulting in a continuing marginalization and exclusion of women within academia. Women who do attempt to take on leadership roles are often regarded merely as tokens and their abilities and skills remain questioned by their colleagues (Zunker, 1998). Similarly, Welch (1990) propounds that the addition of women in academia stands against the classic profile of the academic career, which is cut to the image of the traditional man with his traditional wife and hence, results in many difficulties of academic women and managers. Significantly, despite the gains women have made in higher education over the last 15 years, they are still rarely viewed as leaders in what, still seems to remain a male dominated field.

Barnes (2005:5) adds further insight to some of the contributing variables that he perceives as “background pieces of the puzzle of gender and institutional culture in South African universities”. He cites the late entrance of African women within the university environment as problematic. He comments on the hostility, if not resistance of African men to renegotiate the norms of the ‘club’, in order to accommodate the experiences and needs of women within the institutional culture as challenging. He makes reference to the permeating presence of threat by ‘unruly women’ who appear to test the limits of patriarchal control as challenging to the status quo. He challenges the essentialist ideology that ‘female and male’ styles are immutable in teaching and management. He strongly criticizes the role of research as ‘under theorizing’ the relationship between professionalism and gender within African universities. According to Barnes (2005), this has served to further reinforce the extreme exclusion and resistance to the promotion of women in the academic community.

Research shows that despite the view of educational institutions as a progressive thinking organisation, most upper management positions in higher education remain occupied by men (Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Welch, 1990). Toxic patriarchy culture and gender traditions are barriers that continuously work against women in their attempts to promote themselves in the male-orientated world. Singh (1998 as cited in Ramsay, 2000) points out that woman deans and professors remain a minority group and women vice-chancellors and presidents are still rarer, due to the gross under-representation of women in higher education management.

Historically, as indicated by previous studies of eight South African universities (Badsha and Kotecha, 1994) men not only constituted 73% of the staff population, but also occupied positions at the upper levels of the hierarchy, including senior lecturers, associate professors and professors. Only 14% of the staff at these upper levels (senior lecturer and above) were women. Citing three Western Cape universities', there were only 15 women professors in 1990, as compared to no fewer than 401 male professors. The remaining 13 % occupied lecturer, junior lecturer and below junior lecturer positions. This is in startling contrast to the lower levels of the academic post structure where women tend to be concentrated. The study concluded that very few women featured in the top management of universities.

On a more national level, the statistics provided by Barnes (2005) for the year 1999, reveals that, out of the four hundred public and private universities in South Africa, more than 90% of the staff complement was male. In addition, over 80% of the teachers were male with 75% of the student population comprising of men. This, he attributes as a perpetuating factor in the reproduction of gender inequality within South African universities.

A recent report by Professor Malegapuru William Makgoba (2004), Interim Vice-chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal concluded that the total staff complement of the new institution was 5 659. This total reflected 2 192 academic staff and 3 467 support staff. Among academic staff, 23% were Black African, 2% Coloured, 25% Indian and 47% White. Of the academic staff 57% are male and 43% female. Makgoba (2004:3) concluded, "as far as staff is concerned, there is still some room for improvement, particularly with respect to academic staff".

These statistics reveal slow progress of women, with the improvement of only 29% of upward mobility specifically within the university community.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 the merging between Tertiary Institution 1 (institution of study) and Tertiary Institution 2 was forged. The intention of the merger has been, amongst others, to redress the historical balances created by the apartheid era and to create sustainable organizations that provide improved and equal opportunities for all. The merger between Tertiary Institution 1 and Tertiary Institution 2, in 2004 was an attempt to reduce such fragmentation in higher education institutions as well as to alleviate the debt burden of the historically disadvantaged institutions be it from non-paying students to poor financial management. Although the merger between both Tertiary Institution 1 and 2 appeared successful in meeting economic sustainability of historically disadvantaged institutions, the merger appears to be unsuccessful in addressing the legitimate academic and career needs of Black women within the institution of study.

An overview of the most recent academic staff profile at the University of KwaZulu- Natal (UKZN) provided by the Black African Academic Forum (2005) challenges the general absence of Black African academics within the institution. According to the statistics provided, Black African individuals constitute 80% of the total population nationally, 84% of the provincial population within KwaZulu-Natal, but a mere 17% of the total academic staff (permanent and temporary) at UKZN. Of this total, 66% occupy lecturer and junior lecturer positions, 17% in senior lecturer positions, 9% in associate professorship positions and the remaining (9%) holding professor titles. This general absence of Black African academics, according to the forum is startling evidence for lack of significant change, despite the merger. Concerns regarding impact

for retention, recruitment and upward mobility of Black African academics as well as the implications toward academic policy making and curricular have been raised. This is reason enough, I believe, for future vested interest toward academic research of women of colour in academia.

Patriarchal culture seems to be in all professions and in most organizations an endemic problem. This has resulted in the formation of unions within the academic environment and within the labour force (Benjamin, 2001), in an attempt to account for the disadvantaged positions and subordination of women. In this regard Nicolson (1996:21) explains feminism as “essentially both a product of, and a reaction to, patriarchal culture”. Mies (1986 as cited in Benjamin, 2001) has argued against ‘patriarchal capitalism’ that targets visible women exploitatively, and which subsequently led to the definition of women as unpaid labourers i.e. wives and mothers responsible for the care and keep of her family.

Crucial to this discussion is the acknowledgement that women deserve their rightful territory in the world of intellect, authority and power. In doing so, I acknowledge the sentiments offered by Greenspan (1983), that the emotional distresses of women are ‘least understood by distant male figures’ and in what follows, I attempt to argue the case of women in senior managerial and academic positions in relation to their personal, social, familial and political experiences.

According to Raskin (2002), there has been limited research that has adopted a problem-focused perspective that concentrates on women’s coping tactics and strategies in terms of their cognitive, behavioural and social adjustments. Women who have already achieved leadership

play a very important role in advancing the status of women in academia (Singh, 1999). By occupying such positions women are more visible and provide excellent role models for other aspiring women to move up the academic ladder. Furthermore, they are also in a position to effect considerable change within their own institutions to make them more gender sensitive and to further engineer the promotion, recruitment and training of other women.

Walker (1990: 22) purports that in order to fully understand the psychology of women “it is necessary to understand the position and experiences of women today, it is necessary to know something of their history and the wider historical difficulties and conflicts that women undergo”. Adding further, Nicolson (1996) stresses that both women and men are exposed differently to the process of socialisation throughout their life span. In this regard, early childhood socialisation exposes females and males to different stimuli that impacts on their perceptions regarding their future careers. As a result, the continued presence of patriarchal practices and dissuading societal norms hamper the growing potential and contribution of women in economic society (Bandura, 1995). Within this process, the broader social context, family, personal integrity and sense of identity are linked and tied to the development and progress of career (Cassimjee, 2003; Guay, Senecal, Gauthier & Fernet, 2003; Flores & O’ Brien, 2002). Despite individual differences, the impact of such experiences lingers, leading to either subservience to gender inequality or conflict and resistance to the status quo.

Flores & O’ Brien’s (2002) study of the career development of Mexican American adolescent women found that parental support, non-traditional career self-efficacy, acculturation and feminist attitudes predicted career choice prestige i.e. non-traditional career self-efficacy had a

direct effect on the choice of non-traditional career interests and career goals of the women within the study. The study concluded that parental support was predictive of career aspiration. Similarly, Cassimjee (2003) found parental influence to be a strong predictor for commitment of women developing motivation to master small tasks required for long-range goals. These findings are supportive of the study conducted by Guay, Senecal, Gauthier & Fernet (2003) who noted that parental and peer styles predicted career indecision/decision through perceived self-efficacy and autonomy of the individual.

Traditionally the career development of women has been largely influenced by the demands of the family, attitudes generated within the marriage, financial resources, educational level and general cultural values of the past and present. The general developmental life cycle of a woman in terms of career development is slower to develop as compared to men, primarily as a result of gender role stereotyping. Sanguiliano (1978 as cited in Zunker, 1998) reports that a woman's self-identity is significantly delayed because of the conflicting expectations of the feminine identity. A major problem in this area is associated with role confusion, the lack of role models and lack of support systems within the traditional male dominated setting. Furthermore, given that a woman's career pattern is often interrupted by childbirth, family priorities and other related demands, flexibility within the work place becomes an essential and core ingredient. In this regard Blocher (2000) argues that this remains an impossible challenge in today's society for most women to achieve.

Documented research regarding opportunities and challenges of South African Black women with regard to career development remains a very sensitive issue. The South African Journal of

Labour Relations (as cited in Cassimjee, 2003) identified nine barriers to the career advancement of women which are as follows: A lack of recognition and respect for work completed, restrictions on the type of work given thus limiting experience, lack of female mentor support, lack of flexibility of working hours, low salary that cannot support child care payments, little allowance made for family commitments, rigid male culture within the organization, requirement to work long hours and gender bias by supervisors.

According to previous studies Lyness and Thompson (1997 as cited in Lyness and Thompson, 2000) research-documenting barriers to women's career advancement far outweighs opportunities and facilitators of women's advancement. The earlier study by Lyness and Thompson (1997, as cited in Lyness and Thompson, 2000) investigated women's advancement to executive positions where they continue to be underrepresented. The study Lyness and Thompson (1997 as cited in Lyness and Thomposn, 2000) found that women at the highest executive ranks reported more obstacles (not fitting into the organisational culture) than lower-level woman did and lower satisfaction with future career opportunities. In this study (Lyness and Thompson (1997 as cited in Lyness and Thompson, 2000) these differences were not found to be consistent for men.

The Lyness and Thompson (2000) study raised questions regarding the route traveled by male and female executives in their quest to reach executive positions within the corporate world. This study (Lyness and Thompson, 2000) reported a lack of culture fit, being excluded from networks, difficulty getting developmental assignments with greater geographic mobility opportunities than their male counterparts. Mentoring was more strongly related to success for

men than for women, i.e. more successful women were less likely than less successful women to report that mentoring facilitated their advancement. Reports regarding women's difficulty in securing developmental assignments are consistent with findings on gender differences in the development of organisational power, indicating that organisational processes tend to favour and preserve power for the dominant group (men). The Lyness and Thompson (2000) study also raised the question that women may have confronted a second subtler 'ceiling' after they attained senior management positions. The study thus concluded that women followed different routes within the corporate hierarchy as compared to their male counterparts. The Lyness and Thompson (2000) study reiterated the necessity for future research in the field of career development specifically with the aim of furthering insight that allows for the expansion of knowledge and meaning of career for both men and women.

On a more local note, the Wood (1993) study conducted an investigation into the problems that Women Managers experience in the Workplace and whether Equal Opportunity Programmes dealt effectively with these problems. The study found that the following were the most reported problems facing women managers in the workplace (in order of frequency): The majority of the women found routine, administration and the financial side of their jobs frustrating and trivial. A general lack of time, aggravated by the demands and responsibilities of motherhood. Within this report women reported that they had to work twice as hard to achieve the same recognition and respect as their male counterparts. Some participants felt that men were automatically entitled to respect and recognition, whereas they had to earn it. All the working mothers interviewed reported that the constraints of time added severe pressure on them and feelings of guilt for not spending as much time as they could with their children. These findings

were confirmed in an earlier study by Welch (1990) who highlighted that women in academia experienced intense feelings of guilt, frustration and stress as a result of dual roles, sexism in the workplace and associated problems.

De La Rey (1999) within her doctoral thesis examined the Career Narratives of Women Professors in South Africa. This study explored the experiences of women professors within South African academia, their mobility within the system, the reconstruction of their experiences and their career trajectories. The study drew attention to the effects of past policy upon the personal lives of the participants and the creation of the present using the lens of the past (De La Rey, 1999). Of interest, the narratives of the participants within the study illustrated the significance between the intersection of the apartheid era and the processes of gender organisation within and outside this South African university (De La Rey, 1999). Within the study, the following constructs emerged as playing significant roles in shaping the academic careers of the participants: the significance of gender in shaping academic careers; the multiple roles played by women as academics/managers, mothers and wives; shared representation of academic life as a battle to be fought and the legacy of apartheid and impact upon academic development.

Within her writings, De La Rey (1999) challenged the existence of a gender gap at the level of higher education of women in South Africa citing similarity to the international trend, viz. relation between status, monetary rewards and the absence of women in organisations. According to De La Rey (1999) despite the implementation of equal opportunity programmes, the success of women within academia has been ambiguous. De La Rey (1999) indicated that gender and racial discrimination, even though it was often accompanied with variation and

differentiation, manifested as patterns of commonality amongst the participants. The history of racial division and oppression was also identified as an inhibiting factor within the participants career mobility and experiences.

The Holland (2001) study concentrated on Identifying Stressful Factors Perceived by Health Science Staff within a School at a South African University. The following factors identified, were found to be consistent with the earlier studies cited (De La Rey, 1999; Lyness and Thompson, 2000; Wood, 1993). Role conflicts as a result of failure to reconcile the demands of home and work. Consensus followed that being a parent, partner, friend and homemaker added to the stress of woman in academia. Due to the concentration of women in lower levels of the academic hierarchy, upward mobility of women academics appeared restricted and constrained.

Recently, Cassimjee (2003) conducted a study into the investigation of women in the Workplace within the South African context. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Holland (2001), De La Rey (1999) and Wood (1993). These are summarized as follows: Sixty percent of the participants felt that they had to 'prove' themselves capable of the leadership position held particularly in relation to their male counterparts. Seven percent of women in authority experienced resistance from male colleagues all the time: 40% most of the time, 53% some of the time and interestingly 0% never. Thirteen percent reported that developmental opportunities (training, workshops, study opportunities, job rotation) were less accessible to them as compared to their male counterparts; all of the time (13%), most of the time (20%), some of the time (27%) and 40% not at all. The remaining female participants (60%) revealed limited access to career developmental opportunities. Remuneration discrimination was also cited, i.e. due to family responsibilities women were restricted to overtime work as compared to men. According to Cassimjee (2003) these

differences are perceived as remuneration discrimination.

The question then arises, is there a culture still clinging tenaciously to former gender based stereotyping that continues to maintain and perpetuate the status quo, failing to recognise the full potential of senior woman in academia and management? The above-cited research studies (Cassimjee, 2003; Holland, 2001; Lyness and Thompson, 2000; De La Rey, 1999; Wood, 1993) indicate the existence of a number of factors inhibiting the career advancement of women. Discrimination (gender and racial), lack of support within the workplace and challenges of personal life reflects the steeper climb for many of these women.

The theoretical framework employed to study the subjective accounts and stories of the women academics, managers and executives follows in Chapter 3.

### Chapter 3

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the sociopolitical and economic context inherited from the apartheid era, any attempt to understand the career behaviour and development of South African people must firstly take into account the unique socio-political context. In light of this statement, Stead and Watson (1998) stress the importance of a new search, in identifying and understanding South African career development and psychology that is more relevant, meaningful and appropriately representative of the socio-cultural milieu in South Africa. Whilst such an “identity need not be divorced from Western psychology” (Stead and Watson, 1998: 297), both authors advocate that future research needs to be culturally and contextually rooted within relevant South African constructs such as unemployment, career barriers, economic factors and the role of culture in career choice.

Naicker (1994) challenges that the Western compliance to career research and theory lacks attention to sociological factors in the career choice of South Africans and thus may be inappropriate in view of the cultural transition taking place in South Africa. Stead and Watson (1998) have also criticized the generalized assumptions purported by the use of Western approaches to career psychology in South Africa that such theory, instruments and constructs hold similar meanings and are therefore assumed relevant for different ethnic groups. In support Stead and Watson (1999) have criticized previous frameworks of career theories, largely based on the career development of Western middle class men with an over-emphasis on individual values and a gross neglect of socio-political and socio-cultural values.

Following is a summary of some of the important assumptions of dominant Western theories, as outlined by (Stead and Watson, 1999:91):

- That people's career development can be divided into clearly demarcated developmental stages.
- That each developmental stage has to be completed successfully before the individual can move to the next stage.
- That if the developmental stages are dealt with successfully, the individual should be able to make a satisfying career choice.
- That if an individual works hard he or she should be able to have a successful career.

De Bruin and Nel (1996 as cited in Stead and Watson, 1999) conclude that these theories are not necessarily useful within the South African context due to the legacy of apartheid. Firstly, these assumptions do not hold true for the larger part of the South African population due to the socio-economic circumstances which does not allow for a free flowing education and career developmental path (Stead and Watson, 1999). Naicker (1994) and Stead (1996), in keeping with the above, stress the importance and absolute necessity of the social context, when attempting to make meaning of career behaviour within the South African context.

Whilst other social learning perspectives such as Classical Conditioning (Pavlov, 1849-1936; John Watson, 1878-1958), Radical Behaviourism (B.F. Skinner, 1904-1990), Moderate Behaviourism (Dollard, 1900-1980; Miller, 1909), other person-orientated approaches such as Self-actualisation (Abraham Maslow, 1908-1970), the Self Concept theory ( Carl Rogers, 1902-1987), the Holistic theory (Gordon Allport, 1897-1967) and the Ecosystemic approach (Bateson,

1972;1979) have been considered, the social cognitive learning approach appeared to be the most balanced of all approaches (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997). Whilst an agreement exists that behaviour is acquired through learning, social cognitive theory differs in their views from previous social learning theories that learning remains a passive acquisition. Social Cognitive theory posits that learning is an active and selective experience, with individuals exercising freedom through their own choice based on individual values and incentives. A second point of departure is the recognition that learning experience is acquired through the four principle sources of information, namely, personal accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion and emotional states as compared to 'conditioning' as the main form of learning experience. Thirdly, contrary to behaviour as a primarily learnt experience, social cognitive theory attributes cognition as one of the main contributors responsible for human behaviour in the form of thoughts, symbolic processes and expectations as. Motivation, viewed by behaviourists as primarily a product of motives and drives, is viewed by social cognitive theory as a product of interaction, learning and reinforcement. In addition, the social cognitive perspective allows for an "interactional view" in that "behaviour is determined by the interaction of three factors: the person, the situation, and the behaviour that takes place in this situation" (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997: 327).

SCCT has been specifically chosen to distance itself from other theories of human functioning that overemphasise the role of social learning experiences in the development of behaviour and learning and to recognize and acknowledge the centrality of cognition and its role played in people's lives, i.e. "capability to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information and perform behaviors" (Pajares, 2002:1). In support Pajares (2002) further argues that in order to predict the

influence of environmental outcomes on human behaviour, one needs to critically understand individual cognitive processes and interpretations regarding the said outcomes. In this light Bandura (1986) challenges that an over reliance of people as products of environmental factors solely, not only produces ideology of helplessness but promotes the assumption of people behaving similar to weathervanes, constantly shifting direction according to influential winds. Hence, undermines the significance and influence of concepts such as resiliency, agency and self-efficacy upon human development and behaviour.

However whilst Bandura (1986) acknowledges the active contribution of people within the shaping of their situations, he cautions against the mistaken belief of people as the sole contributors of the situation. Social Cognitive theory posits that environmental factors such as economic conditions, educational and familial structures, socioeconomic status affect human behaviour indirectly, i.e. human behaviour is affected by the degree to which these structures influence “people’s aspirations, self-efficacy beliefs, personal standards, emotional states and other self-regulatory influences” (Pajares, 2002). This theoretical account, encompassing human functioning as a product of the interplay between personal, behavioural and environmental influences (Reciprocal Determinism) is a marked departure from previous social learning theories, that allows for flexibility and applicability to human adaptation and behaviour change.

For this purpose, this study has been principally informed by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) proposed by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1996 as cited in Stead and Watson, 1999) to explain the career behaviour and development of women academics within the South African context. This theory has been specifically chosen for its contextual property that lends insight

into the dynamic interaction between individuals and the contextual factors that surround them. In keeping with this statement, Hackett and Lent (1992 as cited in Brown and Lent, 1992) stress the importance of structural and environmental factors when considering future research regarding women's career development. Accordingly Hackett and Lent (1992 as cited in Brown and Lent, 1992) advocates that such attention to structural facilitators and barriers not only serves to enhance the understanding between women and work, but serve to lengthen the shelf life of research findings as it accurately reflects social realities and the interaction within career development process.

Social cognitive career theory is largely derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory rooted in "an agentic perspective in which people function as anticipative, purposive, and self evaluating proactive regulators of their motivations and actions" (Bandura and Locke, 2003: 87). In this light Bandura (1997) provided a view of people both as products and producers of their own reality and of their social systems. Thus, giving birth to the understanding of people as planful, thinking agents, proactively engaged in the selection and shaping of their own lives and their environmental context. According to Bandura (1995) key to the theoretical perspective of human agency underlies the pervasive and central role of people's beliefs, personal efficacy and self-efficacy.

Following are the concepts that principally inform the theoretical underpinnings of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). These include *triadic reciprocity*, *self-efficacy*, *outcome expectations*, *goals and interests*. The influence of personal variables and environmental factors on self-efficacy and outcome expectations is explored in terms of their impact on career

development and behaviour of Black women within academia.

Accordingly, social-cognitive career theory posits that there exists *Triadic Reciprocity* “between personal attributes (which include feelings, attitudes, gender and aptitude), the external environment and overt behaviour” (Stead and Watson, 1999: 92). Extending this perspective, Bandura (1977, 1986) advocates that psychological functioning is a continuous mutual action and interaction between behavioural, personal, environmental determinants and self-generated thoughts. Bandura (1977) maintains that such a process provides both opportunity and limits for self-direction of individuals, thus giving rise to a sense of human functioning and people as free agents with free choice functioning within environmental limitation. According to Pajares (2002) it is this bi-directional influence between biological, evolutionary, social and technological factors that results in the outstanding intercultural and intra-cultural diversities evident within human adaptation and development.

The essential element of *self-efficacy* as noted by Bandura (1995:2) includes the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations”. Self-efficacy beliefs are said to be the most important mechanism of human agency regulating human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes (Bandura and Locke, 2003). In its simplest form, self-efficacy refers to the power to make things happen. *Self-efficacy is context-specific and does not form part of a general personality trait.* Accordingly, this has an affect on whether individuals think in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways, effecting perseverance, motivational ability, their responsive behaviours to stress and depression, choices and crucial decision-making abilities. (Bandura and Locke, 2003). Bandura

(1997) reiterates the concept of perceived *self-efficacy* as a belief about one's capability under differing contexts with whatever skills one has in possession, rather than as a measure of a skill one possesses. Hackett and Betz (1981 as cited in Zunker, 1986) posit that women who have low self-efficacy constrain their career options and mobility resulting in under-achievement of personal potential. In contrast, women who are said to have a high sense of efficacy possess the ability to foresee positive guides for performance and affect positive solutions to potential problems (Zunker, 1998: 86).

Bandura (1997) adds that possession of resilient forms of self-efficacy results in individuals responding to challenges as matters to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Bandura (1997) concludes that such an orientation not only fosters involvement and commitment to goals but increases interest, effort and a task-focused orientation in activities. In this regard Lent, Brown and Larkin (1986) hypothesize that self-efficacy expectations are valuable mediators of behavioural change and behaviour in terms of career options, decisions, persistence and success in career development.

Bandura (1997) argues that there remains a clear distinction between the concepts of self-efficacy and self-esteem despite the interchangeable use of both concepts. Accordingly, differentiation between the concept of self-efficacy and self-esteem rests within the "judgment of personal capabilities" whereas self-esteem concerns itself with a "judgment of self-worth" (Bandura 1997:11).

Bandura (1986) challenges that cognitions do not operate within a vacuum nor are they free

from causal influences. In this light he maintains that people acquire *self-efficacy beliefs* through four different processes. Such beliefs are constructed from the following principal sources of information: personal performance accomplishment which includes direct experiences of success or failure, vicarious learning through observing others fail or succeed, verbal or social persuasion including encouragement from those closest to you (parents, teachers, peers and other people) and physiological arousal which relates to a lower self-efficacy expectation as a result of heightened anxiety (Stead and Watson, 1999). Of all the sources of information, personal performance accomplishment (*enactive mastery experience*) is the most powerful source in the creation and strengthening of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1986, 1997) as it serves to provide evidence of one's capability for success. Bandura (1995) purports that the development of self-efficacy through mastery experience is not merely an adoption of ready-made habits but rather an involvement that includes the acquisition of self-regulatory cognitive and behavioural tools in the creation, execution and management of action within life transitions. Bandura (1995, 1997) advocates that a resilient sense of efficacy is dependent on perseverant sustained efforts and experiences in the face of adversities, as easy successes foster a false sense of expectations, quick results and discouragement when faced with failures.

Vicarious learning experiences, in terms of inspirational modeling also serve to enhance and motivate a sense of efficacy. Bandura (1995) maintains that the impact of modeling on self-efficacy beliefs strongly relates to perceived similarity to the models, i.e. "the greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive is the model's successes and failures" (Bandura, 1995: 3). Acquisition of such competencies, knowledge and expressed ways of thinking not only increases perceived self-efficacy but equips observers with strategies and skills to manage

environmental challenges. Bandura (1995) purports that unfailing attitudes by perseverant models within challenging contexts proves more enabling to the observer than particular skills exhibited.

Social persuasion is the third influential thread of creating and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs. Verbal persuasion in relation to the development of capabilities to master and manage challenges is likely to sustain perseverant effort and increase mobility particularly in the face of adversities and self-depreciating behaviour. Bandura (1995) maintains that such persuasive boosts strengthen perceived self-efficacy, affirm positive self-beliefs and personal efficacy.

Lastly, physiological arousal and emotional states partly contributes to people's judgment about their capabilities, self-efficacy beliefs and personal efficacy. Bandura (1995) reports that the perception and interpretation of emotional reactions in comparison to the intensity of the response experienced by individuals is of ultimate importance. Commonly known mistakes include the misinterpretation of arousal states as debilitating factors as compared to efficacious individuals interpreting their arousal states as energising facilitators of performance. Such mistakes includes misinterpretation of signs of stress, tension and vulnerability to poor performance as signs of failure.

Stead and Watson (1999: 93) refer to *outcome expectations*, as "what people believe the results of particular behaviours will be". Motivation is governed by the expectation and value, that a given course of action will produce certain favourable outcomes. Efficacy beliefs partly influence this motivating outcome (Bandura, 1995). Hence, according to Stead and Watson

(1999) people will engage in behaviours that they expect will lead to desirable outcomes including rewards, feelings of pride, lowered anxiety as compared to that they believe to undesirable outcomes.

According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), *goals* are said to help people organize and guide their actions and behaviours. In this respect, the career choice process flows from the goals and activities that develop out of interest. *Goals*, according to Bandura (1997:128) are described as a major cognitive instrument of self-motivation and directedness including the “capacity to exercise self-influence by personal challenge and evaluative reactions to one’s own performances”. Goals ultimately generate a sense of personal agency that interacts with self-efficacy and outcome expectations positively effecting self-directed behaviour. Efficacy beliefs and strong perseverance contributes significantly to motivation and attainment of goals and performance accomplishments. Goals are as a result of self-influence processes and in this respect differ from the dominant Western theories that posit that people are products of environmental and learning experiences only.

Social cognitive career theory relates *interests* to positive self-efficacy and outcome expectations. In turn, people develop interest in activities for which they have positive self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Most importantly, interests are seen to be tied with learning experiences and opportunities that individuals are likely to encounter throughout the lifespan. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) holds that aptitude influences interests indirectly through self-efficacy expectations, contrary to the traditional point of view, viz. that people develop interests in activities for which they have a strong aptitude.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) most importantly, places emphasis on the individual's socially constructed world rather than solely inherited biological traits. Bandura (1995) purports that the addition of a self-efficacy belief system within this broader socio-cognitive theoretical perspective not only allows for the development and expansion of human efficacy but also provides guidelines on how to enhance human efficacy. To this end, he adds that the development and exercise of personal control over life events produces valued and desired outcomes, preparedness and well-being. This ability to change environmental demands into successful challenges contributes significantly to human attainment and motivation.

The theoretical underpinnings call attention to the social-cultural and socio-economic variables that influenced learning opportunities individuals were exposed to, personal reactions and future outcomes as well as the influence of contextual and other personal variables on interests and career choice. In this sense, the influence of race, gender and institutional patriarchy on the career development and behaviour of women is taken into account. As in the case of the apartheid era which often resulted in many Black women being placed at the lowest rung of the career ladder due to institutional policies which propagated racism and gender inequality. Furthermore, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) takes into consideration the influential variables relating to parental and societal expectations in relation to their impact upon the career mobility of women.

Chapter 4 follows with a description of the methodology utilized to capture the various accounts of the research participants.

## Chapter 4

### METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design has specifically been chosen to shape and inform the structure of this study due to its acceptance and primary concern with human understanding. For the benefit of the reader, Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1) refers to the institution of study within the content of the thesis, followed by Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2).

#### 4.1. Data Collection:

Reinhartz (1992) proposes unstructured interviewing as a qualitative data-gathering technique. The research tool, i.e. unstructured research interviews, accompanied by open-ended questions, has been specifically employed for the benefit of this study in order to allow for maximum discovery and description of the research participants accounts. Most importantly, this facilitates the experience and access to people's life story in their own words, through their own memories and thoughts rather than that of the researcher. The interviews within this study revolved around the central theme and story of the participants career development within academia and executive management, with a general focus on the opportunities and challenges experienced. The area of questioning in the initial and follow-up interviews (wherever possible) included:

- their advancement from entry-level to current position, the pace of their movements, perceived obstacles on their career path, the management of these obstacles, past/present developmental opportunities (professionally or career), past /present career interruptions, perceived organisational support (the use of mentoring, coaching, role-models, career counselling), how organisational support is/was utilised), career aspirations versus familial needs/demands, useful strategies employed, recommendations and suggestions to other up and coming women.

The dates and duration of the interviews (initial and wherever possible, follow-up) are briefly discussed. Rationale for follow-up interviews were to gather remaining information required to complete the interview.

- Research participant 1: (Initial interview on 10/08/2004: duration -1 hour  
Follow-up interview on 14/09/2004: duration- 30 minutes).
- Research participant 2: (Initial interview on 17 August 2007: duration - 45 minutes  
No follow-up granted)
- Research participant 3: (Initial interview on 19/08/2004: duration -1 hour  
Follow-up interview on 20/10/2004: duration -1 hour).
- Research participant 4: (Initial interview on 31/08/2004: duration - 40 minutes  
Follow-up interview on 21/10/2004: duration- 30 minutes).
- Research participant 5: (Initial interview on 22/10/2004:duration - 50 minutes  
No follow-up granted).

With the permission and consent of each interviewee, the interview was then audio-taped. All interviews were then transcribed at a later stage in preparation for analysis.

#### 4.2. Sampling:

Non-probability sampling was utilised for the benefit of the study, with particular reference to convenience sampling, also known as availability sampling. Accordingly, Grinnell (1993:162) describes convenience sampling as “the sample that is reliant on the closest and most available subjects to constitute the sample”. Grinnell (1993) further argues that this sample is composed of the most available and closest participants.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis:

Interpretive analysis, according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 140) is seen “as a back and forth movement between the strange and the familiar, as well as a number of other dimensions including description, interpretation, foreground, background, part and whole”. In keeping with this, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that there are different traditions that fall under the umbrella of interpretive analysis, with thematic analysis forming part of such a tradition. For the benefit of this research study, inductive thematic analysis, as an interpretive technique was employed in the analysis of the research participants story. Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall (1995: 57) describe thematic analysis as a “coherent way of organising or reading some interview material in relation to specific research questions”. All eight interviews were transcribed verbatim, in preparation for the analysis of data. Owen’s (1984) criterion for inductive thematic analysis was employed in terms of the actual procedure followed within the analysis and interpretation of interviews. As suggested by Owen’s (1984) criterion for inductive thematic analysis, procedural steps within the analysis of interviews included the use of recurrence (repetition of common/similar meaning within the discourse), repetition of key words and phrases, forcefulness in oral discourse (changes in volume, inflection, positioning of ideas, dramatic pauses and introductory follow-up phrases). Reading and re-reading of text, revision of theme description, re-categorisation of segments of text was also deployed. In final preparation for presentation of results all major themes, according to frequency, commonality and degree to which they are closely reflected in meaning with other themes emerging within the discourse was identified.

Following are the procedural steps briefly outlined, as suggested by Owen (1984:1):

- Recurrence: at least two parts of the discourse reflect the same thread of meaning, even though different words are used.
- Repetition: key words, phrases or sentences are repeated in at least two parts of the discourse.
- Forcefulness: in oral discourse, significant changes in volume (whisper, speaking loudly), inflection, positioning (putting an idea first in an explanation or list), the use of dramatic pauses or introductory follow-up phases that indicate the importance of a segment of a discourse (here's the main thing....What I really think is...).
- Reading through the text to be analysed and underlying potential answers to the research question/s.
- Re-read text to identify themes missed, to revise theme description and to re-categorise particular segments of the text.
- Identify major themes by their frequency and by the degree to which they are closely associated in meaning and discourse with other themes. Common themes that evolved will be used in the presentation of the results.

#### **4.4. The research participants:**

The five participants involved were women who had attained the ranks of doctor, associate professor or professor, and who occupied senior positions in academia and/or executive management at a particular campus at a university in South Africa. The intention of this study was to focus on women in either academia or executive management who have had experience within the tertiary education system and who have experienced upward career mobility.

#### **4.5. Procedure Followed:**

All five participants were identified via the human resource department on the targeted campus. A convenience method of sampling was used in an attempt to identify and include women holding the title of doctor, associate professor or professor, who were all South African born and of 'African, Coloured and Indian' descent. Although attempts were exercised in terms of including participants from previously male-dominated academic disciplines, this proved to be futile, as there was an absence of women, particularly Black women holding similar ranking in these subject areas on this targeted campus. Interviews were arranged telephonically and at times via e-mail. Most follow-up interviews (wherever possible) were arranged telephonically. All interviews were held within the confines of the participants professional settings (offices).

#### **4.6. The research context and interview dynamics:**

The research participants chosen for the purpose of the study were well known public figures both nationally, and in certain instances, internationally. Many of the participants have earned their reputation within the academic world and the wider community, through their academic successes and contributions within society to varying degrees.

#### **4.7. Ethical Considerations:**

Caution was exercised at all times to protect the identities of all those involved bearing in mind that the academic world is quite a closed community. The issue of confidentiality was discussed prior to the start of the interview, with the interviewer assuring that all attempts would be made to adhere to this standard. Informed consent was elicited from all participants involved including their voluntarily participation within this study.

In reporting the findings of this study, all identifiable details have been masked and measures have been placed to change or omit, wherever possible names of persons, places, disciplines, schools and universities in the interest of preserving confidentiality.

The unfolding of the participants experiences follows within chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### RESULTS

The following data was organised and analysed under thematic headings, using verbatim examples from the transcripts that are included within the appendices. No grammatical corrections were made with regard to the participants responses, phrases and discussions. For the benefit of the reader Tertiary institution 1(T.I.1) refers to the institution of study, followed by Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2). Participants in the study are referred to as P 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The main themes that have emerged from the analysis within this study are as follows:

#### 5.1. The Challenges regarding Institutional Culture:

Challenges regarding institutional culture ranged from a general lack of institutional support, racism within the institution, gender discrimination and a lack of organizational support. These are as follows.

5.1.1. *Lack of Institutional Support*: Tertiary Institution One (T.I.1), the institution in question, was perceived by all five research participants as unsupportive in terms of their career development and career mobility. The following embraces the sentiments shared by all 5 participants:

**P 1:** “Ja, my perception of management was that ... (slight pause) it was not at all supportive (high intonation). One, it was sort of an ‘upward swim’, they presented themselves as obstacles rather than a source one could go to”.

**P 2:** “So, I came here...(pause) my thinking was I will do my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) in

academia. Well...(slight pause) it was not to be so!...Yes, you expressed the interest, but the system will not ...(pause) be supportive in terms of creating an environment. You will be loaded with more and more work!”

**P 2:** “So...(pause) so you had this very hostile unsupportive environment within your institution (T.I.1) and then very supportive environments outside...(pause) outside your institution”.

**P 3:** “And I must say that this university falls far short of that. You know in terms of having a culture of academia that can be sort of emancipatory in a way”.

**P 3:** “ I do believe in an, particularly in an institution like this (T.I.1) that there were more obstacles than opportunities”.

**P 4:** “We are a marginalised programme in the sense that this university (T.I.1) management, faculty and executive have not, like everywhere else in the world of course, seen women issues as important issues and gender issues as important issues. It’s kind of; it’s the end of the day thing that has to be attended to. Now that is seen by the resources that are brought into the department, you know”.

**P 5:** “You know, if can’t speak English with the ‘Queens’ accent, you are looked down upon, people look down at those whom have grammatical errors when speaking English. You know you won’t find them here, if you don’t give them opportunities”.

5.1.2. *Racism within the Institution:* The sentiments of all 5 participants revealed that racism was a distinguished marker within the institution (T.I.1), which permeated their experiences both directly and indirectly. The conscious admission followed that their career choices were

restricted not only through gender discrimination but through racism as well. We see the above-mentioned unfolding in their various accounts of their stories:

**P 1:** “You know, as an Indian, as a Black women, I could only sell my labour at one institution. I could have easily risen quicker and higher if I were a White woman! ... Well I got married in 1974, and then there were very few women who had a master’s degree in.... I was full of bright ideas but it was very difficult to exercise them due to racism” (high intonation).

**P 2:** “... I noticed that I was actually carrying the highest teaching load and I said to myself...this is not something I will challenge as an individual and remember those days I was the only Black lecturer in the department. To me these were some of the barriers...(pause) the barriers that you cannot actually touch...(pause) that were beginning to unfold! That...now(forcefulness), this is a barrier that will make life difficult for you in the institution! It’s faceless; you can attach faces if you want! But it’s an in-built thing...(pause) it’s an in-built barrier which makes life difficult for Black people entering academia! ... And I don’t think it was an accident of history that(forcefulness)...(pause) at that time, in the early nineties, people would come for a short while, you can go and check the records, they’ll come and they’ll go out and they never (forcefulness) want to hear a thing about academia. It was this subtle culture which pushes you out, very subtly!”

**P 3:** “I just wrote a paper in which I say ‘race is race, everything at the same time is race’. Especially in my professional life (high intonation), almost everything revolves around race and gender. They don’t consciously (high intonation) do it, but its part of one’s psyche. It’s like an

archetype, you know, 'anything that's White is better than Black' It's really an entrenched part of one's psyche".

**P 3:** "Its odd enough, I became aware of race and gender bias at this university (T.I.1)".

P 3: " ...But as you get higher up, I think the divisions become more pronounced, you know the prejudices, the biases become more pronounced".

**P 3:** "The other thing is that...(pause) I again have difficulty reconciling with this. We are academics, most people, especially given the South African context, from a political point of view, a lot of them write about it. Right, they (high intonation) write about it, they studied other people's lives (high intonation), in relation to race and gender. And yet (high intonation) you dare not introduce the discourse, the debate (high intonation) at the university (T.I.1). I just find it's a ...(pause) How can you acknowledge its importance in other people's lives but don't practice?' (high intonation)"

**P 4:** "Sometimes this kind of thing happens were as a woman of course and as a Black person as well, running the department. You get people organising or seeking approval of something that should be happening in the department or is to happen in the department, or is sought to be happening in the department but not going straight to you but going via somebody else! Which is kind of like, I don't know, I haven't been wanting to read too much into it but its irritating and upsetting but anyway my wanting not to dwell too much into it (high intonation) because I don't want it to control me in terms of thinking that these people are marginalising me".

**P 5:** "In this regard, the leadership of the present institution (T.I.1) is questionable. They have a transformed student body but have not transformed as yet. We have a very sophisticated

public...(pause) there's no 100% transparency regarding decisions...(pause) committees are set for different things. The White supremacy ensures that this is being perpetuated".

**P 5:** "Why is it that we are not being transformed and the favourite defense statement is that 'African people are being snatched, they won't stay here and earn academic salaries!' That is nonsense!"

5.1.3. *Gender Discrimination:* Gender discrimination was another distinguishing marker that is closely woven within the shaping of their stories. For many of the research participants race and gender were not seen as separate entities but rather as intertwined shaping factors that has had an effect on their career behaviour, development and advancement. According to De La Rey (1999: 47) this is seen as "Double Discrimination" which encompasses the effects of both sexism and racism. These are typified as part of their stories, which is as follows:

**P 1:** "Absolutely, in order to survive in a man's world. Ja, that's right...(pause) women have to relinquish their status of womanhood because the notion of leadership is very male driven and hence you end up losing out".

**P 1:** "Not very well! Because it's a very male dominated management style and focus! They're not used to...(slight pause) they define...they define the dignity of their own lifestyles!"

**P 1:** "Then married women were temporary members of staff, it was university policy, you know, married women earned less than men and were temporary".

**P 2:** "It also takes time to develop relations because the fact that you are, one is a Black woman is enough to put you in the category of incompetence. You don't have to say anything; you just

fit the stereotype in most cases”.

**P 3:** “That women...(pause) of my colour, okay, work ten times harder is an understatement...forty or fifty times harder than my male counterparts to achieve the same type of recognition. Even then I think, it’s hard to be acknowledged, even though we have all the overt, you know what the scientists would call the empirical evidence that we’d excelled (high intonation). You know, surpassed I think the sort of normal expectations, we are still not acknowledged. White males, who have far less than I have, have been a lot more acknowledged and rewarded! I think, you know, the colonial mentality still prevails...very largely so. We live still, in what Fannin called the imperial gaze of the White man”.

**P 3:** “You asked for examples of the discrimination kind sort of thing...I really think that this is not spoken, right but the fact is ...you have management, you have leadership qualities. You are academically extremely productive and totally overlooked in the system...(pause). I think is a form of discrimination. For me there is no doubt about that”.

**P 3 :** “ If I had not been such a productive person, I think I would never have been considered because I ...(pause) I think just my race and gender would have prevented it (high intonation)”.

**P 4:** “Ja, there’s always been. Where there’s a man there’s a challenge of course! Like I mentioned earlier on, there’s always been obstacles which are very much gendered I must say!”.

**P 4:** “Hence, if you look at research activities, it’s actually largely White men! And if it is not White men, it will be men of other races! And if you look at who heads that, it will be men again! For me that is very problematic!”

**P 5:** "...You have gender issues, you have a culture, a masculine organisation dominated by White males...And as a woman unfortunately, you can't perform like men, you've got to perform three times harder! You can't publish like them; you got to publish three times harder! Because you're a woman, because you're an African! Your benchmark (high intonation) is much more difficult, I mean your outputs (high intonation) has to be three times more than perhaps a White male before they can take you seriously. But that's the challenge we face and if we want to move ahead as women and if we want to be taken seriously we just have to take that stride. We have to face that challenge! We have to work harder!"

**P 5:** "I mean it took me three years of slaving (high intonation) for people to take me seriously and to say...(pause) perhaps to say I'm worth my salt. Now when I'm unhappy, sometimes I feel like going, sometimes when you say; 'I can't take this anymore' and I think about leaving. And I say to myself wherever I go (high intonation), it will take me not less than three years in developing those relationships, in trying to prove myself before people start to believe who you are and if you are worth your salt!"

5.1.4. *Lack of Organisational Support:* The lack of role models, mentoring and coaching was collectively seen as barriers and inhibiting factors with regard to the career advancement and career behaviour. Particularly upon new entry into academia, there was a collective sense of being 'lost and without direction'. The analyses of these accounts are as follows.

**P 1:** "No, not so. The issue is that you got no support from women or colleagues. Then married women were temporary...(pause) there was a lot of racism. You know the 'Queen Bee syndrome', climbing up the career ladder was a real struggle, as a result one was pushing down

on those below”.

**P 2:** “Suffice to say, that again support...(pause) came from very few quarters...I’m not going to mention the quarters, but again, one has to understand that you are coming into protected terrains here; you are coming into protected turfs!”

In response to mentors within Tertiary Institution One (T.I.1) participant 2 responded as followed:

**P 2:** “On campus! (Laughs a little). I have to think very hard. You know, this is an area, sometimes I don’t want to talk much about, sometimes...(slight pause) I have tried to approach people, I’ve had mentors outside campus.

**P 3:** “In my academic career I can’t think of anybody here (T.I.1)”

**P 4:** “But besides that there’s been challenges, one challenge that was very bad with this university was that of lack of mentoring. You know, you’re expected to be thrown into the deep end and know how to swim and swim well! If you don’t swim well then you are giving names because you are a woman, because you’re Black”.

**P 4:** “You’re not initiated (high intonation) in this university (T.I.1). Hopefully things have changed but nobody seems to initiate you and follow on that. It’s been ever since; it’s still like that I must say”.

**P 5:** “Mentoring and coaching, very few African role models. Very few mentors and very few people to coach you. I think I was very lucky because when I started in academia I was already

mature and...(pause) my role models have been a number of people not necessarily in academia”.

Of importance, none of the research participants were able to identify role models within the immediate tertiary institution (T.I.1), which consequently impacted to varying degrees on their career development, and advancement within the said institution. Equally important, most of the role models identified were those people from the international arena (participant 1, 2, 3) and a few nationally (participant 1, 5) whom had a positive influence, to varying degrees on the career development of these individuals.

## **5.2. The Opportunities regarding Institutional culture:**

The opportunities regarding institutional culture were few and far between. Although these were not consistent neither constant, they are worth mentioning in terms of their significance on the career development and impact on career advancement of the research participants.

Participant 1 favoured academia in terms balancing dual roles and found the flexibility that it offered helpful:

**P 1:** “It was. Also because I was in academia so...(pause) you have that flexibility (high intonation). You have that kind of flexibility which you’ll never have if you’re an accountant working for a big firm”.

Participant 3 favoured the institutional culture of research and development within (T.I.1.) as compared to (T.I.2) and embraced her sentiment in the following extract:

**P 3:** “I think the other difference ...(pause) is that at (T.I.2) there wasn’t so much a culture of research and publications, it was here (T.I.1). So when I entered here (T.I.1) you know, I began to appreciate the value of research as compared to when I was at (T.I.2)”.

**P 3:** “Recently, in the past few months, from the research office I’ve had some opportunities and recognition. But that...(pause) that...(pause) that has just come. Now that I’ve proved it (high intonation), there are opportunities coming”.

Participant 4 expressed that opportunities did present within the academic setting, however it was more a question of ‘grabbing’ onto opportunities and ‘making’ the best of them. These accounts are as follows:

**P 4:** “So, it’s a question of looking at what is available and how you perceive what is available and the question of turning around what is available into opportunities. You know looking at battles as opportunities....

It’s a question of just looking at where are opportunities and make those opportunities work for you!”

**P 4:** “Financial support. I don’t want to say major or minor, but its resources. I mean getting a thousand rands as compared to getting nothing, I regard that as support. I got this from this university (T.I.1) when I was working and studying full- time”.

### **5.3. The Legacy of Apartheid:**

The legacy of the apartheid era has been cited as a powerful influence in the career development and behaviour for most of the research participants. For the participants, racist practice and practices have had a decisive influence, to varying degrees for most part of their

lives within their career trajectory. These are as follows:

**P 1:** “You know, as an Indian, as a Black women I could only sell my labour at one institution. I could have easily risen quicker and higher if I were a White woman!”

**P 1:** “I was full of bright ideas but it was difficult to exercise them due to racism (high intonation)”.

**P 1:** “At that time, Indians had to have a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) and seven publications before appointed to a senior lectureship position”.

**P 2:** “Let me just start by saying...(pause) I came from the tradition of the anti-apartheid movement...So as you can see there was a pattern in the NGO’s (1 and 2) I worked for. We were critical of apartheid but at the same time we tried to put alternate mechanisms in place. We started interrogating those policies, for instance, way back before the government did. The point I’m making is that there was ...(pause) there was a tradition I came from and as a person I ...(pause) I believe in doing things.... I’m a doer rather than ...somebody who blows her own trumpet!”

**P 2:** “I took that as a barrier, not only did I take it as a barrier...(pause)usually my mantra and my philosophy is any adversity (high intonation) that is presented to me, I don’t retreat. I turn it around and see what the opportunity is. I don’t retreat! It’s not in my nature. So by nature I don’t retreat and I think also it comes from the family where I come from and the tradition I just outlined to you earlier on”.

**P 2:** “There is no reason to add toxin in our lives, the system added enough toxin in the country so we can’t afford more”.

**P 3:** “Maybe it’s from an apartheid past which I’m acutely (high intonation) aware of as well. In terms of every law and legislation that implied that I was inferior. So I think basically it contributed to a sense of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self. Paradoxically, what it’s also done is produced in me...(pause) that I can be equal and better. It’s a paradoxical kind of a thing; I think that’s part of the dynamics as well. Although I think despite all the effort to prove oneself as equal to Whites, right, in an institution like this (T.I.1), it did not work”.

**P 3:** “ ...As I’ve said, ‘the imperial gaze of the White man’, you know that comes out in reality from a book; that I could be the head of a school where there are a whole lot of White men. It can never enter the consciousness, you know, of some people that a little Indian woman can do it. It’s played itself out in very practical terms, you know evident”.

**P 4:** “ Of course, we look at systems, its systems that are there (high intonation) that prevent people from performing or from participating, resulting in them being excluded. And the systems that we’ve had and still have are the systems that have the legacy of apartheid or that were apartheid in nature legislated (high intonation) of course, as you know”.

**P 5:** “...This freedom, I feel it’s irresponsible of us not to do something about it. Because our brothers have died for it, kids have died for this freedom; our fathers have died for this freedom (high intonation). (Name of person) was locked for twenty years for this freedom! And if as women, we take the easy route because it’s easier not to face leadership and to move on forward, if we take the easy route we are not honouring the very people that gave us the freedom, and that’s what drives me!”

In the above accounts, we are able to see that race and the legacy of apartheid are intertwined entities that have affected the participants 'sense of drive', to an extent their access to higher education, their progress and development of their academic success. There is an overall sense of resiliency, despite the oppressive social and historical forces; participants have reshaped their career trajectories, overcoming barriers and driven by motivation and determination.

#### **5.4. Power is Knowledge:**

Despite the lack of support, the accounts of the academics and managers reveal various enabling strategies as a means of coping mechanisms in the face of obstacles and challenges. These are as follows.

For participant 1 knowledge was perceived as a means of empowerment to enable a sense of survival within a patriarchal and racially divided society.

**P 1:** "You know, in order to strategise in your life takes a lot of discipline. Knowledge changes the quality of life, knowledge is very powerful, it gives energy to life. It is important to adopt a stance and to strategise if you want to survive in this country. Not to stagnate. I was very ambitious, I wanted to make a difference and adopt a stance for what I believe in".

Participant 2 stressed the need to learn, understand and constantly acquire certain competencies as vital to the various aspects of her work related activities. Through her accounts, she embraces the following:

**P 2:** "So I had to learn quickly a lot of things, learn quickly, learn again! You have to continuously fight fiercely to protect your dignity, all the time! It's an ongoing war, all the time;

you've got to do that! You've got to perform and you've got to learn...you develop a repertoire of techniques to learn what you are supposed to do, because it's not going to come to you voluntarily. So that's ...been it!"

**P 2:** "Like I said to you by nature, I don't retreat, I try to learn and understand, not only to learn and understand! And if I need to acquire competencies I take it upon myself to acquire those competencies. I'm not afraid to acquire competencies if I don't know. So that's important".

Participant 3 once again embraced the idea of sheer hard work, dedication and belief in oneself. Importantly, the participant nurtured the concept of 'resiliency', which is used as a means of coping within a challenging institution and politically charged 'climate' of South Africa. These are as follows:

**P 3:** "Yeah, but I think I'm also the kind of person who does not want to settle for anything but the best in terms of what (high intonation) I think, in terms of the standard I set for myself, I think sometimes at great expense to myself. I think of the entire week-end and holiday spent working...(pause) I think that, as almost power for the cause for woman in institutions like this".

**P 3:** "I think everything I got in a way is what I worked extremely hard for. You know and put in a lot of effort and energy"

**P 3:** "Now that I've proved it (high intonation), there are opportunities. You know, sometimes I actually wonder, quite honestly, given all the obstacles...(pause) given all the obstacles that I've had to endure and experienced 'How I've actually come so far'. Given all the obstacles, I've had to work extremely hard to get what I want, 'resilience'...(pause) I got it from my mother, even though we were at two different poles. I am very direct and assertive, too assertive, so much so, that it can be threatening...(pause)".

**P 3:** “And that’s why I’m linking it to the area I grew up in, which as generally sort of under-privileged, low socio-economic area and I think seeing the problems...(pause) a...(pause) wanting to make a difference”.

Participant 4 also encompasses the idea of studying and following through with one’s passion in life, to make a contribution and to map out a vision strategically. These important determinants are reported as a means of empowerment, which are as follows:

**P 4:** “No...no...no. I’ve never stopped studying in my life; I’m a student and hope to be for my entire life”.

**P 4:** “But it is a question of combining passion with a personal...(pause) programme and looking ahead at a vision! You know, kind of being on a mission to realise the vision but also using the passion and the history that you have and any role models that are available to you...(pause) as a kind of context to realise your vision! Kind of making your own mark!”.

Participant 5 expressed Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, in particular reference to ‘self-actualization’ that has given her an enabling sense and drive to cope in the face of difficulties and obstacles. She inculcates the following sentiments in her story:

**P 5:** “We want to be able to express (high intonation) who we are...(pause) not to express...(pause) not to be defined on the basis of what your husband’s does or be on the shadow of your husband. I think we are motivated by the same kind of things that motivate men. If you look at Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the greatest motivator is self-actualisation, I’m motivated by self-actualisation. Self-actualisation through mastery of all these difficult issues! (high intonation)”.

**P 5:** “This is a very difficult balance (high intonation), I can tell you that. But again it’s about mastering your own self, your own emotions! Mastering the small little issues! Knowing what to say and when to say it and how to say it!”

Given the lack of support, the patriarchal nature of institutional culture, direct and indirect racism, sexism and the lingering legacy of apartheid, the above accounts of women in academia/management depicts their various coping mechanisms. These are adopted to enable a sense of survival in a very male orientated institution in what appears to be dominated by the prevailing ideology of ‘White supremacy’.

#### **5.5. The Domains of Family life:**

There are two distinct thematic dimensions emerging from the stories of the research participants. Firstly, the influence of parental support or guidance as a form of role models, and secondly the dual challenges of familial needs versus career aspirations. These are as discussed.

*5.5.1. Parental Influences*, in terms of support and guidance was a common facilitating factor in the lives of the research participants career choice, career behaviour, development of self-efficacy, outcomes expectations, goal orientated behaviours and interests. These are embodied in the following extracts.

**P 1:** “My father inculcated the need to read and educate myself from a very early age”.

**P 1:** “He motivated me to write my first letter, my first feminist letter when I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age”.

**P 1:** “Don’t get into a situation of comfort...make a difference (high intonation). You know, in that respect my father was a great inspiration. My father used to say ‘wherever you are, you must make a difference!’. I believe in that. My mother was an amazing woman as well. She had learnt to paint when she was much older in life”.

**P 2:** “My father in terms of values and being focused, and I wish, I wish I had his calm and cool temper”.

**P 3:** “Resilience...I got it from my mother even though we were at two different poles”.

**P 3:** “I think its ... (pause) messages that I carried, I think from my mum. I think...(pause) because I remembered from my mother, at some point in my life when I was at school, telling me that whatever I chose to do in life, I must try to do the best that I can in it. You know, whether I wanted to be a sales-assistant or a doctor, lawyer, social worker, whatever it was that I should try to be the best I can. That message for me somehow stuck in my head. It’s the best that I can be in my, to persevere, to complete a task when I start. Perseverance to complete tasks”.

**P 4:** “So looking at all this, I went for teaching probably because my mother was and my father had been”.

**P 4:** “Possibly my mum, because she was in this kind of field and you know, you tend to take your parents as role models”.

**P 5:** “There are a number of people that I respect. My father particularly who believed that there’s only one place to be and that was excellence! He was a champion in athletics and in

1958 when Bantu education was stipulated, he refused to work and stopped teaching that day”.

*5.5.2. Dual Challenges regarding familial needs versus career aspirations.* The various challenges regarding dual roles associated with familial needs and career aspirations were a common dominant theme that permeated the stories of the women in academia and managerial positions. Their sentiments are embodied in the following accounts.

**P 1:** “It’s still much a dual career you know, this is the catch twenty-two situation, we’re opening doors for them and so forth, but nothing has really changed in terms of family dynamics! There must be societal acknowledgement that there is no opportunity that is favourable in terms of rearing children and being in the work force!”

**P 2:** “I’ve never stopped to think about marriage, for instance. I’ve always sort of, pulled myself into my work. I have a son. My thing was, I would give him the best education, the best what is, the best humanly speaking”.

**P 2:** “I organized, by the way when I had to go to ..., I had to organise how to tell my son. I would look at him and I would say to myself, he needs my support. It’s very difficult, it’s a very difficult programme, he needs my support when he comes home...”

**P 3:** “Constantly, constantly need to cope with the competing demands around me. You know I wouldn’t even frame it as demands but all the competing needs around me. Because they really are so. I travel a lot and when I think of all the funerals and wedding I have missed due to work related activities, I am constantly missing”.

**P 3:** “In terms of juggling both personal and professional career, I’m the worst example. If you ask my colleagues, I’m the right one, totally skewed. I think that’s part of my fears as I told you, taking my academic and career life too seriously. I spend too much of my energy and life here. I have an exceptional loving and wonderful family. When I think of my daughter and husband and consider the number of week-ends I spend working, I think I sometimes take them for granted”.

**P 4:** “The external obstacles will be family. Obstacles, probably commitments that one needs to keep, especially if you have family, more so if you have an extended family. So it will be that”.

**P 4:** “Of course, there will be challenges! Although one can’t say it’s better, I mean it’s challenges like any other career, will pose such a challenge if you have those kind of identities... All people have those kind of identities, not only one identity where one part of your identity will impact whatever career you get to be exposed to. But of course, for women it becomes much more challenging because women have to have more than two, three, four five identities! You find it becomes much more challenging. At least from my analysis as a feminist, you know”.

**P 5:** “Having career, work and family is not the most difficult thing in the world, it is the second most difficult thing right after achieving world peace! When I think of that statement I realise how true it is. Everyday when I come home from work I have children to attend to, I have to attend to their needs, I’ve got to cook supper for them, they want me play with them, I’ve got to be a wife, be all of those! (high intonation). And I tell you, if I say it’s easy, it’s an understatement”.

**P 5:** “Challenges, lots of challenges! Challenges of having numerous roles, being a mother, being

a wife, being an academic, a colleague to my colleagues”.

Academic and managerial work-loads was a common precipitating factor that ultimately led to a strain between managing career development and aspirations in relation to managing personal and familial commitments. The various suggestions offered in terms of balancing such roles, are discussed in terms of the strategies employed by the research participants, which is as follows.

#### **5.6. Proposed Strategies:**

There emerged a common theme that academic and managerial life within (T.I.1) was a ‘battle to be fought and won’. The strategies adopted enabled a sense of coping and survival. These are varied and range from the constant acquisition of knowledge as a power base, to specific mapping of career advancement through a system of discipline, boundaries and goal orientated behaviour. Also included are the development of networks and a resource base, to the management of familial and career needs. These strategies are embodied within the political climate of Tertiary Institution One (T.I.1) and takes into consideration the interplay of contextual variables that have emerged through the participants various accounts (to mention a few, racism, gender discrimination, lack of support, lack of mentors, coaching, role models, the lingering legacy of apartheid, familial challenges etc). The following sentiments expressed by academics and managers within this institution bears reference:

### 5.6.1. *The Proactive challenge:*

Both academics and managers within the research study, have expressed through their various accounts, the need to be proactive, to develop a ‘fighting spirit’, to develop a sense of ‘resilience’ and to develop an entrepreneur spirit turning barriers/challenges into opportunities. There was a common identification across the transcripts to ‘believe in one self’ in light of the present institutional (T.I.1) climate. These are reflected in the participants sentiments and in some of their final messages imparted to women:

**P 1:** “Don’t get into a situation of comfort...make a difference (high intonation). It is important to adopt a stance and to strategise if you want to survive in this country. Not to stagnate. I was very ambitious, I wanted to make a difference and adopt a stance for what I believed in”.

**P 2:** “And it would be interesting to know that despite the merger, you have to be strong, to have this inner strength, be ready to confront the barriers because the barriers present themselves in...human form. So you will have to deal with them, they are there! It’s as if we are living in the 1860’s! So you have to understand that it’s the challenge, the critical challenge is...attitudinal, it’s dealing with the attitude and stereotypes”.

**P 2:** “Yes, believe in yourself. Never retreat when faced with difficulties. Never allow people to create negative evaluations because you are African or a Black woman. There’s nothing wrong with being Black or being African or Indian descent. There is nothing wrong! I always say to people, I don’t have a scientific explanation; I always say God was decorating his...world. That’s all...so believe in yourself! ”

**P 2:** “That’s what it takes. I think it takes resilience! And it takes a certain mind frame...(pause)

mind frame to fight barriers! You must not allow them to be toxin in your system. You must understand them! This is me! I believe in understanding barriers put in front of me, but I don't internalise them, to allow them to suppress me and to be toxin! I deal with them...(pause) in a constructive way. They are not going to pull me down. And I finished my degree, I came back and I joined this university (T.I.I.)!"

**P 3:** "Believe in oneself and believe in one's capacity..."

**P 3:** "...Resilience, I got it from my mother, even though we were at two different poles".

**P 3:** "I do believe in an institution like this (T.I.I) there were more obstacles than opportunities. Really, in terms of ...as I've said, I think that the opportunities that were out there, I think a lot of it were the things that I pursued and created. And one had to prove one's worth in a place like this".

**P 4:** "So, it's a question of looking at what is available and how you perceive what is available and the question of turning around what is available into opportunities".

**P 4:** " Well, I think it's a question of being aware that there are challenges and acknowledging challenges but be reactive in the sense that if you look at what's a challenge or an obstacle! ...Equipping you to be aware that it's necessary because the system seems to be unfortunate, there you have to be pro-active! You have to be not reactive but pro-active".

**P 5:** "I'm motivated by self-actualisation. Self-actualisation, through mastering all of these difficult issues!"

**P 5:** "But again it's about mastering your own self, your own emotions! Mastering the small little issues! Knowing what to say and when to say it and how to say it!"

5.6.2. *Power is Knowledge*: Through their various accounts, both academics and managers within (T.I.I) have expressed a consistent theme of power through the acquisition of knowledge. The shared identification of the importance of knowledge and in this instance, empowerments are as follows in their final messages to women.

**P 1**: “They should build into their lives opportunities for learning constantly!”

**P 1**: “You know, in order to strategise in your life takes a lot of discipline. Knowledge changes the quality of your life, knowledge is very powerful, it gives energy to your life...”

**P 1**: “My challenge to them is ‘whoever you are...you always have to be in a state of learning...(pause) formally or informally! The more you achieve the mre you should learn something new all he time!”

**P 2**: “So I had learn quickly a lot of things, learn quickly, learn again! You have to continually fight fiercely to protect your dignity, all the time! It’s an ongoing war, all the time you have to do that. You’ve got to perform and you’ve got to learn...you develop a repertoire of techniques to learn what you are supposed to do, because it’s not going to come to you voluntarily. So that’s...(pause) been it!”

**P 3**: “I think everything I got in a way is what I worked extremely hard for. You know and put in a lot of effort and energy...”

**P 3**: “I have been the most productive person in terms of research and publications and things like that”.

**P 4:** “No...no...no. I’ve never stopped studying in my life, I’m a student and I hope to be for my entire life”.

In response to its importance, participant 4 responded:

**P 4:** “It’s developmental of course because things tend to change over time. Whatever I’ve studied...(pause) I’ve studied management, law, catering,you know when I look back and look at all the kind of studies that I’ve done you know they kind of form a continuum. Unless one exposes oneself to a variety of data that is out there, be it hard data or electronic data, or whatever kind of data, one never grows, you know, one never makes full sense or rather good sense of the life that one is exposed to”.

*5.6.3. Goal directed Behaviour:* All five participants have emphasized through their stories the collective importance of goal directed behaviour, the importance of strategically planning in terms of their career development and related behaviour. Their accounts highlight the dynamics of discipline, hard work and dedication, vision and boundaries, which are as follows:

**P 1:** “They should build into their lives opportunities for learning constantly!...

So there’ll be a training period, then there’ll be going into a career ...(pause) right and then they get ready for a more focused career...(pause), right whatever that may be...(pause) medicine, law etc”.

**P 2:** “So...(pause) it’s about a lot of things, and of course I think along the way you need to self-reflect...(pause). Take time and engage with the I, me and the self. From time to time you need

to do that, not only for your personal life but also for your professional life so that you can ...”

**P 3:** “I believe in hard work, sheer dedicated hard work. There are no short-cuts, absolutely no short cuts”.

**P 4:** “My last message to women, in particular Black women in academia is exactly what I said earlier. In terms of mapping your own career and kind of having time plans for everything! You know, something like ...(pause) this is what you want to achieve by when and how...and walk towards that!”

**P 4:** “I don’t know whether this has to do with personalities as well but I’m a person who doesn’t think twice in terms of grabbing onto opportunities”.

**P 5:** “So it’s not easy, it takes a lot of discipline, discipline, discipline! I mean if I talk to you I’ve got to give you thirty minutes of my time, I can’t talk to you and be on the phone. I’ve got to give attention to everything thing that I do and that means boundaries. I cannot over emphasise that, the fact that you’ve got to set boundaries!”

**P 5:** “So, maybe in closing I can just say that being a woman and trying to live your life is my biggest motivation. You know what the purpose is and if you keep examining that question and don’t get easily distracted”.

**P 5:** “But that’s the challenge we face and if we want to move ahead as women and if we want to be taken seriously we just have to take that stride. We have to face that challenge! We have to work harder!”

5.6.4. *Networking*: Participant 2 and 4 identified ‘networking’ within and external to Tertiary Institution One (T.I.1) as a facilitating factor in terms of academic and career related behaviour.

The shared representations are as follows:

**P 2**: “So we had those linkages, one of those universities was the University of (name of university) which had made a commitment that they would be prepared to take on workers who wanted to pursue their studies”.

**P 4**: “So having said that, these are the things that one has to talk about, what can you as a person who has networks, who has resources you know, how can we use the resources that you have, that are not formal resources turn them around as opportunities that can help students”.

**P 4**: “And you have to plan, have programmes in place and have networks (high intonation), it doesn’t have to be in the system”.

5.6.5. *Achieving a balance between familial and career related needs*: achieving a balance between familial and career related needs proved to be a difficult task for most participants. Sentiment expressed by participant 5 and participant 1, in their final messages, offers some insight into the management and balance between family and career. These are as follows:

**P 5**: “So what you have to do is to be a great communicator with them...”

**P 5**: “So I think it’s a question of understanding that you have to take time to manage your personal life!”

**P 5**: “If you can’t control your personal life, if you’re not in control your personal life, you will

never survive here! As a woman, I think anywhere, not just as an academic”.

**P 1:** “There must be happiness, balancing work, family and social life. Take into account the reality of the situation; we are a product of the various compartments. And a compartmentalisation of one’s life is a...(pause) the reality you know! If you only go career, career, career and nothing else you can end up feeling very lonely. Money is not the only satisfaction”.

**P 1:** “So my ...(slight pause) my views on that is we must acknowledge (high intonation) that for society to exist we need to have stable families. There must be opportunities in the work place that has crèches, sites to do homework for children. We must allow flexi-time and not grudge these as nuisance values and excuses for children. But I think seriously, we need to think about that”.

Given the limitations of the mini dissertation, it is not possible to fully capture the colourful and dynamic interaction of the total interview. For an in-depth capture and further reading, refer to interviews within appendices of the present study. Chapter 6 follows through with the discussion and interpretation of results.

## Chapter 6

### DISCUSSION

The research project in question, set out to investigate the opportunities and challenges facing women managers, academics and executives. Significantly, the research findings produced more challenges and barriers as compared to the initial task set out to achieve, i.e. to examine the opportunities experienced by the research participants themselves. Although these findings may appear somewhat 'ordinary', it offers insight and depth in terms of its contextual significance to the career development of women in the institution studied. The findings of the present study are commensurate with the Lyness and Thompson's (2000) study supporting that research documenting barriers to women's career advancement far outweighs opportunities and facilitators of women's advancement. Hence, despite the demise of the apartheid era, South Africa's gradual transition to democracy and the progressive legislation in favour of women, the findings of this recent study (2005) still demonstrates similarities to previous South African studies conducted (Cassimjee, 2003; Holland, 2001; De La Rey, 1999) with regard to the career development of Black South African women academics and managers within the tertiary environment.

For the benefit of this discussion, the three opportunities, as identified by the research participants will be mentioned briefly. The opportunities cited by the research participants within Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1.) are as follows:

Participant 1 favoured the flexibility of academic life in terms of the opportunity offered to balance dual roles of family and career. This is embodied in the following sentiments:

**P 1:** “It was. Also because I was in academia so...(pause) you have that flexibility (high intonation). You have that kind of flexibility which you’ll never have if you’re an accountant working for a big firm”.

Participant 3 favoured the presence of research and development within the institutional culture of Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1) refreshing as compared to Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2). This is reflective in the following sentiment:

**P 3:** “I think the other difference is...(pause) is that at (T. I.2) there wasn’t so much a culture of research and publications, it was here (T.I.1). So when I entered here (T.I.1) you know I began to appreciate the value of research as compared to when I was at (T.I.2)”.

Participant 4 expressed that opportunities did exist within tertiary institutions and was more a question of ‘grabbing’ onto and making the best of these ‘opportunities’. Participant 4 also found the financial support offered by (T.I.1) supportive. These accounts are as follows:

**P 4:** “So, it’s a question of looking at what is available and how you perceive what is available and the question of turning around what is available into opportunities. You know looking at battles as opportunities...”

It’s a question of just looking at where are opportunities and make those opportunities work for you!”

**P 4:** “Financial support. I don’t want to say major or minor, but its resources. I mean getting a thousand rands as compared to getting nothing, I regard that as support. I got this from this university (T.I.1) when I was working and studying full-time”.

Upon reflection of the research analysis, the complex dynamics affecting the opportunities of women managers, academics and executives were numerous. These presented as contextual challenges within academia itself, which are as follows. The lack of institutional support was found to be the most common factor amongst all 5 participants in terms of their career development and career mobility within Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1). Challenges cited by participants included a lack of managerial support, lack of organizational support, lack of emancipatory culture within academia, lack of gender sensitivity, lack of transparency on the part of management regarding decision making and committees sittings. The findings of the present study are commensurate with the findings of Cassimjee's (2003) study reflecting commonality with the lack of organisational support, gender oppression, and lack of career development opportunities.

The lack of organisational support in terms of an absence of role models, mentors and coaching was cited by all 5 participants as a very stressful factor. Particularly upon new entry into academia, there was a collective sense of 'being lost and without direction'. The results from this study suggest (varying degrees), that most women academics, managers and executives perceived the structure of academia as unsupportive and stressful.

Racism within the institution (T.I.1) was revealed as a distinguishing marker along with gender discrimination by all 5 participants within the study. The following disclosures by the participants bear reference to the permeation of racism and gender discrimination within their career trajectory:

**P 1:** “You know, as an Indian, as a Black woman, I could only sell my labour at one institution!”

**P 2:** “I noticed that I was actually carrying the highest teaching load and I said to myself...this is not something I will challenge as an individual and remember those days I was the only Black lecturer in the department. To me these were some of the barriers...(pause) the barriers that you cannot touch...(pause) that were beginning to unfold! That ...now (forcefulness) this is a barrier that will make life difficult for you in the institution! It’s faceless you can attach faces if you want! But it’s an in-built thing...an in-built barrier which life difficult for Black people entering academia!”

**P 3:** “It’s odd enough I became aware of race and gender bias at this university”

**P 3:** “I just wrote a paper in which I say ‘race is race, everything at the same time is race’.

Especially in my professional life (high intonation) almost everything revolves around race and gender. They don’t consciously (high intonation) do it, but its part of one’s psyche. It’s an archetype, you know, anything that’s White is better than Black”

**P 3:** “We are academics, most people, especially given the South African context, from a political point of view, a lot of them write about it. Right, they (high intonation) write about it, they study other people’s lives (high intonation) in relation to race and gender. And yet you dare not introduce the debate (high intonation) at the university (T.I.1). It’s just it’s a ...How can you acknowledge its importance in other people’s life but don’t practice it? (high intonation)”.

**P 4:** “Sometimes this kind of thing happens were as a woman of course and as a Black person as well, running the department. You get people organizing or seeking approval of something that

should be happening in the department or is to happen in the department...but not going straight to you but via somebody else! Which is kind of like, I don't know, I haven't been wanting to read too much into it but its irritating and upsetting but anyway my wanting not to dwell too much into it (high intonation) because I don't want it to control me in terms of thinking that these people are marginalizing me".

**P 5:** "Why is it that we are not being transformed and the favourite defense statement is that 'African people are being snatched, they won't stay here and earn academic salaries'! That is nonsense!"

**P 5:** "I mean it took me three years of slaving (high intonation) for people to take me seriously and to say...perhaps to say that I 'm worth my salt".

The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of the De La Rey's (1999) study in terms of the significant contextual commonalities i.e. the legacy of the apartheid era, the marginalisation of women due to racial and gender oppression as a common significant factor, effecting both the career development and behaviour of women academics and managers. Conversely to De La Rey's study (1999), participants within the present study were able to reflect through their testimonies a sense of agency, and despite contextual obstacles, were able to advance beyond challenges to successfully meet career objectives.

This prevailing construct of gender biasness was found to be pervasive and consistent within the accounts of the participants stories, often intersecting in their positioning as women, Black women and women of colour within their career trajectory. This was evidenced by the presence of prevailing social norms that defined the participants within conventional scripts, with women

holding more junior positions or remaining in them longer, as compared to their male counterparts. According to Pillay (1985) this situation is known as the 'Triple Oppression' of women as (1) workers, as (2) Black people, as (3) dominated by a patriarchal society. Thus lending support to the concept of 'Triple Oppression' Pundy Pillay (1985:1) who claimed, "Black women have to endure a double burden in that they tend to be discriminated against both because they are women and because they are Black". Following are some of the sentiments offered by the participants in respect of the gender discrimination within the institution of study:

**P 1:** "...Because it's a very male dominated management style and focus! They're not used to...(slight pause) they define....they define the dignity of their own lifestyles!"

**P 2:** "It also takes time to develop relations because the fact that you, one is a Black woman is enough to put you in the category of incompetence. You don't have to say anything; you just fit the stereotype in most cases".

**P 3:** "That women...(pause) of my colour, okay, works ten times harder is an understatement, forty or fifty times harder than my male counterparts to achieve the same type of recognition. Even then I think, it's hard to be acknowledged, even though we have all the overt, you know what scientists would call the empirical evidence that we'd excelled (high intonation)... White males that have far less than I have have been a lot more acknowledged and rewarded! I think, you know, the colonial mentality still prevails...very largely so. We still live in, what Fannin called the imperial gaze of the White man".

**P 4:** “Ja, there’s always been. Where there’s a man there’s a challenge of course! Like I mentioned earlier on, there’s always been obstacles that are very much gendered I must say!”

**P 5:** “Hence, if you look at research activities, it’s actually largely White men! And if it’s not White men, it will be men of other races! And if you look at who head that, it will be men again! For me that is very problematic!”

Given the participants status both as women and as Black women within the present study, most of the participants felt that they had to work twice as hard, in order to gain recognition and respect from their male counterparts. The general lack of respect and recognition for work completed and the need to work ‘three times harder’ (participant 5) to ‘forty to fifty times harder’ (participant 3) in order to achieve the same type of recognition are consistent with the findings of two previous South African studies (Cassimjee, 2003; Wood, 1993). Similar to the present study, participants within Wood’s (1993) study felt that whereas men were automatically entitled to respect and recognition, participants felt they had to earn it.

The findings of the present study are commensurate with the findings of the Lyness and Thompson’s (2000) study, as well in terms of the organizational bias in favour of the dominant group (men). Whilst the Lyness and Thompson (2000) study discovered that organizational processes tended to favour and preserve power for the dominant group (men) in terms of developmental assignments, within the present study organizational biasness in favour of the dominant group (men) centered on research activities, seniority positions held within management, heads of schools, faculties, committees and departments. These findings are

consistent with the earlier views purported by De La Rey (1999) highlighting the existence of a gender gap at the level of higher education of women in South Africa and commensurate with the international trend, viz. the relation between status, monetary rewards and the absence of women in organizations.

The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Cassimjee's (2003) study in terms of the participants struggle to 'prove' themselves capable of leadership positions held (academically and managerial), resistance from male colleagues, lack of career development opportunities and lack of organizational support. The presence of a rigid male culture within the organization, as indicated within the present study is consistent with the barriers identified by the South African Journal of Labour Relations (as cited in Cassimjee, 2003). Moreover the findings of this study lends support and commonality with the sentiments echoed by Nicolson (1996:137) (1999:137) "that women remain marginal to the grand narrative of career success and organisational power" due to patriarchal power relations within professional organisations.

The legacy of apartheid remained a pervasive theme for most of the women academics and managers interviewed within the institution studied. From the analysis, it is evident that the impact of the apartheid legacy played a significant shaping factor not only in the construction of the participants career development but in their own understanding regarding their individuality and relation to the world around them. Their experiences have given visibility to the impact of the political context within their personal lives, academic lives and career trajectory. Driven by the legacy of the apartheid era, most of the participants within the study reported the adoption of positive self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, through their observations and

acknowledgement of significant people whom had ‘fought within and for the struggle’.

Following are some of the important sentiments offered by the participants in relation to the legacy of apartheid upon their career trajectories.

**P 1:** “I was full of bright ideas but it was difficult to exercise them due to racism...(high intonation)”.

**P 2:** “I took that as a barrier, not only did I take it as a barrier...(pause) usually my mantra and my philosophy is any adversity that is presented to me, I don’t retreat. I turn it around and see what the opportunity is. I don’t retreat! It’s not in my nature. So by nature I don’t retreat and I think it also comes from the family where I come from and the tradition I just outlined to you earlier on”.

**P 2:** “There is no reason to add toxin in our lives, the system added enough toxin in the country so we can’t afford more”.

**P 3:** “Maybe it’s from an apartheid past which I’m acutely (high intonation) aware of as well. In terms of every law and legislation that implied I was inferior. So I think basically it contributed to a sense of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self. Paradoxically, what it’s also done is produced in me...(pause) that I can be equal and better...”

Although I think despite all the effort to prove oneself as equal to Whites, right, in an institution like this (T.I.1) it did not work”.

**P 4:** “Of course, we look at systems, its systems that are there (high intonation) that prevent

people from performing or from participating, resulting in them being excluded. And the systems that we've had and still have are systems that have the legacy of apartheid or systems that were apartheid in nature legislated (high intonation) of course, as you know".

**P 5:** "Now when I went to university I realised that and I tell my African students the same thing....you can't behave the same way as your counterparts, you've got to work three times harder because you will be judged. Not on the fact that you've passed your test, you have to prove that you are worth that particular position that they are trying to recruit you into".

**P 5:** "...This freedom, I feel it's irresponsible of us not to do something about it. Because our brothers have died for it, kids have died for this freedom; our fathers have died for this freedom (high intonation). (Name of person) was locked for twenty years for this freedom! And if as women, we take the easy route because it's easier not to face leadership and to move on forward, if we take the easy route we are not honouring the very people that gave us the freedom, and that's what drives me!"

Despite the merging of Tertiary Institution 1 and Tertiary Institution 2 in 2004, the organizational culture appears to have been unsuccessful in addressing and meeting the legitimate academic and career needs of Black women within the institution of study. From the various accounts of the participants it appears that the organizational culture of both the historically advantaged and disadvantaged appears to be deeply entrenched. This perhaps calls for urgent attention a carefully thought through strategy in order to be able to readdress and meet such individual needs. Whilst the merger has aimed to redress amongst others the historical imbalances created by the legacy of apartheid in higher education institutions, improve financial

sustainability and reduce fragmentation, the attempt to create improved and equal opportunities for all appears ineffective. These needs appear evident within the unfolding of the various participants accounts and subjective experiences within the institution of study.

However, despite the emergence of the numerous difficulties and challenges commonly shared by women academics and managers within the study, this study is in many ways a reflection of the participants resiliency and adaptability. Women in this study have changed and shifted, as their life circumstances have, and have made deliberate choices regarding their career progression. The general conclusion of this study indicates that women's career advancement to leadership and senior positions (academic/managerial) are a complex yet dynamic combination of a number of factors. Including these factors is empowerment by way of the constant acquisition of knowledge, deliberate mapping of career advancement through a system of discipline, boundaries and goal orientated behaviour, networking, strategizing, positioning and management of familial and career needs.

Given that a woman's career pattern is often interrupted by child birth, family priorities and other related demands, flexibility and support within the work environment becomes an essential and core ingredient. According to Blocher (2000: 217), "one of the basic propositions on which developmental counseling is based is the view that human effectiveness and resulting life satisfactions are products of the successful implementation of the variety of social roles that provide structure and substance to every individual". Capturing the words of Blocher (2000) that this is an impossible task for most women in today's society, we are able to reflect from the analyses the reality of the participants world in terms of the stresses experienced of meeting and

managing such challenges. The participants within the study experienced higher overall levels of stress in their jobs as a result of the multiple roles played as academics, managers, women, wives and mothers. Overall stress experienced was often exacerbated by the lack of organisational support within the workplace. Participant 1 challenged the need for societal acknowledgement regarding the lack of favourable opportunity within the workplace and suggested the creation of opportunities to accommodate sites such as crèches, sites for completion of homework, flexi-time within the work place. Participant 1 indicated the need for happiness, balancing work, family and social life. Participant 2 acknowledged that her status as a single mother was aggravated by the lack of time, work related and family related commitments. Participant 3 verbalised the stress experienced in terms of managing the competing needs between career and family and through her own admission, reported a neglect of familial needs aggravated by the demands of work and career. Participant 4 disclosed that the challenges associated with women having numerous identities as a stressful factor upon career and family. In sum, participant 5 captured the challenges posed in terms of managing career and familial needs as “the second most difficult thing right after achieving world peace”. These findings lend further support to previous South African studies (Cassimjee, 2003; Holland, 2001; De La Rey, 1999; Wood, 1993) in the direction of the stress associated with managing familial and career needs and the lack of organizational support.

Accordingly Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) advocates that humans can make things happen by their own actions due to their proactive engagement in their own development. However, Kerka (1998:2) purports “for women and people of colour, barriers such as discrimination or bias may determine outcomes independent of behaviour”. She advocates in this

regard that self-efficacy beliefs may be undermined by racial or sex-role stereotypes. In support Bandura (1986) reports that cultural sex-typing through socialisation practices and gender-role labeling not only limits career interests and development but effects utilization of capabilities as well. Accordingly, whilst disempowering conditions of limited power, deprivation and discontent can produce hopelessness and aggression, Bandura (1986:304) states that “it is the more efficacious members who remain perseverant in the face of challenges, who believe themselves still capable by individual and collective action”. He suggests that people engage in deliberate cognitive reflection, effecting choices that exert influences over alternatives available to them, consequences of action and appraisals of activities (Bandura, 1986). In this sense, Bandura (1986:39) maintains that “Psychological analyses of the mechanisms of personal agency show how people can contribute to the attainment of deserved futures by regulating their own behaviour”.

Participants within the study were able to rise above challenges successfully through the skilful mastery of the environment, resiliency and agency. This core ability of the women studied, i.e. their persistence, tendency to seek independence and autonomy, to exert power and influence over others, to master the environment despite challenges and obstacles, can be readily attributed to their high inner drive of ‘self-efficacy’. Despite societal and institutional limitations, Bandura (1986) views the continued presence of persistence efforts and achievements in a non-supportive environment attributable to a high sense of personal efficacy. In this sense, the participants within the study have proven through the various accounts, “resiliency” of perceived efficacy, which according to Bandura (1986:435) is responsible for the “staying power” of individuals under challenging conditions and a pre-requisite for self-regulatory capabilities

required for the development and attainment for self-direction, personal resources, freedom of action and the fostering valued outcomes. Their behaviours and associated outcomes, not only challenges the patriarchal lie that women remain inferior but also takes ownership of the concept of 'agency' which traditionally has been advocated by Blocher (2000) as a primarily masculine trait. A closer examination of the participants sense of resiliency and perceived self-efficacy is embodied in the following sentiments:

**P 1:** "Don't get into a situation of comfort...make a difference (high intonation)".

**P 2:** "You have to be strong, to have this inner strength, be ready to confront the barriers because they present themselves in human form...So you have to understand that it's the challenge, the critical challenge is ...attitudinal, it's dealing with attitudes and stereotypes".

**P 2:** "Yes, believe in yourself. Never retreat when faced with difficulties. Never allow people to create negative evaluations because you are African or a Black woman".

**P 2:** "That's what it takes. I think it takes resiliency! And it takes a certain mind frame...(pause) mind frame to fight barriers! You must not allow them to be toxin in your system. You must understand them! This is me! I believe in understanding barriers put in front of me, but I don't internalize them, to allow them to suppress me and to be toxin! I deal with them...(pause) in a constructive way".

**P 3:** "Believe in oneself and in one's capacity...".

**P 4:** "So, it's a question of looking at what is available and how you perceive what is available

and the question of turning around what is available into opportunities”.

**P 5:** “I’m motivated by self-actualization. Self actualization by mastering all of these difficult issues!”

The above excerpts give visibility to the participants sense of resiliency, proactive stance adopted, the common identification to believe in oneself despite obstacles and the development of an entrepreneur spirit, turning barriers and challenges into opportunities. The above accounts reflect the importance of self-efficacy beliefs and their impact on all aspects of the participants lives, i.e. their level of motivation, their vulnerability to stress and depression, the choices made, their ability to strive and overcome challenges despite societal and institutional oppression. In this regard, self-efficacy beliefs remains a critical point of self-regulation within the participants lives, driving the potential for self-directed changes in behaviour (mastery experiences; level of resilience; sense of agency) and thus leading to positive evaluations of one self (positive self-efficacy; positive self-esteem, positive self-concept and values) and impacting positively on personal change. The findings of the study provide theoretical support for Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) confirming personal efficacy beliefs as a vital ingredient of human agency (Bandura and Locke, 2003). The emerging sense of resiliency amongst the participants closely supports the self-regulating behaviour advocated by Bandura (2001 as cited in Bandura and Locke, 2003:87), adding that “individuals possess amongst other factors, self-beliefs that enable them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings and actions, hence effecting how they behave in turn”.

To gain further insight into the participants sense of control and survival within the institution of study (T.I.1), a closer inspection of their enabling strategies are necessary. Despite the common theme that academic and managerial life within Tertiary Institution One (T.I.1) was ‘a battle to be fought and won’ the participants adopted various strategies that ranged from the constant acquisition of knowledge as a power base to specific mapping of career advancement through a system of discipline, boundaries and goal orientated behaviour in order to manage career development and mobility.

For participant 1, knowledge was perceived as a means of empowerment to enable a sense of survival within a patriarchal and racially divided society and institution. These are as follows:

**P 1:** “You know, in order to strategise in your life takes a lot of discipline. Knowledge changes the quality of life, knowledge is very powerful, it gives energy to life. It is important to adopt a stance and to strategise if you want to survive in this country. Not to stagnate. I was very ambitious, I wanted to make a difference and adopt a stance for what I believed in”.

Participant 2 stressed the need to learn, understand and constantly acquire certain competencies vital towards her career advancement. Participant 2 embraced the following strategy:

**P 2:** “So I had to learn quickly a lot of things, learn quickly, learn again! You have to continuously fight fiercely to protect your dignity; all the time! It’s an ongoing war, all the time; you’ve got to do that! You’ve got to perform and you’ve got to learn...you develop a repertoire of techniques to learn what you are supposed to do, because it’s not going to come to you voluntarily. So that’s ...been it!”.

Participant 3 utilised the concept of resiliency as a means of coping within an unsupportive institution and politically charged climate within South Africa. Participant 3 embraced the idea of sheer hard work, dedication and belief in oneself. These are as follows:

**P 3:** "...You know sometimes I actually wonder, quite honestly given all the obstacles...(pause) that I've had to endure and experienced 'How I've actually come so far'. Given all the obstacles, I've had to work extremely hard to get what I want, 'resilience'...I got it from my mother, even though we were at two different poles. I am assertive and directive, too assertive, so much so, that it can be threatening...(pause)".

Participant 4 embraced the idea of studying, following through with one's passion in life, making a contribution and mapping out visions strategically. These are as follows:

**P 4:** "But it's a question of combining passion with a personal ...(pause) programme and looking ahead at a vision! You know kind of being on a mission to realize the vision but also using the passion and the history that you have and any role models that are available to you...(pause) as a kind of context to realize your vision!...Kind of making your own mark!"

Participant 5 referred to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with reference to self-actualisation as an enabling strategy to cope in the face of difficulties and challenges. These are as follows:

**P 5:** "We want to be able to express (high intonation) who we are...(pause) not to be defined on the basis of what your husband does or be in the shadow of your husband. I think we are motivated by the same things that motivate men. If you look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the greatest motivator is self-actualisation. I'm motivated by self-actualisation. Self-actualisation through mastery of all these difficult issues! (high intonation)".

Within the current study, the intersecting of personal factors (self-efficacy), agentic behaviours and contextual variables visibly confirms that the participants themselves were able to exercise purposive and proactive self-regulating behaviours and therefore not remain, as helpless victims of their environment (Stead and Watson, 1999). The current study lends support for the concept of 'Triadic Reciprocity' in which Bandura (1986:39) advocates that "behaviour is determined by a multi-authored influence" encompassing numerous other influences within the environment including the social, institutional and physical variables.

Despite the unsupportive and oppressive academic environment the research participants appear to have shared a common 'mastery experience' through their personal accomplishments of success within the institution of study (T.I.1). What appears visibly evident within the unfolding of their accounts, are the participants high self-efficacy beliefs, accompanied by their specific goal directed behaviours that have enabled them to influence their own career development and control over their career path, thus concluding personal successes over their career trajectory. Despite inhibiting contextual variables (environmental and societal barriers), the element of personal control (mastery experience) over their own career path (varying degrees) remained strong and did not weaken under the pressures of both institutional and societal challenges. This lends support in the direction of self-efficacy expectations that appears to have been acquired through personal performance (accomplishments) and personal success (mastery experience over the environment) by the participants within the study, thus confirming the acquisition of self-efficacy beliefs as a result of the direct experiences of success amongst the participants within the current study (Bandura, 1995, 1997).

However, one of the SCCT propositions that were not supported by the data from this sample was the role of vicarious learning and physiological arousal as a means of creating self-efficacy expectations. Despite institutional and societal barriers (patriarchy, racism, lack of organizational support within T.I.1, the legacy of apartheid) vicarious learning through the observation of others failures did not inhibit participants in their acquisition of self-efficacy beliefs and mastery over career development. Significantly, within the context of the apartheid legacy and the lingering sense of racism and sexism experienced within (T.I.1), vicarious learning acquired through the observations of other's failures served as a facilitating factor towards the strengthening of self-efficacy beliefs rather than defeating self-regulatory behaviours of the participants. Of importance, most of the participants, through their accounts revealed high levels of mastery and motivation, 'purposeful and empowering behaviour' driven through the observations of significant people and role models whom had fought 'within and for the struggle' of the apartheid era. In keeping with such enactments, Bandura (1986) reports that model similarity and commonality in observed outcomes not only fosters motivation but perseverance as well. Accordingly, efficacious observers holding common collective incentives and values to that of role models enhances perseverance and greater effort at longer intervals, as the outcome expectation serves as positive incentives for action despite failures of others. Bandura (1986:449) refers to these unifying purposeful behaviors and beliefs as "perceived collective self-efficacy". Thus leading to the beliefs that sustained collective and concerted efforts will eliminate obstacles to produce collective unifying incentives for social change.

Their accounts further illustrate that verbal encouragement from family and significant others

also play an important positive role in cultivating their self-efficacy beliefs and have served to encourage and empower them rather than to weaken and defeat their beliefs. The participants accounts reveal that parental influences and support was a guiding and facilitating factor in their career development, through the internalization of parental role models and associated strengths and values derived from the parental relationship. Such findings are in keeping with Bandura's (1986) view, supporting the view that familial sources serve as a significant instrument in the development and growth self-efficacy. Further research in this area (Caldera, Robitschek, Frame & Pannell, 2003; Cassimjee, 2003; Guay, Senecal, Gauthier & Fernet, 2003; Flores & O'Brien, 2002) confirms that parental support is predictive of career aspiration, self-efficacy beliefs and autonomy of the individual.

Social Cognitive Career theory (SCCT) as a theoretical framework promotes the view of career choice as a process that flows from goals and activities that develop out of interest. Goals, in this respect are said to help people organize and guide their actions and behaviours. In turn, people develop interest in activities for which they have positive self-efficacy and outcome expectations. The participants stories lends support to the premise, that career related goals and activities are chosen in the field of interest and are influenced by self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. The coping mechanisms adopted by the participants themselves confirm the evidence of goal orientated behaviours and empowering strategies. Through their continuous endeavours, i.e. constant acquisition of knowledge as a power base, deliberate mapping of career advancement through a system of discipline, establishment of boundaries, goal orientated behaviours, networking and strategizing, allowed participants to gain further confidence and control over their environment, hence contributing to a mastery experience, confirmation of self-

efficacy beliefs and positive outcome expectations. The goals proposed within the participants accounts illustrate the acquisition of knowledge as a powerful instrument of mastery. Self-reflection (personally and professionally), self-regulatory adaptation and proactive responses (turning barriers/challenges into opportunities), hence affecting control within the institution and academia and affecting positive outcome and self-efficacy expectations within their career trajectory were cited as well.

Specific goal orientated responses of the participants within the study include the following:

Participant 1: "...However when women are considering re-entry into the work-place or career, they need career counseling more than any other time (high intonation). Women need career counseling if they are considering re-entry".

Participant 2: "Take time to engage with the I, me and the self. From time to time you need to do that, not only for your personal but also for your professional life".

Participant 3: "I believe in hard work, sheer dedicated hard work. There are no short-cuts, absolutely no short-cuts".

Participant 4: "In terms of mapping your own career and kind of having time plans for everything! You know something like ...(pause) this is what you want to achieve by when and how...and walk towards that!"

Participant 5: "So it's not easy, it takes a lot of discipline, discipline, discipline!... I've got to give attention to everything that I do and that means boundaries. I cannot over emphasise that, the fact that you've got to set boundaries!"

The above accounts bears evidence of Bandura's (1986) concept of personal agency in pursuit

of future goal attainment. According to Bandura (1986:39) “people direct their efforts toward valued goals by enlisting cognitive guides and self-incentives and by arranging environmental conditions conducive to goal attainment”. In order to account for the participants career success, despite institutional barriers (lack of support, racial/gender discrimination, lack of role models, coaching, mentors) and organizational obstacles (legacy of apartheid, patriarchal society, gender stereotypes) leaves little doubt that the participants within the study did achieve their leadership positions (academically and managerially) as a result of their positive self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn effected positive outcomes expectations, specific interests and goal orientated responses. In sum, I believe that the study in question lends support to the theoretical framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), confirming through the participants accounts support of the core belief that promotes the view ‘that one has the power to make things happen’ (Bandura, 1995, 1997).

Following are a capture of the participants accounts regarding proposed strategies that have served for them as empowering and facilitating factors within the development of their career trajectory and mobility.

- All participants recommended the adoption of a proactive stance.
- Most of the participants supported ‘constant acquisition of knowledge’ as a tool of empowerment (gaining a mastery experience) and control over their career trajectory.
- Most participants agreed upon the need to engage in goal directed behaviour as an important strategy towards their career aspirations.
- Some of the participants cited networking as a helpful strategy to further assist with transforming career challenges into career opportunities.

- Some of the participants proposed the need to strive toward achieving a balance between familial needs and career aspirations.

Chapter 7 follows with a summary of the study, conclusion and evaluation including methodological strengths and logistical weaknesses, concluding with recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 7

### OVERALL SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, EVALUATION OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1. Summary:

In sum, the results suggest compelling evidence in the direction of support towards SCCT and the fundamental principles of self-efficacy and personal efficacy beliefs as the most important mechanism for human agency (Bandura and Locke, 2003). Participants within the study were able to rise above challenges successfully through the skilful *mastery of the environment, resiliency and agency*. This core ability of the women studied, i.e. their persistence, tendency to seek independence and autonomy, to exert power and influence over others, to master the environment despite challenges and obstacles, can be readily attributed to their high inner drive of 'self-efficacy'. In this sense, the participants within the study have proved through the various accounts, their pervasive and consistent sense of agency and self-efficacy. The findings of the study provide theoretical support for SCCT confirming "personal efficacy beliefs as the most important mechanism of human agency" (Bandura and Locke, 2003: 87). Their behaviours and associated outcomes, not only challenges the patriarchal lie that women remain inferior but also takes ownership of the concept of 'agency' which traditionally has been advocated by Blocher (2000) as a primary masculine trait.

The emerging sense of resiliency amongst the participants closely supports the self-regulating behaviour advocated by Bandura (2001 as cited in Bandura and Locke, 2003: 87), adding that "individuals possess amongst other factors, self-beliefs that enable them to exercise a measure of

control over their thoughts, feelings and actions, hence effecting how they behave in turn”. Furthermore, in this regard, self-efficacy beliefs remains a critical point of self regulation within the participants lives, driving the potential for self-directed changes in behaviour (mastery experiences; level of resilience; sense of agency) and thus leading to positive evaluations of one-self (positive self-efficacy; positive self-esteem, positive self-concept and values) and impacting positively on personal change.

In support to SCCT, acquisition of self-efficacy expectations within the participants lives and career trajectory within this study appear as a result of mastery experiences via their direct personal performance accomplishments (successful experiences within the institution of study T.I.1.); paradoxically through vicarious learning acquired through the observations of others successes ‘within the struggle and those who fought for the struggle’ during the apartheid era, by verbal and social encouragement from family and significant others (parental role models, parental influences and support ) that acted as a guiding and facilitating factor within their career trajectory. Contrary to remaining as victims of their environmental limitations any physiological arousal or heightened anxieties experienced as a result of institutional or societal barriers (racism gender discrimination, lack of institutional support in terms of familial needs, lack of mentorship, legacy of apartheid) served as a facilitating rather than as a debilitating factor toward the development of self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, further career interests and goal directed behaviour.

## 7.2. Conclusion:

In conclusion, I believe the evidence from the research findings are consistent in illustrating that positive self-efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to positive behavioural functioning of individuals over time, facilitating perseverance, determination and staying power in the face of challenging careers. In accordance with this study, self-efficacy beliefs have contributed significantly to the shaping, developing and achievements of career aspirations and level of mastery experience of participants within the academic environment. Moreover, evidence highlights the crucial role of self-efficacy beliefs in perpetuating decisional making, maintaining interest and engaging in goal directive behaviours.

Furthermore the mastery experiences accomplished by the participants within the study via, personal accomplishments (direct experiences of success), vicarious learning acquired through observations of others failures or successes (pre-apartheid and post-apartheid), familial influences mediated through social and verbal persuasion (role modeling; parental support) are shown to have had a positive impact upon self-efficacy and career aspirations, hence ratifying Bandura's (2001, as cited in Bandura & Locke, 2003:97) view of people from an agentic perspective, supporting that "people form intentions that include plans and strategies for realizing them, and in this respect, agents are not only planners and fore thinkers, they are self-regulators as well".

The participants stories lends supports to this premise, that career related goals and activities are chosen in the field of interest and are influenced by self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Depending on the experiences (success or failure), self-efficacy and outcome

expectations are either strengthened or weakened. The coping mechanisms adopted by the participants themselves confirm the evidence of goal orientated behaviours and empowering strategies. Through their continuous endeavours, i.e. constant acquisition of knowledge as a power base, deliberate mapping of career advancement through a system of discipline, establishment of boundaries, goal orientated behaviours, networking and strategizing, allowed participants to gain further confidence and control over their environment, hence contributing to a mastery experience, confirmation of self-efficacy beliefs and positive outcome expectations.

As a concluding remark, I wish to add that women who challenge traditional sociopolitical career barriers should not doubt nor undervalue their femininity, intellectual capacity and competitiveness, but rather embrace it.

### **7.3. Evaluation**

#### *7.3.1. Methodological Strengths:*

Firstly, the strength of the study lies within the successful attempt of placing 'women' on the center stage, providing emphasis on the experiences of women, and thus fulfilling the aim of giving 'women a voice'.

Secondly, further strengths of the study includes the capturing of the participants strategies, in their quest for successful career advancement that might help other women reach this level and beyond.

Thirdly, the strengths of the study is embodied by the positive documentation of the enabling

strategies, as outlined by various participants. These benefits are threefold, which are as follows:

- Being able to explore issues especially relevant to female academic and managerial staff members within academia.
- Women learning and being able to benefit from other women's examples.
- Lastly, being able to hear other points of view of women in executive managerial positions and academic positions.

### 7.3.2. *Logistical Weaknesses:*

The limitations of the study include firstly, the difficulty experienced within the process of the study, which was the issue of securing interviews with the potential pool of interviewees. Whilst the interviewees themselves appeared to be quite responsive to the study in question, the practical issue of securing an interview date was not an easy task. In certain instances, I was put on standby, more specifically, on a waiting list for a period of three months, prior to securing an interview with research participant. In other extremes, certain research participants (P 2, 5) could not afford to grant the research participant follow-up interviews due to time constraints and the very hectic academic and/or managerial schedules that demanded international and national work related commitments. This was reflective in their extreme work related demands and the resultant time constraints. However due to my patience and understanding, most of the participants (P 1, 3, 4) were interviewed twice, hence the quality of the data gathered from the interviews.

Secondly, due to the issue of confidentiality it was not possible to secure accurate statistical

percentages in terms of the exact number of Black women at the targeted campus occupying senior academic and managerial positions. Whilst an account outlining percentages in terms of race groups in senior academic positions has been documented, a further outline in terms of gender was not possible to obtain due to the many administrative problems encountered during the merger period. Despite efforts aimed at securing such information from the Equity office and Human Resources, the specific data requested was not unavailable. Such information, I believe, if it were available would have lent further insight into the statistical reality within the institution of study (T.I.1). However, the figures available provide some trends in the employment of Black women over the past few years at the targeted institution of study (T.I.1).

Thirdly, the study is limited in its relatively small sample size, however the qualitative nature of the study compensates relatively for the sample in relation to the quality and depth of participants responses and analyses.

Fourthly, the results of the study are generalisable to the targeted institution of study only. This proves to be a limitation in that the findings could not be generalized to other South African higher education institutions. This is, in part, due to the nature of the study and the demographic and historical profile of other institutions.

Finally, the study did not allow for the thorough interrogation of pre and post factors following the merger between the institutions adequately due to the narrow scope of the study. Due to this, the study is ineffective in identifying the exact origins of the challenges faced by the participants within the institution of study.

#### **7.4. Recommendations for further research:**

Research is encouraged with a larger sample size to replicate and expand this research, at longer intervals to strengthen the supposition of this study. Future research could also be extended to both males and females participants in an attempt to investigate possibly, gender differences. Future research with participants from 'previously male dominated professions' might prove fruitful in providing further insight and affirmation of the results obtained. Future comparative research regarding the origins of the challenges faced by the participants (pre and post merger factors) might also prove useful in an attempt to redress such disparities and creation of improved opportunities for Black women academics and managers within the institutions of study. Such a study might prove useful to academics and managers within higher education institutions.

## REFERENCES

- Badsha, N., & Kotecha, P. (1994). University Access: The Gender Factor, *Agenda*, 21, 47-53.
- Bannister, P., Burman, E., Parker, J., Taylor, M., & Tindall, C. (1995). *Qualitative methods in psychology: A research guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: W.H. Freeman & Company.
- Bandura, A., & Locke, E.A. (2003). Negative Self-Efficacy and Goals Revisited, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88 (1), 87-89.
- Barnes, P. (2005). *Politics of the mind and body: Gender and institutional culture in African universities*. Presented at the Saardhi Conference: African Universities in the Twenty First Century: 27-29<sup>th</sup> June, 2005. Retrieved on 18/11/2005 from:  
[www.interaction.nu.ac.za/saardhi\\_2005./full\\_papers.htm](http://www.interaction.nu.ac.za/saardhi_2005./full_papers.htm).
- Benjamin, S. (2001). Masculinisation of the State and Feminisation of the Poverty, *Agenda*, 48, 68-73.
- Black African Academic Forum. (2005). *Recruitment, Retention, Upward Mobility, and Research and Scholarship Development of African Academics at UKZN*. University of KwaZulu-Natal.

- Blocher, D. H. (2000). *Counseling: A developmental approach*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed). USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Brown, S.D., & Lent, R.W. (1992). (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Caldera, Y. M., Robitschek, C., Frame, M., & Pannell, M. (2003). Intrapersonal, Familial and Cultural Factors in the Commitment to a Career of Mexican American and Non-Hispanic White College Women, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50 (3), 309-323.
- Carli, L.L. (2001). Gender and Social Influence, *Journal of Social Issues*, 57 (4), 725-741.
- Cassimjee, K. (2003). *An investigation of Women in the Workplace: How do women perceive themselves in this male dominated world?* Prepared for the University of Natal Graduate School of Business: In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.
- Collins, A., & Young, R.A. (2000). *The future of career*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- De La Rey, C.M. (1999). *Career Narratives of Women professors in South Africa*. Prepared for the University of Cape Town, Department of psychology: In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
- Flores, L.Y., & O' Brien, K.M. (2002). The Career Development of Mexican American Adolescent Women: A Test of Social Cognitive Career Theory, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 49 (1), 4-27.
- Greenspan, M. (1983). *A new approach to women and therapy*. USA: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Guay, F., Senecal, C., Gauthier, L., & Fernet, C. (2003). Predicting Career Indecision: A Self-

- Determination Theory Perspective, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50 (2), 165-177.
- Govender, P. (unknown). *The women's budget*.
- Grinnell, R.M. (1993). *Social Work Research and Evaluation*. USA: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.
- Holland, K. (2001). *A study to Identify Stressors Perceived by Health Science Lecturing Staff within A School at a South African University*. Prepared for the University of Natal, Department of Education: In partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree in Master of Education (Tertiary Education).
- Kerka, S. (1998). *Career development and gender, race and class*. Retrieved on 21/11/2005 from [www.ericadigests.org/1999-2/career.htm](http://www.ericadigests.org/1999-2/career.htm)
- Kerka, S. (2003). *Career development of diverse populations*. Retrieved on 04/05/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D., & Larkin, K.C. (1986). Self-Efficacy in the Prediction of Academic Performance and Perceived Career Options, *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 33 (3), 265-269.
- Lyness, K.S., & Thompson, D.E. (2000). Climbing the Corporate Ladder: Do female and male executives follow the same route, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85 (1), 86-107.
- Magojo, S. (2004). *Women and career planning: challenges ahead*. (unpublished papers) Department of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Makgoba, M. W. (2004). *One hundred days*. A report by the Interim Vice-Chancellor. University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Meyer, W.F., Moore, C., & Viljoen, H.G. (1997). *Personology: From Individual to Ecosystem*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Higher and Further Education (Pty) Ltd.

- Mpanza, E.D. (2001). *The effects of Globalisation on the Empowerment of Women in Middle Management*. Prepared for the University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business Administration: In partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration.
- Naicker, A. (1994). The Psycho-social context of career counseling in South African Schools, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 24 (1), 27-34.
- Nicolson, P. (1996). *Gender, power and organisation: A Psychological perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Owen, W.F. (1984). Interpretive themes in Relational communication, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 274-287. Retrieved on 17/10/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Pajares, F. (2002). *Overview of social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy*. Retrieved on 13/06/2007 from <http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/eff.html>
- Pillay, P. (1985). Women in employment in South Africa: Some important trends and issues, *Social Dynamics*, 11 (2), 20-37.
- Ramsay, E. (2000). *Women and leadership in higher education: Facing international challenges and maximising opportunities*. Retrieved on 17/10/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Raskin, P. (2000). *Career Development of Women*. Retrieved on 04/05/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Reber, A.S. (1985). *Dictionary of Psychology*. England: Penguin Group.
- Reinhartz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social work*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ross, W. (2007). *Self-actualisation and its role in personal development*. Retrieved on 07/01/2007 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

- Singh, J.K.S. (1999). *The status and role of women in positions of leadership in institutions of higher learning: A global overview*. Retrieved on 04/05/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Stead, G.B. (1996). Career Development of Black South African Adolescents: A Developmental-Contextual Perspective, *Journal of Counseling & Development*, (January/February) 74, 270-275.
- Stead, G.B., & Watson, M.B. (1998). Career Research in South Africa: Challenges for the Future, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 52, 289-299.
- Stead, G.B., & Watson, M.B. (1999). *Career Psychology in the South African context*. Pretoria: J.L.van Schaik Publishers.
- Terre Blanche, M., & Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. Cape Town: Cape Town Press.
- The South African Department of Labour. (2004). *Employment Equity Act: Summary of the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, issued in terms of Section 25 (1)*. Retrieved on 07/01/2007 from [http://www.labour.gov.za/legislation/original\\_act.jsp?LegislationDetail\\_id=5954](http://www.labour.gov.za/legislation/original_act.jsp?LegislationDetail_id=5954).
- Walker, M. (1990). *Women in therapy and counseling*. USA: Open University Press.
- Welch, L.B. (1990). *Women in higher education: Changes and challenges*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Whitehead, S. (2001). Woman as manager: A seductive ontology. *Gender, work and organization*, 8 (1), 84-107.
- Wood, N. (1993). *An Investigation into the Problems that Women Managers Experience in the Workplace and whether Equal Opportunity Programmes Deal Effectively With These Problems*. Prepared for the University of Natal, (Industrial Psychology), in the Centre for

Industrial Labour Studies, Durban: In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Science.

Zanville, R.L. (2001). *A quantitative analysis of the personal characteristics and workplace experiences of men and women as professionals and community leaders*. Retrieved on 04/05/2004 from [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

Zunker, V.G. (1998). *Career counseling: Applied concepts of life planning*. California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

## APPENDICES

## **Informed Consent**

I,.....hereby consent to my voluntarily participation in the study “ The Opportunities and Challenges facing Women in senior academic and managerial positions at a particular campus within a merging South African university”, conducted by researcher, Bhavani Krishna.

I have been informed that my personal identifying details will be masked and that all measures have been placed to protect and preserve confidentiality.

I have been informed of my right, to withdraw my voluntary participation in the study, at any given time, should I wish to do so, without future and further consequences.

Participant Signature .....Dated.....

Researcher Signature.....Dated.....

Name: Bhavani Krishna

## **General Outline of Interview Questions**

The interviews within this study revolved around the central theme and accounts of the participant's career development within academia and executive management, with a general focus on the opportunities and challenges experienced. The general focus of questioning in the initial and follow-up interview (wherever possible) included:

- their advancement from entry level to current position,
- the pace of their movements,
- perceived obstacles on their career path,
- the management of these obstacles,
- past/present developmental opportunities (professionally or career),
- past /present career interruptions,
- perceived organisational support (the use of mentoring, coaching, role-models, career counselling),
- manner in which organisational support is/was utilised),
- career aspirations versus familial needs/demands/obligations,
- their useful strategies employed,
- recommendations and suggestions to other up and coming women.

Dates and duration of all interviews (initial and wherever possible, follow-up interviews) are as follows. Rationale for follow-up interview was to gain further information required to complete interview.

- Research participant **1**: (initial interview-1 hour with follow-up interview of 30 minutes).
- Research participant **2**: (initial interview-45 minutes) no follow-up granted.
- Research participant **3**: (initial interview-1 hour and follow-up interview of 1 hour).
- Research participant **4**: (initial interview-40 minutes and follow-up interview of 30 minutes).
- Research participant **5**: (initial interview- 50 minutes) no follow-up granted.

## **Research Interview 1:**

**Date of Interview:** 10 August 2004

**Time of interview:** 11H00 -12H00

The research participant is an Indian South African, English speaking woman holding the title of doctor and occupying a prominent position within the executive management at a particular campus within a South African university.

The interviewer thanked the participant for affording the opportunity to be interviewed and assured that confidentiality will be maintained at all times and the identities of all those involved will be masked. The interviewer discussed briefly the research topic and interests accordingly.

For the benefit of confidentiality, the following terms will be used: Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1) and Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2) in all of the eight interviews included.

**P 1:** Participant

**I:** Interviewer

P 1: I grew up in South Africa, in a middle class family with two sisters, myself and a brother. My father was a teacher and lectured economics at one of the technikons. My father inculcated

the need to read and educate myself from a very early age. Although he was a single bread-winner, we had quality education. We lived in the greater Durban area, in a multi-racial setting and I attended all type of classes including ballet. My eldest sister was given the opportunity to study photography; it was what she wanted to do. When I finished my matriculation, I participated in the Jan Hofmeyer contest and had won first round, the Jan Hofmeyer scholarship. However this was only for men and I remember my father saying 'the monopoly of knowledge doesn't reside only for men'. He motivated me to write my first letter, my first feminist letter when I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age. When I finished matric, there was no question about it; I knew I had to go to university to study.

My eldest sister won a scholarship, this was in 1950, she was only 22 years old, to go to America. My father shed tears of joy and had bought her a car. He was really a man with a lot of insight. Remember it was 1950 and she was the first Indian woman to drive a car. When she went overseas, she wrote to us a lot which really opened doors for me. My ambition was to follow her but I had to go to ... in 1964, which was a kind of a separate Indian university college. They had then, the Separate University Act (1960) which ensured that Indians had their own ethnic university. After completing my Honours there, I won a Full Bright Scholarship, it was an American Scholarship, very prestigious you know (incidentally my daughter also won it).

In 1968, my sister was lecturing at ... where she met a German Professor, fell in love and got married. Our family disagreed, but my mother was very supportive, she said her daughter was very educated and could choose whom she wanted to marry. However, due to the Immorality Act that said that one cannot marry across the colour line, similar to the Group Areas Act, they

couldn't live in the country and had left to Germany. Three days later, the entire family left. My parents left to Canada, my brother went to the United Kingdom and I went to an American university to complete my Masters degree.

I did come back to South Africa, but went back to America thereafter, to complete my PhD.

When I came back, I lectured at (T.I.2) for about seven years.

The first hurdle in my life... (pause) came, when I went off on encashment leave for my second child. Then, married women were temporary members of staff, it was university policy, you know, married women earned less than men and were temporary. It was then, that they advertised the post I was occupying and did not tell me about it. I thereafter applied for a senior lectureship post at (T.I.1) but was turned down.

I applied for another senior lectureship position at another university. The second set of the selection committee interviewing sittings was the worst ever. It was not a selection committee but rather an interrogation committee. This committee interrogated and defamed me. I then took the matter up with the lawyers as I felt that this was not a selection but an interrogation. I took them to court and sued on the grounds of nepotism as one of the members who sat in the selection committee had interviewed her brother-in-law who had consequently got the job. In comparison, I had seven years of experience and publications. Subsequently five hundred students had signed a petition with respect to me which I had taken to court. At that time, Indians had to have a PhD and seven publications before appointed to a senior lectureship position. In terms of the court case, the media went to town; it was a very bad judgement for

women. The Judge at that time responded that the university is like a business, and could hire and fire whoever they please. It was a very bad judgement, a very bad judgement for women! (high intonation) It was the worst phase of my life.

I took the matter to appeal court. It was a very lonely battle. A lot of women were too scared or terrified to join me or be seen with me. I remember consulting with the American Psychological Association who stated that this issue should be a 'class action' rather than 'individual action'. It was a lonely battle and I felt that the doors were closing in on me.

In the mean time, I had tried to find an internship placement in order to be registered as a ...for about eighteen months. I had tried everywhere but could not secure an internship placement. I approached the technikon but the professor there said that the case was too controversial and 'can't have her here'. I went up to see the vice-chancellor and challenged him 'on what grounds do you have to deny me the chance to further my career...you know, I said to him, I have no place to sell my labour and I did nothing wrong'. I challenged him on that level. He got back to me and said that he would take me on, on condition that the case against the university in question was dropped. This was a turning point in my life. I felt very low and very down. I had to make a decision and I made the decision to withdraw the case in order to make myself more marketable. I had a lot of support from my husband and my family at that time. I completed my internship at the technikon under great duress. In 1989, I went into private practice in the surrounding area but had too close because of the crime in the area.

Thereafter, I applied for the position at (T.I.1) and was appointed as ... Within a short while I was appointed as Head of the center. My current position came much later in life, on executive management.

In 1998, I began to write for the newspaper, writing columns for about seven to eight years. I have won two awards as columnist of the year. You know, as an Indian, as a Black women, I could only sell my labour at one institution. I 'could have easily risen quicker and higher if I were a White woman!'

Well, I got married in 1974, then there were very few women who had a Masters degree in...I was full of bright ideas but it was difficult to exercise them due to racism... (high intonation) if I remained in America it would not have been so difficult. When I worked with students, I always discussed with them...as women it is very easy to become a pedestrian, but that is so boring...(pause)to embrace life with a breath of fresh air!

You know, in order to strategise in your life takes a lot of discipline. Knowledge changes the quality of life, knowledge is very powerful, it gives energy to your life. It is important to adopt a stance and to strategise if you want to survive in this country. Not to stagnate. I was very ambitious, I wanted to make a difference and adopt a stance for what I believed in.

It is so important...(pause) to know your roots...(pause) whilst not being stuck in a particular cultural sect. Respecting each other, the fundamentals that are common... not making too much of the difference. I have been married for thirty years; still enjoy conversation, not out of

conviction or under compulsion. I have two children. My daughter is twenty eight years of age; she is married and practices within the ambit of the law field. My son is twenty four and is completing his MBA overseas.

You know, in our family there is a mixture, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim etc. My husband has been and is very supportive. He is a lawyer by training. He's personality is such, that I did get the chance to feel sorry for myself, there was the right amount of tension. I've got to give him credit...(pause) my major decisions and in the crux of the whole court battle, he was very supportive and had provided the right direction. My family was very supportive.

I: What advice would you give to other women?

P 1: My challenge to them is 'whoever you are...you always have to be in a state of learning...(pause) formally or informally!' The more you achieve, the more you should learn something new all the time. It doesn't have to be related to your professional field, something different like language or skills...floral art...sewing. Don't get into a situation of comfort... 'make a difference' (high intonation). You know, in that respect my father was a great inspiration. My father used to say 'wherever you are, you must make a difference!'. I believe in that. My mother was an amazing woman as well. She had learnt to paint when she was much older in life.

I: Can you comment on your present position?

P 1: It's a strange position you know. With the change there have been complications with the actual job designation of my post. You get very little clarity, it was very difficult initially but it is getting better. It hasn't been that easy. As head of division, you have freedom but with the merger you're not sure whether you're head or tail.

The interview was terminated at this stage due to the research participant's busy work schedule and time constraints.

**Date of follow-up Interview:** 14 September 2004

**Time of Interview:** 10H15 – 10H45

The main purpose of the follow-up interview was to clarify aspects that were unclear in the first interview and to engage with more specific details in terms of the career development of the research participant.

I: You spoke a lot about the obstacles and opportunities; can you speak about the past obstacles in terms of management that presented itself in your career?

P 1: When you say management, what exactly do you mean and when you say past, how far back?

I: Management in terms of the institution. When I refer to the past, it is in terms of your career from entry level to date.

P 1: Ja, my perception of management was that ...(slight pause) it was not at all supportive (high intonation). One, it was sort of an 'upward swim'; they presented themselves as obstacles rather than a source that one could go to. You know, they had the ruling (high intonation) for example, when I worked at the other university in those years, you know you could go off on leave, you were temporary and your job was not guaranteed. Married women earned less, it was the policy put into place by management.

I: So that was your encushment leave.

P 1: Ja. The encushment leave was not favourable... So management to me presented itself as (high intonation)...(pause) as some kind of ...(pause) barrier! I think that, you know generally the policies now, the equity policies has been quite supportive of women. Mentorship and mentoring women, addressing the issue of woman status and attempting to do something about it, have a better kind of reception now. Doors are opening up for women having young children. It's still much a dual career, you know, this is the catch twenty two situation, we're opening doors for them and so forth but nothing has really changed in terms of family dynamics! There must be societal acknowledgement that is no opportunity that is favourable in terms of rearing children and being in the work force!

So my... (slight pause) my views on that is we must acknowledge (high intonation) that for society to exist we need to have stable families. There must be opportunities in the work-place that has crèches, sites to do homework for children etc. We must allow flexi-time and not grudge these as nuisance values or excuses for children.

But I think seriously, we need to think about that.

I: Any research in this area?

P 1: No but when I worked at the center previously I had this policy that they could bring their babies to work, even to a point where I organised a cot, in one of the offices there. It could have been detraction but on the other hand, I mean it's a reality of life.

I: How do you think management would view these possible suggestions?

P 1: Not very well! Because it's a male dominated management style and focus! They're not used to...(slight pause) they define...they define the dignity of their own lifestyle! Okay. But work can take place and everything else can take place...(pause) maybe the style of the work-place can change but that doesn't mean to say the output will necessary change. It's all a matter of how you see it!

I: Presently, are there any crèches at this institution?

P 1: No. If you take the average the work-place, you bring home pressures to work. I, after the first child had my in-laws take care of them when I was at work. When I had evening lectures I used to take them with me and just give them something to play with, they were well- behaved children and it didn't distract from the lecture in any way.

I: How did you manage your roles, as a mother and a wife, to balance both career and home life?  
Did you travel, go away etc?

P 1: I must say that I did but that's where my husband would come in and when I had to go on international commitments he would care for them. It wouldn't be long, you know I wouldn't take a six months stint, I'd go for about a week or two. Quickly you know, depends on the age of the child it can affect you.

I: Personally and professionally, what would you sight as your short-comings?

P 1: My short-comings were that, in a way, I had a choice between ...(pause) I tried to balance career and home. For me that balance was very important; it was very very important (forcefulness). But perhaps because of it, I didn't ...(pause) I could have gone much further as a devoted professor in ... For me the balance thing is very very important because my family...(pause) I didn't want to lose my family.

You must balance in everything you do. You don't want to lose your family. Because you know, like for example, you can lose your family. Like very highly professional women, research found that children were mainly brought up by husbands and their nanny's. So you know, you don't hear your children, watch their first steps, you're away, you're saving the world but you know, I suppose you have to give up family then.

I: It appears, from what you are saying, that women have attempted to be masculine leaders rather than feminine leaders and it's very difficult to be assertive, be a leader and not compromise your femininity, your womanhood, your motherhood etc?

P 1: Absolutely in order to survive in a man's world. Ja that's right ...(pause) women have to relinquish their status of womanhood because the notion of leadership is very male driven and hence you end up losing out.

I: Did you find balancing both roles challenging?

P 1: It was. Also because I was in academia so ...(pause) you do have that flexibility (high intonation). You have that kind of flexibility which you'll never have if you're an accountant working for a big firm. There was a lot of multi-tasking. You know if you're in your child rearing years it would be better to chose employment that is flexible. Certain jobs are flexible, others reactionary where you find your nurturing qualities are compromised, and it is a short-fall of other skills.

I: Can you comment on opportunities that you made use of in academia?

P 1: No not really... (pause) however when women are considering re-entry into the work-place or career, they need career counselling more than any other time (high intonation). Women need career counseling if they are considering re-entry.

I: Would you have considered a change of career?

P 1: I wouldn't have taken an eight to five job. Private practice was very flexible.

I: Did you make use of any coaching, mentoring, role models in the past or present?

P 1: No, not so. The issue is that you got no support from women or colleagues. Then married women were temporary...(pause) there was a lot of racism. You know the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' climbing up the career ladder was a real struggle, as a result one was pushing down on those below.

I: In the recent years, was there anybody that you used particularly as a role model in your life?

P 1: Professionally, as a role model my elder sister. There was a four year gap between her and me and she...(slight pause) won a Full Bright Scholarship to America to complete her Doctorate. She's a professor now. I knew very early (high intonation) in life that there'd be no doubt that I had to go to university.

When I was young, I wanted to be like ...she achieved a lot and was an inspiration to a lot of young people around her. There's ...also. She was a great role model, gave more of herself to community life and served as a mentor for younger people. They in a way, had a more flexible environment, they were academics. As I say in the corporate world, you're flying all around the world you know; it's a different kind of a thing.

I: Can you comment on organisational support?

P 1: Nothing, there was no organisational support. You know there is somebody who stands out for me, my mentor in a way. I met this person, he was a 'Lennonist a communist and a Marxist'. He was banned from the country due to his communist ideology. He provided the...(pause) you know...(pause) the intellectual support, the knowledge base. Having my problem with the other institution, he actually led my whole my case. He was highly knowledgeable and had a wide historical knowledge of South Africa. We spent a lot of time talking, I remember the breakfast sessions where we would spend two to three hours talking about politics and history.

I: It's very interesting and it's been really nice to hear about that. I've heard that you are currently doing research on women as well.

P 1: Yes, right now I've got a project related to women leaders. I am currently holding a workshop where I'm having women leaders speak on how they 'made it'. Focussing on the barriers that hampered them in institutions, how they made it, it's an interaction group.

I: Would you be publishing anything thereafter?

P 1: Yes, we are hoping to develop a strategic plan for 'Women Leaders' thereafter. To proceed with that.

I: What is your final message for women?

P 1: Yes, women need to weigh their lives at some point, discuss where they want to be by what...date you know time. Whether they want to have families and how they want to. Is it their careers, do they want to exit their careers and re-enter another. Because if they don't, you actually get short-changed. There must be happiness, balancing work, family and social life.

Take into account the reality of the situation; we are a product of the various compartments. And a compartmentalisation of one's life is a ...(pause) the reality you know! If you only go career, career, career and nothing else you can end up feeling very lonely. Money is not the only satisfaction.

They should build into their lives opportunities for learning constantly! So there'll be a training period, then there'll be going into career ...(pause) right and then they get ready for a more focussed career...(pause) whatever that may be...(pause) medicine, law etc. But they also must learn about other things in life in order to be a 'whole person'. Their personalities become a composite multidimensional kind of a thing. I mean, if you take a very prominent female judge that I'm thinking about, she must be something else, somebody else other than just a career person. My young son, currently busy with his Masters degree has learnt language and music. You must...(pause) have kind of a multi-dimensional interest. It doesn't have to be related to your professional field, it can be anything!

The interview was terminated at this stage due to a prior work related commitment of the research participant. The interviewer once again thanked the research participant for the time and effort afforded.



**P 2:** Ya, I was just saying, maybe I'll just narrate, I'm not sure were to start, but you will probably pause, by asking questions. Let me just start by saying ...(pause) I came from the tradition of the anti-apartheid movement. Firstly, I worked for a NGO (1) and then I moved to another. So as you can see, these were alternative organisations, which were very much rooted in the tradition of the anti-apartheid. Which were very much rooted not only in speaking out against apartheid, it spoke out against apartheid from an educational perspective, from a social justice perspective, from a number of perspectives, from a human rights perspective. But linked to that, they also put into place during the seventies and eighties, put into place alternative programmes, you know to say these are some of the things that we would like to see happening and they were also responding to the gaps that were created by apartheid in education and in social service generally.

For instance in education, one of the things at the time we did at the NGO (1) was to develop a children magazine called ABET...(pause) what we were trying to do were trying to help children whose second language is English, to learn to appreciate the printed word, appreciate reading, and also write for the magazine. So we were trying to reach the creativity of the South African child, which was destabilised by the apartheid ways of doing things. Also we had a lot of study skills programmes for adults who were studying either by correspondence for matric or for their degrees during their mid career, mid career level. So we set up these support systems so that they don't fail and believe that they can't make it...(pause) so it was adult education, it was study skills, it was all those kinds of programmes.

Then I went to another NGO (2) and also in between...(pause) I was also voluntarily linked, very actively (high intonation) involved with a particular association within South Africa. The same (high intonation) principal and philosophy applied in that organisation. As Black...(pause) ours was what not just to be a professional body, we felt as a professional body we also had a commitment to the course of African people or the ...(pause) the dispossessed majority. Hence we established also programmes which were like stop gaps ...(pause) filling gaps ...(pause) we established for instance a child guidance clinic which looked at children with developmental and learning disabilities, it's still alive at in the greater ...area and it has diversified...(pause). They have got a unit at two places within the greater ...area, it's diversified! We've placed students there! We also established after school programmes, we also established a programme which was actually...(pause) which had grew, it worked, it operated from a particular campus of the within a South African university on Saturdays. It then expanded and even operated here at Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1). This was also an enrichment programme, where again we were trying to help our high school students with things like English, Maths and many other subjects. That involved a lot of people who were professional, Professor ...; the late Ms ...were some of the people I worked with. We worked with; we lived for this NGO (2)! It was like this NGO (2) was our second ...(pause) our last names! But it was those kinds of things ...so as you can see there was a pattern in the NGO's (1 and 2) I worked for. We were critical of apartheid but at the same time we tried to put alternative mechanisms in place... It was the same with the first NGO. We started interrogating those policy for instance, way back before the government did. So by the time the new government came we had already started interrogating the social welfare system, we were dealing with the displaced people from Mozambique within our local communities... a range of things. The point I'm making is that there was...(pause) there was a

tradition I came from and as a person I...(pause) I believe in doing things...(pause) I'm a doer rather than somebody who blows her trumpet!

And then in 1994, I decided let me get into academia, I had been tutoring for another tertiary institution during my time at the NGO (2). Let me get to academia, the reason I wanted to come to academia I wanted to pursue my studies. In between by the way, I was studying. I finished my Masters...(pause) whilst I was at NGO (2). In between I was doing my work, which was national and international, but I finished my Masters.

**I:** Masters in what Prof?

**P 2:** It was Masters in ...I did that and then my idea of coming here, my thinking was...(pause). Okay, I'll get out of the hectic change processes, I was deeply involved and not (forcefulness) that I was running away but I ...(pause) was also looking at the future. Okay. I wanted to come into academia and I know if you, one wants to be in academia, you must study. So I came here...(pause) my thinking was I will do my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) in academia. Well...(slight pause) it was not to be so!

I do know...(pause) when you are entering academia you tend to be loaded with most of the teaching, and I was also still involved in lots of other national and provincial projects. What ...What bothered me was that, I did express an interest to register for a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) because the university allowed ...(pause) it's a benefit. But there's something, which I will call a subtlety. Yes you expressed the interest, but the system will not ...(pause) be

supportive in terms of creating an environment. You will be loaded with more and more work! More and more teaching!...(pause). I noticed that I was actually carrying the highest teaching load and I said to myself ...this is not something that I will challenge as an individual and remember those days I was the only Black lecturer in the department. To me, these were some of the barriers...(pause) the barriers that you cannot actually touch...(pause) that were beginning to unfold! That ...now (forcefulness), this is a barrier that will make life difficult for you in the institution! It's faceless; you can't attach faces if you want! But it's, it's an in-built thing...(pause) it's an in-built barrier, which makes life difficult for Black people entering academia!

I took that as a barrier, not only did I take it as a barrier...(pause) usually my mantra and my philosophy is any adversity (high intonation) that is presented to me, I don't retreat. I turn it around and see what the opportunity it is. I don't retreat! It's not in my nature. So by nature I don't retreat and I think also it comes from the family where I come from and the tradition that I just outlined to you earlier on. I worked for organisations that never retreated... no matter what! We were bombed, we'd go without offices, but we never retreated from our mission!

So I didn't retreat, I realised...(pause) and I...(pause) actually made a decision just for that. I am going to stay in academia. I'm not going to be pushed out. I'd then realised inside me that it might not be possible for me to register and finish my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) in (T.I.1) which I so dearly loved. But I had to understand where the subtleties were at, at that time. It was not designed to empower people Black people who came into the system. And I don't think it was an accident of history that (forcefulness) ...(pause) at that time, in the early nineties,

people would come for a short while, you can go and check the records, they'll come and they'd go out and they never (forcefulness) want to hear a thing about academia. It was this subtle culture, which pushes you out, very subtly!

Anyway, I then realised and made a conscious decision that I will do my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) but it's not going to be here. I will pursue my career, but it's not going to be here at (T.I.1). That was a difficult decision. I have friends and colleagues in other universities who we've worked with during the apartheid times. We worked with when we placed students, again to pursue their academic careers outside South Africa when South African universities made it difficult for them to succeed.

So we had those linkages, one of those universities was a university in ... which had made a commitment, that they would be prepared to take Black ... who wanted to pursue their studies. By Black, remember we meant Coloured, Indian and Africans. Low and behold, it's very difficult; it was very difficult because you had to make a difficult decision. You resigned at your workplace because the workplace was equally unsupportive. When you have an opportunity employers would make it a point that it's almost impossible (high intonation), they'll say, you resign and go! And imagine what happens at mid career. The same thing (forcefulness) my university said to me, make a choice? You can take your sabbatical, which you and me knows, is not very much, which was for me at that time six months. You can take your sabbatical and the rest will be unpaid leave. Fine, I did exactly that! So, I made a hard choice!

And ironically...(pause) as I said to you, ironically the university that supported me, again through colleagues, who are into international work, who had understood the dynamics of the South African political system and education system, were supportive. I then...(pause) because they actually...(pause) every year what they did, they said they will take two Black professionals for either a Masters or for a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*). I then applied for a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) at this university and that programme and of course, I had to take unpaid leave!

So, I made hard decisions! I did not spend my time ...(pause) lamenting about the barriers! I made a decision to ignore or to work outside or just around those barriers and come back and deal with them, later so that other people don't get frustrated by those barriers, even thirty years down the line or ten years down the line when we are not here, we must never have a situation where African, Indian or Coloured, so called Coloured children and women are made to feel uncomfortable in this university. That was my thinking.

I left ...(pause) I took my sabbatical, my six months, got paid for six months. I went to this university, got a fee waiver. This university, which made learning and created opportunity for South Africans. South African universities could have easily done that, it wouldn't cost them anything because they will create, they will have fee waiver for capable people, and they don't lose anything. The ... university and probably most other universities in... do that, probably in... they have fee waivers. I mean, you know, at that point at that time, that's about R 54 000 or R50 000 per semester and all you do, is to perform well. Be an A student, A plus student, that's all you do. I sat behind desk and I went into a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) programme for four years. I don't want to go into the rest, for four years and that's what I focussed on. And I sold

my car to ensure that I...(pause) I had to sacrifice certain personal things, material things that I accumulated over the years. I had to get rid of them. Because I had to be focused, so I had to, for me, the locus was in me! That I am not going to be defined by barriers...(pause) I am not going to be made to stop working in (T.I.1) by the subtleties or other barriers that were there left unattended. So I went and I studied and of course...(pause) I worked!

What I did, I worked. During the day I will be in class. I worked for an agent and because of my performance in that agency also, my allowance increased. I was actually doing Quality Assurance and Client's satisfaction, Advocacy Surveys for... it's a massive agency with fifty units in that area

**I:** What type of agents?

**P 2:** Health Social Service...for Mental Health

So, here was a support system! I was getting support from the ... university, which created a very supportive environment. I remember the first day I met with the PhD Programme Director. I didn't have a computer. The first thing he said to me, 'How are you going to communicate with the world if you don't have a computer?' So, that was a supportive question. That was a supportive question. Not only that, he also indicated that there a doctoral room which has all those facilities. The facilities for doctoral students. And what did I do, the first two allowances I got I bought myself a computer! So you have this supportive environment in an ... institution outside the university, outside the country, outside your own university. And ironically, by the

way, the way I got to know a lot of people in the administration in my university (T.I.1) was because of the frustrations I experienced in my university when I was away! That's how I got to know more people in Human resources. It's ironic, even the smallest thing, where you think it wouldn't be an issue; they would make it an issue to frustrate you! That's how I read it. So...(pause) so you had this very hostile unsupportive environment within your institution (T.I.1) and then very supportive environments outside...(pause) outside your institution.

And in fact, there's one person I'll never forget, I never knew her well and I got to know her well when I was outside the country. I think ... she was one person, though she had nothing to do with me directly, each time she picked the phone, she was the most helpful person when I was 15 thousand...20...14 thousand miles away from home.

That's what it takes. I think it takes resilience! And it takes a certain frame...(pause) mind frame to fight barriers! You must not allow them to be toxin in your system. You must understand them! This is me! I believe in understanding barriers that are put in front of me, but I don't internalise them, to allow them to suppress me and to be toxin! I deal with them...(pause) in a constructive way. They are not going to pull me down. And I finished my degree, I came back and I joined this university (T.I.1)!

I have nothing...(pause) I had nothing against (T.I.1) but I had made a decision, that I am going to stay in academia and I am going to ensure that we produce quality workers and development workers and if I have a role to play in the change processes ...because I knew it had to change!, it was not going to be like this forever...(pause) it had to change! And we had to participate in

that change. I was not going to run away from all the frustrations that I had observed! During my short stay between 94' and 97' when I went to study. So I observed and I said to myself I'll have to come back and work with my colleagues and some of them will have to be comrades in transforming education, making it work for our children and the future generations, both Black and White. That was my determination and I came back and I landed here on the second.

I make time for students, all students! Black and White!, because some times you tend to forget that White kids in the process get traumatised because they view themselves negatively, as a problem. So they also get traumatised in the process. They become a minority and remember they are terrified of the new order also...(pause). Here I am...(pause) they were told I'm a baboon! I'm whatever and then suddenly one day they wake up, I'm in front of a class to teach them or I have to sign their forms! How does that translate to a kid who knows me as somebody who has to clean floors in her house? Who has to be defined at all times, who is an imbecile ...(pause) it's traumatised! (high intonation).

So they have to go through that transition, to say, girl it's not business as usual...(pause) girl your parent's were misleading you! So they need that also, we need to also help them to understand that everybody is a human being, including themselves. The skin is no longer your passport, it's not your...I think it's very much in my mindset and also I think my commitment to my profession, my commitment to this university. I'm committed to the university. I mean, we have our...(pause) our little wars as colleagues but I think at the end of the day, there must be good of the institution.

And of course, I was asked by a colleague to join him in the faculty. I mean, I was terrified, I hadn't...I had just come back. I hadn't worked in management in a university setting. But I did not, I didn't say no. I was prepared to learn, I was prepared to work with him and again I always believe that if we are vocal especially us Black people, if we are vocal about what is wrong, we must also be visible in...(pause) situations where we attempt to take corrective measures or to change what is wrong. So I worked with him in... the faculty. Suffice to say, that again support...(pause) support came from very few quarters. He was supportive. Support came from very few quarters. I'm not going to mention the quarters, but again, one has to understand that you are coming into protected terrains here; you are coming into protected turfs!

And part of...(pause) I think...(pause) I believe part of the onus was upon me to develop ways of engaging with my newly acquired peers now, who are usually almost all white and male!

And...(pause) I think in most cases they don't know what to say to you. And I think as a worker it is upon...(pause) it is incumbent on me to take initiative in terms of building relations. Some of them are hostile, some of those initiatives were hostile but I didn't give up. Some of them are the best relations we have now. We talk, we engage. I can ask, they can ask from me because we are not know alls.

That's another said thing about the previous order, it made people believe that by virtue of their skin...(pause) you...(pause) it is a shame to ask, you know everything, which is not true. So I think we were beginning to enter those kinds of...(pause) so I had to take initiatives in terms of establishing relations and developing a new layer of support. It was difficult because one, you have to learn what you are doing because it doesn't come out voluntarily, you learn in the

process but it's not easy to ask for support or for wise council if you don't know exactly what you are suppose to do.

So I had to learn quickly a lot of things, learn quickly, learn again! You have to continually fight fiercely to protect your dignity, all the time! It's an ongoing war, all the time; you've got to do that! You've got to perform and you've got to learn...you develop a repertoire of techniques to learn what you are supposed to do, because it's not going to come to you voluntarily. So that's... been it!

And, then of course when the merger came, I mean I was attending all the universities committees, with him to allow me to understand the workings of the...(pause) of this complex institution (T.I.1) and to understand my role better. The processes were moving very fast and I'm trying to learn each portfolio but before you know it we've got to move on because of the processes. Like I said to you by nature I don't retreat, I try to learn and understand, not only to learn and understand! and if I need to acquire competencies I take it upon myself to acquire those competencies. I'm not afraid to acquire competencies where I don't know. So, that's important!

Right now, here I am entering... At this level we also need to acquire certain competencies, you've got to deal with human resources, not just purely interacting with people, skills which I think we acquire very well I think in our professional training but we got to now deal with human resource issues, financial issues, huge budgets...(pause) budgets running into millions. I am not a trained accountant but as a ...I know there is something called linking to other resource

systems, something called engaging other capacities, and we've been assigned a team of...human resource persons and the finance person.

Again, as a ...I've built a relationship with ...(pause) with them. One ...(pause) they are younger than me, so it's important for me to engage with them in a manner that creates a working, healthy working relationship so that they are not put in a position where they have to be scared of me or me treating them as subordinates. So we have a working...a professional working relationship. You saw the gentleman going out now, we have a working relationship. We sit, they understand and I understand that H.R. and finance are their competent area, they're professionals in that.

And I understand that there are certain basic competencies that I have to acquire and I have to work with them as a team. So it's very important the type of leadership, the style and leadership (high intonation) that you develop as you go up, I think as you move on in the university structures. For me, it doesn't have to be a hierarchical leadership; it's more of teamwork, collective type of leadership. The ability to be able to work with people in different competencies and ...(pause) when I work with academics, if you are an ...you are not an authority in all disciplines, but there are certain skills and competencies that you have to apply to engage in all academics, without imposing yourself but be firm, you have to be firm with academics. I mean, it's not leading or managing people who are ignorant, you're talking about people who are authorities in their own disciplines, and you don't have to develop an inferiority complex. It also takes time to develop relations because just the fact that you, one is a Black

woman is enough to put you in the category of incompetence. You don't have to say anything; you just fit the stereotype in most cases.

But with the changing of time and probably with the very visible gender philosophy and policy frameworks that are in-built into our democracy. I think that is also beginning to filter into our mind-sets, but it plays itself out all the time. Half the time I've had to deal with people who are very arrogant, but I don't address the arrogance I don't become...I understand exactly why they're arrogant, that is not an issue, I know that will be resolved along the way. I don't focus myself on petty issues, I deal with substantive issues. If somebody throws a tantrum, I don't deal with the tantrum; the tantrum is a manifestation of something. I've dealt with people who've thrown tantrums because they feel they have to be promoted, doesn't matter what the guidelines are. Because they're using some other weird criteria which worked for others in the past. Good for those who it worked for in the past, but now we are looking at different productivity and other things of us...(pause) and that's the culture that I would like to see prevailing in this institution.

Right now the change processes forces one to engage with lots of human behaviour, dynamics and I don't allow myself to be effected by those dynamics in terms of just responding randomly to them. I know exactly what they mean, I don't address petty things as I said I try to understand why people do certain things and deal with that and we move on. I've sat in meetings where people start by swearing and I know its not that they're swearing because they want to swear, they have to deal with the mind set, destabilise my mind set! I don't deal with the swearing

then, we have to deal with them later. We deal with substantiate issues, and then we deal with that later so that we understand that this is about business, new business of the university.

So... (pause) it's about a lot of things, and of course I think along the way you need to self reflect...(pause) self reflect. Take time and engage with the I, the me and self. From time to time you need to do that, not only just for your personal life but also for your professional life so that you ...

Ja, I was saying you extend the invitation to people, I think, I believe because it is very difficult for people to be brutally frank to you. There's a Zulu word, for somebody who is in charge...put the brakes on that because maybe I go on and on, I can do that, I can go on and on and on... it's my weakness. I have to understand that other people don't have that energy, at some point they have to put brakes, I can go on and on and I must not expect other people to do that. So it's helped me from time to time, I do it, then, I remember by the way people can do this much and it might intrude into their time. But somebody, a confidante, a colleague, a friendly colleague had to say that, otherwise I will just continue, you just continue and continue. And ...ja, so I, that's how you grow, grow in the process, because generally the systems, the pre 1994 systems were not designed to...(pause) enhance or promote or develop, empower or be supportive to Africans, Indians and Coloureds and primarily to women, in particular, African women. They were just not designed for that!

So we are actually destabilising, we are destabilising. Yes, it is nice to have policies in place but the test; the acid test is when you are in those institutions. With all the policies, your equity

policy, we have all the equity policies. It would be very interesting to find out what people, what women in equity position will tell you. And it would be very interesting to know that despite the policies, you have to be strong, have this inner strength, be ready to confront the barriers because the barriers present themselves in...human form. So you still have to deal with them, they are there! It's as if we are living in 1860! So you have to understand that it's the challenge, the critical challenge is ...attitudinal! It's dealing with the attitudes and stereotypes!

It must still be difficult for people to understand that we have to merge because they have got certain stereotypes probably about the...about the stereotypes about merged institutions, they have stereotypes about the demographics that we are trying to... My other thing is, if we are pushed out of the system, there are more people who look like me, who are competent, they will have more. You push one out, you will invite ten in. So it doesn't matter, you can push me out if you so wish, but another one will come, will come in, it's as simple as all that.

And I'm just, when I see the students now, our students engage in university and amongst them, it's soothing, I think we're going on the right track. Now we got to do it with them.

I've never stopped to think about marriage, for instance. I've always sort of, pulled myself in my work. I have a son. My thing was, I would give him the best education, the best, what is, the best humanly speaking. Given the type of work that I used do, which was, which involved travelling, sometimes through the continent, Europe and what have you. It's of this stupid apartheid thing but he understood, he understood. He understood when he was big enough, when he was in his mid teens; I traveled with him to some of the places. I traveled with him to meet

some of our people who were in exile because that was part of some of the things we did but we wouldn't talk about them in those days. So that he understands why ...(pause) why sometimes when I've bonussed I don't have money for luxury and I had to think of some of our people who were outside. Well I can have a bonus maybe to buy an extra handbag but they might need that just to buy a T-shirt or to buy decent food.

When I went to...I organised by the way, when I had to go to ..., I had to organise about how to tell my son. First I thought, when this idea was implanted...(pause) came into my mind, when he was doing second year at ... I would look at him and I would say to myself, he needs my support. It's very difficult, it's a very difficult programme, he needs my support when he comes home he could talk to me about his...you know they enter ... young! They see the corpse for the first time at ..., they see some of the material conditions for the first time because they stay at home. I'm a...and it had to ring in my head, by the way he's beginning to see some of the poverty in ...but it's always been there, then we talk about these things. So we would engage with him and you know adapting from high school into the programme... is a very robust programme, and at the same time, being a staff member I was very cautious. I did not want too many people to know that he's my son because I didn't want my involvement with the university to influence or affect him one way or another. But students are students, sometimes he would get to know that I'm teaching student X but I don't think, I don't think the university would be mean, really that would give ... I just wanted him to develop his own identity as a student and to develop his own identity, his own friends.

When he was doing his fourth, we sat down and I told him about what I was thinking. I was very worried because each night I would think and it would be such a nice conversation and I will say I don't want to spoil it. He was very matured about it, he said I think it's a very good opportunity for you. And I left him by himself, in the house and we ran the household by telephonic and I remember by the way, I always did groceries. Now he comes, he doesn't have a car, he's from school or he wants to make coffee, there's no sugar and he has to go to the shop. But he grew, he adapted and he learnt to manage a household, he then stayed with a friend colleague of his, who is a very outstanding lawyer in his own right today. They are still friends, but they grew together during that time and I really admired the way they managed the home when I was away. I would come when I visited; you wouldn't tell its boys who stayed in that house. No bottles of liquor, they were not into that, they did not turn a home into a pigsty. They had their friends, sometimes I would phone home, and they would be having fun in the house. Fun like any kid their age would. Clean fun and that's it. And I appreciate...(pause) appreciated that. So he never gave me a headache as a child growing up, even in my absence and I always appreciated that.

Anything can happen when you are a parent, anything can happen, you can do the best for your child but kids are kids, they would just embarrass you. You would have everything to offer your child; your child would just go...(pause) decide to steal cars. Doesn't matter how best you've trained him, he goes and steals cars.

So, my father was very supportive, sadly by the time I finished my, he was...He was a teacher. He had a passion for education but by the time I had did my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) he was

no more, he died in 1992. He had always been there. So was my extended family, I knew I could have peaceful sleep in America because my mother was there for my son. He had to decide which grandmother to go to. He had a fleet of five and they were all supportive. So he didn't, he was not miserable. If he needed something, he picked up the phone; I didn't mind having a huge telephone bill. So, essentially, that was the core of my family.

**I:** And other sisters and brothers?

**P 2:** I do have.... My other brother is around. My youngest brother who had to spend all his youthful life in exile, he's in Johannesburg. He's got a beautiful wife from ...wonderful sister; she's like a baby sister to me. We get along very well, and they are just divine. There is no reason to add toxin in our lives, the system added enough toxin in the country so we can't afford more.

But I'm in a stable relationship. I'm okay, which is very supportive, very supportive, stable relations. So, life goes on. Here I am at (T.I.1).

**I:** How do you cope with the work demands?

**P 2:** Let me say, yes in this sense, it's a massive responsibility. I realize it's a massive responsibility or again it needs to be taken as a challenge that has to be taken forward in a very dynamic team approach. That team is not readily there, you have people scattered all over. I have people in four campuses. The only people I can claim to be comfortable with are...(pause)

were people I worked with in my faculty. I had to do work now with another faculty... that's a massive entity. And here I am...I have to be the ... So I had to develop relations quickly, understand what they are doing quickly, move on with them simultaneously, quickly too! So, it's been a question of building relations! , beginning to work into the vision of this premier university. Understanding who is where, who is who in the zoo, be readily available for everybody, time for individual attention. There are traditional activities by all these faculties, you have got to be there, understand, be ready to present when you are asked, you've got to do school plans, all sorts of things simultaneously!

**I:** Did you ever have a role model?

**P 2:** There are! There are a few people who inspire...(pause) who inspire me. There are few people who inspire me; I don't have one role model. I have lots of people who are role models in my life. My father in terms of values and being focussed, and I wish, I wish I had his calm and cool temper. My father was a very calm, cool ...(pause) I'm very anxious by nature and I'm not patient. My son is equally calm and very cool, and a thinker. You know, he has those qualities.

I love .....is a woman of vision. She's a social worker at heart. I'm talking about ...as a ..., the...I know, the...I've worked within...I love her spirit of resilience and I love her unshakable commitment to a cause. She doesn't get distracted easily.

I love ..... is a man of faith and hope. He has faith, the kind of faith that contradicts circumstances. It doesn't matter how hard the going becomes, he doesn't despair. He's a consistent man, he didn't despair. He didn't have room for a grudge. So that was another person who was a role model...(pause) for me.

And other people, other people you might not know, they are not here. But I have a friend of mine, Ms ...The very first time I went to the ...in 1978, ironically, I actually found her because we were placed with host families and at some point we asked if there were no Latino or African Americans host families so that we get a different experience. And she came forward, she's a ..., I worked with her also. And I liked her commitment to social work, we relate very well as friends because again she has got a very solid personality. So I think that attracted us to each other. That friendship started in 1978, to-date we are still friends! And the other thing that glues us, is our belief in our profession. We, as friends, as families we have maintained that friendship, throughout the years. And as African American, given how Africans Americans were marginalised in the US, I think I like her disposition towards life. I like her attitude of not feeling like she has to fight for space and for acceptance. She's very assertive, firm, polite and pleasant. And I think...(pause).

Ja, and I think my son also becomes a role model that I would like to see in some young people together with his friend. They are young, they don't compromise, and they know that they have compromised their youthfulness but they have got a certain level of maturity and responsibility that I appreciate.

**I:** Where is your son right now?

**P 2:** He's working. He did his community stint, he's working. He's also married.

**I:** Any grand children?

**P 2:** In the future, they are just married a few months ago. And that's it! So...

**I:** Were there any mentors on campus?

**P 2:** On campus! (laughs a little). I have to think very hard. You know, this is an area, sometimes I don't want to talk much about because sometimes...(slight pause) I have tried to approach people, I've had mentors outside campus.

**I:** Your biggest challenge in your career?

**P 2:** My biggest challenge was here, yes. Because for me it was a ...very defining factor! (high intonation). In terms of the career I wanted to pursue. Look, this is the other thing about labels. You know, I sometimes say this to students, this thing about defining yourself as historically disadvantaged, woman from disadvantaged background, those things are okay as labels to define where you are but not as a way of life! I can't live a label of being historically disadvantaged, historically... from a historically disadvantaged background. That is okay as a label to define where I am and where I need to go, but not to start living it! Well it must be understood the

reason I didn't have a PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) at the age of forty, was because I was in the struggle. I come from a historically disadvantaged background. If opportunities present themselves to you and this government also presented opportunities, we need to begin to use those opportunities. Yes, use those labels as an entry into those opportunities but not as a lifetime label that you are historically disadvantaged! You won't move anywhere. Historically disadvantaged... historically this... first Black syndrome! It's Okay! That once upon a time, we sort of became "first Black, Indian...first Black this!"

Now it must be an anomaly if we continue being first Black, because it means doors are closed! We must see first Blacks collectively! We must see cohorts, like we are beginning to see. I'll use the School of Architecture, we are beginning to see cohorts of successful students coming from schools of architecture and engineering, where you are visibly beginning to see woman students, Black and White women students, succeeding, getting recognition prizes! Women...African, Indian and White becoming successful in those disciplines, graduating cum laude, summa cum laude, that's the kind of first I would like to see! Not one little...one Black student, out of 14 000 students! Collectively, we must begin to see the first cohort, of predominantly...Black graduates in 2006 or 2007 in all the disciplines! That predominantly, for me must be ...a cohort of African, Indian and Coloured students. The numbers, the demographic profile of students must change! But I'll be very worried if we graduate the first... we continue to graduate the first engineering student in 2007, the first...this, one student, one student! We must begin to see collective firsts! That's what I would like to see. Yes, we've seen the, individual firsts; it was where we were in terms of time and space. Some of us were first this and first this but now we also begin, we need to see collectives...collectives. Let's see, like we are

seeing in some of these disciplines, we are visibly beginning to see our young girls in ...succeeding as collectivites in medicine, not only in the junior degrees, also in highly specialised fields. Engineering, we are beginning to see girls coming in cohorts, succeeding in cohorts. That's what we need to see!

**I:** Your message for women, over time, if you had to impart a message for Black women or women in general?

**P 2:** Yes, believe in yourself. Never retreat when faced with difficulties. Never allow people to create negative evaluations because you are an African or Black women. There's nothing wrong with being Black or being African or Indian. There is nothing wrong! I always say to people, I don't have a scientific explanation, I always say to myself God was decorating his world. That's all. It's not an issue for me. If it is an issue for someone, you are going develop ulcers, I don't have a problem. Not this much, so believe in yourself!

**I:** Thank you so much, it was such a pleasure!

### Research Interview: 3

Date of interview: 19 August 2004

Time of interview: 11h30-12h30

The research participant is an Indian South African, English-speaking woman, holding the title of Professor and occupying a position within a specific discipline in academia at a particular campus within South African university.

The interviewer thanked the research participant for affording the opportunity to be interviewed and assured that confidentiality will be maintained and the identities of all those involved will be masked.

The interviewer discussed briefly the topic of research and interests accordingly.

For the benefit of confidentiality, the following terms will be used: Tertiary Institution 1(T.I.1) and Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2) in the interviews. Where necessary, all persons, places and other identifying details have been omitted and have been replaced by ‘...’.

**P 3:** Participant

**I:** Interviewer

**P 3:** Okay, I think, most of the issues that you are asking about are in the work place; are issues that may be out there, external to me, you know that might have provided opportunities. White male dominance -role models to help me crack the glass ceiling (laughs). And what factors that might be internal to me that might have contributed to that.

You know...I don't know, we ...(pause) with a colleague I have just published a book, and I remember when doing the acknowledgements for the book, I realised how much I've done it on my own. Not only that, but a whole lot of things that I've done on my own. You know,...(pause) I think the people that I could thank, were people that I engaged with, were people who stimulated my ideas and my thinking. And I must say that this university falls far short of that. You know in terms of having a culture of academia that can be termed sort of emancipatory in a way.

I must say that I'm actually finding it hard pressed to find in our local context, for example, somebody who's really inspired me. I... (pause) I...(pause) honestly, I'm being honest. I think there are many people who have inspired me along the way.

**I:** Can you talk about that?

**P 3:** Yeah, but I think I'm also the kind of person who does not want to settle for anything but the best in terms of what I (high intonation) think, in terms of the standard I set for myself, I think sometimes at great expense to myself. I think of the entire week-end and holiday spent working...(pause) I think that, as almost power for the cause for woman in institutions like this.

That women...(pause) of my colour, okay, work ten times harder is an understatement... forty or fifty times harder (high intonation) than my male white counterparts to achieve the same kind of recognition. Even then I think, it's hard to be acknowledged, even though we have all the overt,

you know what the scientists would call the empirical evidence that we'd excelled (high intonation). You know, surpassed I think the sort of normal expectations, we are still not acknowledged. White males who have far less than I have, have been a lot more acknowledged and rewarded! I think, you know the colonial mentality still prevails...very largely so. We live still, what Fannin called the 'imperial gaze of the white man'.

**I:** Currently, are you the Head of this Department?

**P 3:** No, I'm not. I'm still Professor, but that's because due to objective evidence I earned it! (high intonation) and I could not possibly be denied it. But still, we have a center here, we have no official head. I do all the work, and this is something that is really important, I do all the work for all-intense and purposes, in terms of serving as the head of center, but I have absolutely no official designation. There are no rewards (financial) or recognition that comes with it at all; there is absolutely no reward that comes with it. We've tried for several years to get that changed but for whatever ever reasons in the world I cannot understand, it's not been attended to and it's never been changed.

I think also, maybe it's my worldview that clouds my judgement. You know, that because there are so many things that happen on a day-to-day basis, you know I can't help...(pause) I just wrote a paper in which I say 'race is race, everything at the same time is race'. Especially in my professional life (high intonation), almost everything revolves around race and gender here (T.I.1).

And I can give you lots of examples if you want. Practical examples, I think, as I said, 'the imperial gaze of the white man', you know that comes out in reality from a book; that I could be the head of a school where there are a whole lot of White men. It can never enter the consciousness, you know, of some people, that a little Indian woman can do it. It's played itself out in very practical terms, you know evident.

Time,...(pause) I think ...(pause) have, not the imperial gaze and thinking of the White man, you know they don't go all out to put us down, they don't consciously (high intonation) do it, but it's part of one's psyche. It's like an archetype, you know 'anything that's white is better than black'. It's really an entrenched part of one's psyche. And for me, I think ...(pause) that's where I have a great deal of difficulty and differ to challenge people's attitudes all the time. Because women (high intonation) are equally responsible, women (high intonation) who are the same colour as us, almost the same age group as us, as well do that.

I'll give you one example; we had a selection committee going on. And all the administrative arrangements and things like that were done via the head of school. But the person will not even go...I am sort of unofficially recognised, not recognised but regarded as the head of the discipline. And I will have a direct stake in who we employ here but she did not want to have anything (high intonation) to do with me. Like the messages were sort of quite evident, you know you're not important enough to deal with; we'll only deal with this person, kind of thing. And maybe, that's an issue of structure, maybe that's got nothing to do with race, I'll exceed that. That the structure is such that they will only deal with this person, even though I've been writing emails, I've been making queries and things like that, you know you're not important

enough in this whole system in the university which is very bureaucratic, we only deal with certain important people.

As I've said, I can exceed that it's got nothing to do with race, but (high intonation) I get a call from the person who does not want to deal with me on any other level of importance, to... (pause) broach a subject, to ask me 'I booked a flight for so and so' and I thought, and I immediately knew what it was about. And I said 'no thank you, I do not have the time', and I think the audacity (high intonation) that the person would ask me to serve as a taxi driver. I do it a lot and I do it of my own esteem. You know, I get visitors, I get students from overseas all the time and I regularly (high intonation) pick them up, so that's not the issue. Like doing a menial job, that's not the issue, that's not an issue at all! But I think, I believe that structures ought to be put in place at universities. You know, for candidates who are coming in for interviews. Right. For one, it's not my job, I shouldn't have been asked to do it. Secondly, is that, never ever (forcefulness) would have gone to the head of school, as a White male and asked him to service as a taxi driver. You know, I think that's what I object to. The way people on a day-to-day basis at this institution (T.I.1) are treated differently on the basis of race and gender. And the amazing thing is that I don't think this person even realised she was doing it. You see, it's a non-conscious ideology, it is totally a non-conscious ideology, and I don't think even it occurs to her that 'I've treated this person differently because she is Indian. Because she is not a White and yet she would not do it with a White man'.

You know what I mean but how do we challenge people, you know with that kind of thinking, that permeates institutional sort of culture on a day to day basis. It's very difficult. I mean

students, my students; we get on absolutely great, it wonderful and things like that. But any White male becomes a professor, you know, every women of colour becomes a 'Mrs', even if you've achieved the status of doctor or professor, in their eyes you can't be (high intonation). You know this.

I think I'll give you another example. I went to a particular campus. And I was asked to run a leadership, like training. It was a weekend thing with the SRC over there, a group. They were told that a Professor was coming; you know to run the programme. And I went and because it was over a weekend and when I work with students at that level, I enjoy sitting on the floor with them. Sitting on the floor and really engaging, full experiential work. When I met them, I said 'hi, I'm so and so...' and things like that. There were some people who had come in to drop of the stuff for the catering. So when we sat down to work, again I said 'hi, I'm so and so, this is what we are going to be doing'. But about mid-morning, by ten 'o clock that morning, we were getting on great, the students and I were really getting on great. And we moved onto the whole issues of race and class, gender and identity and all those kind of issues. How that impacts our sense of self and therefore impacts leadership vision and capacity and things like that. And at that moment, the students started being honest with me. They said, that when they saw me in the morning, they thought, one, that I was part of the catering team, because you know, I was dressed in jeans and casual, seriously... and some of them said, they thought maybe I'm the professor's assistant. And the White professor is still going to come. You see, when they heard, it was a professor, even though they're students at a tertiary institution, they had it so ingrained in their heads a professor had to be a White male. That it took a long time for them to reconcile

that I could actually be a professor. You know I could give you hundreds of examples like that, that's if you want them.

I mean I was, recently, in July this year; it must have been in June when I did it. I was taking my daughter to Disney world and I was using my voyager miles for it. So I was standing at the voyager counter at the airport and I was dealing with a woman for about an hour and an half. And at one point she suggested that I redeposit my voyager rewards and reclaim it to get a better option, but the only problem was that you are 'using your husband's card'. She looks at the card again, because it's got 'Prof', the moment she realized, she freezes! Really, for a moment she freezes! And then she says 'Oh, I'm so sorry' because it's got 'Prof' there I thought it was your husband's. But you see what I'm talking about, the non-conscious ideology, it becomes part, it's an archetype, it's like it's in our blood almost, you know, that's hard to transcend. You know it's like how women believe, we are born (high intonation) to be mothers, and it's a non-conscious ideology. But that's the dominant thinking, even among women, this was an Indian woman and she did not intend to put me down. You know she was truly shocked by it.

You know, kids around me, because adult population has it, so entrenched in that, we don't know how we are diffusing these values and these ideologies onto our children. You know my niece's two children; they are now six and eight years old. In my home, they are always with me; they know me as their aunty. The one-day, they were playing school with my daughter and my daughter was talking in an absolutely boring monotonous tone, you know, like her teacher. And I said, 'Why do you have to be such a boring teacher, just be an exciting interesting teacher. And she says' but this is how Mrs. so and so is?'

And I said 'just be a different teacher then!'

And then she said 'Who?'

And I jokingly said "Well, why don't you be Prof...!"

And the little boy, you know he must have been just over seven years at that time, said

'How, but girls can't be professors!'

You see, the non-conscious ideology rubbed onto now a child of seven years of age. And then now, she says 'but my mummy is a professor' and he almost, like, it goes over his head. It's like, he can't reconcile that. For one, is that he knows me as this regular aunty, who's at home and plays and jokes around with them. And he can't believe that girls and women can be professors. And more so, his regular aunty is a professor, it makes it even worse now; the whole confrontation is just too much. And it was his little sister who said 'you heard what so and so said, she said that her mother is a professor!' The child is now trying to get him to see, that there's something going on here, you know, that you are not even looking at. But you see for this child, his little sister was in hospital. You see this is the thing; we don't have to speak out loud, these things, these taken for granted assumptions or have to speak it out loud for the values to be transferred. His sister was at hospital and all the doctors that he saw there, in that context, happened to be professors that were referred, were males. You know, and all the nurses were females. So in his world, doctors and professors become males and nurses become female, the assistants. Yes, the assistants are always the 'female'. And also whenever they watch media, the dominant ideology follows. So, the values are becoming inscribed in little children, from a very, very early age. I don't know, it's like a vicious circle. Where does one stop it? How does one confront it? Where does one stop it?

You know I always go on and on about it and I think there are times when she felt I over do it, the race and gender issues. We both agree, for me it is any anti-oppressive practice. The race and gender tops it at the moment, obviously it intersects with class in a big way. But I think that day, when she stood with me at the voyager counter and I'd gone through all that interaction with this person, for this person eventually to turn around and tell me that I was using my husband's card. Now she's fifteen, she's old enough to truly understand it and she experienced it first hand. She always experiences it. Mail comes home regularly, but it's like give your daddy this, it's never your mummy, because your daddy has to be the professor. But that's it. But to be there and to witness it, so directly, she felt its impact as well. And I told her, one day when you're grown up and you are a professional woman and if you're a doctor or professor or whatever, everybody assumes it's not you but your husband, you'll know what it feels like.

**I:** Prof, your early career advancement. Can you tell me from its beginnings to how you got here?

**P 3:** I was the youngest of seven children, of a domestic servant. My father died when I was five months old. When I finished matric, there was no money to go to university, to do what I wanted to do. I was standing outside Standard Bank, when this guy, who was friends with a girl that I knew at school, in standard eight, met me. He was a handy man at one of the universities. He asked me 'what are you doing here?' And I said, 'This is what I'm doing. I want to study, but do not have the money, so I came to see if I can get a job at the bank'. But he had the sense to ask me, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' He cared enough to ask me if this is really what I

want to do. His next question was 'Did you try to get some help?' I was a naïve young student who'd just come out from matric, I did not know there were possibilities of help. And I said 'No, I don't know what to do'. He said 'Come, I'll take you'.

He physically walked me to, what was then the Department of Indian Affairs. I met there a Mr. ...He said to me, that they can't employ me as a ...as there are regulations and that one has to be qualified. He directed me to the director of Child Welfare, thinking that they won't be as strict; maybe they'll employ you given that you are so interested and you can study part-time. There you go, walk down again to Child Welfare and he's taking me because I don't know any of the places now. He takes me there and I speak to the director there. He tells me exactly the same thing. That ...profession is regulated by law and that you have to have a degree or else you can't be employed by the institution. But again, it was hope that she provided and she said 'Why don't you go to C.M. Basaars and Company and apply for a student loan. Go to university and register and they will some how assist you?' They offered student's loans, because I don't think people wanted to take a risk with first years. Outright firstly, you know, you had to prove your worth. And I got a student loan and that's how I started. As true as anything, this woman was right.

First semester of the second year I was the only one who even had my own car in my class. I was just fortunate after that. But I think of this guy who helped, I think that...(pause) he'd just cared to ask me the right question. And I think these are the little things were people have had profound influence in my life. As I said, it's people, friends that have had a profound role in my life. That culture, ideological critique, someone must agree or else you don't like them, is absolutely stupid. I think the more you trust someone as friends, the more you will challenge

each other's ideas. You know, you can't raise an issue here because people immediately personalise it. It's not seen in the interest of improving things.

Firstly, I worked in a gastro-intestinal unit as a fourth year student at medical school. Thereafter I was employed in psychiatry at one of the hospitals. I think, there I had a consultant, he had vision and capacity of a leader, he was never...(pause) he had truly worked with staff. He held values about equality and demonstrated 'how you can be an excellent but very human leader, horizontal leader. He stated very actively, that first and foremost, we are all mental health care workers. That is something that is very rare.

In my academic career, I can't think of anybody here. I mean the one person; on an international level that stands out for me is Ms. D. She's very much like the person just mentioned. She is sincere, warm, she is genuine, she is absolutely ...(pause) she has over 19 books published and over 60 journal articles. I think I hold up to her as a role model. But she came into my academic life very late (pause). Recently, you know now (high intonation). So its not that she has had that kind of influence on my development. She's like that consultant that I talked about. This consultant had sort of visionary leadership that was wonderful. And yet, say a patient had just walked in and was absolutely drooling with saliva, you know manic to the 'T', you know full of make-up and this patient extended her arms, he would have given her a hug. He was that kind of caring person, genuinely caring. And you know she's like that. A genuine human being, you know (high intonation), with all her achievements. And she stands out for me, as a role model as well. There are few (high intonation) people in my books that compare. And the truth is I'm not sure (pause).

In fact, it was very good for me, in this sense that as a student I was at (T.I.2), I completed my Masters and then lectured and hence the transition from student to lecturer. Although it was difficult for senior people to treat you as an equal, as their colleagues because you occupied a student role for so long. I think the other difference ...(pause) is that at (T.I.2) there wasn't so much a culture of research and publications, it was here (T.I.1). So when I entered here (T.I.1) you know, I began to appreciate the value of research as compared to when I was at (T.I.2). You see that's the thing, in terms of becoming socialised (high intonation) into an academic role, I didn't know what it meant to be in academia, what counted. So, I would write wonderful stuff (high intonation) and never ever bothered to publish it because no one ever told me that it was important. In fact, it is the most important thing (high intonation) if you are in academia. That kind of culture that existed here as opposed to (T.I.2), I think stimulated my academic growth a great deal.

You know, I think while university executives and upper echelons remain predominantly White, at the bottom levels things was beginning to change...(pause) the student demographics. It wasn't such a huge transition. It's odd enough; I became aware of the race and gender bias at this university (T.I.1). Because when you are down there, you're really not bothered, because you don't go to many of the meetings, you don't go to senate, you don't know who's who in the zoo, it doesn't matter, you just doing your teaching and you're happy with that, you know and engaging with a whole lot of students that you can connect with.

But as you get higher, I think, the divisions become more pronounced, you know, the prejudices, the biases become more pronounced.

The other thing is that...(pause) I again have difficulty reconciling with this. We are academics, most people, especially given the South African context ...from a political point of view, a lot of them write about it. Right, they (high intonation) write about it, they studied other people's lives (high intonation), in relation to race and gender. And yet (high intonation), you dare not introduce the discourse, the debate (high intonation) at the university. I just find it's a ...(pause) how can you acknowledge it's importance in other people's lives but don't practice? (high intonation).

Yes...yeah ...Quite honestly, I can't see any situation, I don't see any situation where the opportunity presented itself out there and I got it. I honestly don't see that (high intonation). I've had to work for it (pause) I think everything that I got in a way is what I worked extremely hard for (high intonation). You know and put in a lot of effort and energy (high intonation). Recently, I think in the past few months, from the research office I've had some opportunities and recognition. But that...(pause) that has just come. Now that I've proved it (high intonation), there are opportunities coming.

You know, sometimes I actually wonder, quite honestly, given all the obstacles...(pause) given all the obstacles that I've had to endure and experienced 'How I've actually come so far'. Given all the obstacles, I've had to work extremely hard to get what I want, 'resilience'...(pause) I got it from my mother, even though we were at two different poles. I am very direct and assertive, too assertive, so much so, that it can be threatening...(pause).

At this point, the research participant had to excuse herself due to work-related commitments. The research interviewer expressed her thanks and gratitude for allowing this opportunity to engage within the interview in light of the participant's extremely hectic schedule.

**Date of follow-up Interview:** 20/10/2004

**Time of Interview:** 11H30 – 12H30

The main purpose of the follow-up interview was to clarify aspects that were unclear in the first interview and to engage with more specific details in terms of the career development of the research participant.

**I:** Can you comment on opportunities in terms of your career development?

**P 3:** I do believe, particularly in an institution like this (T.I.1) that there were more obstacles than opportunities. Really, in terms of ... (pause) as I've said, I think that the opportunities that were there, I think a lot of them were the things that I pursued and created. And one had to prove one's worth in a place like this.

**I:** Comment on the internal factors that led to your choice of career?

**P 3:** What are the internal factors, you mean to the university?

**I:** No, cognitively for you.

**P 3:** I think it's...(pause) messages that I carried, I think from my mum. I think...(pause) because I remembered from my mother, at some point in my life when I was at school, telling me that whatever that I chose to do in life, I must try to do the best I can in it. You know, whether I wanted to be a sales-assistant or a doctor, lawyer, social worker, whatever it was that I should try to be the best I can. That message for me somehow stuck in my head. It's the best that I can be in my, to persevere, to complete a task when I start. Perseverance to complete tasks.

Maybe it's from an apartheid past which I'm acutely (high intonation) aware of as well. In terms of every law and legislation that implied that I was inferior. So I think basically it contributed to a sense of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self. Paradoxically, what's it also done is produced in me ...(pause) that I can be equal and better. It's a paradoxical kind of thing; I think that's part of the dynamics there as well. Although I think despite all the effort to prove oneself as equal to Whites, right, in an institution like this (T.I.1), it did not work. I'm not sure. I don't even think that was conscious, but in retrospect when I look at it and I try to understand (high intonation) my sense of drive and 'why' I want to achieve what I achieve.

**I:** In terms of gender?

**P 3:** Let's put it this way. I think the choice of profession in terms of what led me to choose... I think it comes from my own background, my own personal background and recognising the need for help and having the desire to help. I wanted to do something where I could help people. I think my teacher was of the view that I choose medicine or law. But one day, a teacher in class, sort of in passing mentioned 'if any one of you know of children around you who have problems

with drugs and things like that, let me know because I have a sister who's a ...and she can help them'. And then she went on having to talk about her sister having gone to university and studied to become a... And quite honestly, I was simply bowled over...(pause) because I didn't know that there was such a profession, which was specifically designed to help people. And when I heard that, I felt my world had opened...(pause) this is what I want to do, I really want to help people, and there's a profession, you can go to university and learn how to help people. And from that day, the idea was planted in me and I could never lose sight of it. So when I finished matric, no matter how much people tried to put me off from the idea, because medicine was more affluent, more status, more money, so was law and everything else. And you know how it is with our families, if you had the brain, those were one of two things that you chose to do. But I...(pause) simply refused to listen to any possible alternatives. This is what I wanted to do...(pause) and when I look back ...(pause) many years later, I have absolutely no regrets (high intonation) in terms of my choice of career.

**I:** Did your 'gender' influence in any way your choice of career?

**P 3:** Not in any conscious way no, no. Although I think that kind of script which says that women go into certain professions that are nurturing and caring has actually contributed to the marginalisation of certain professions like social work, teaching and nursing. I don't think I fit the typical profile, I don't think gender...(pause) I don't know. These things also play themselves out sort of unconsciously, as it is, possibly that my gender may have played a very profound role in my choice of career. But I think more likely (high intonation) it's linked to...(pause) my experiences of growing up in my family and my experiences of growing up very

poor. And that's why I'm linking it to the area I grew up in, which was generally sort of under-privileged, low socio-economic area and I think seeing the problems...(pause) and having a ... (pause) wanting to make a difference.

**I:** Can you discuss or comment on exclusions, selections or discriminations experienced any examples?

**P 3:** Many many many (high intonation)...(pause) I mean the thing is I just think is, you know it would be too much to go into detail with each one of them. Some of which I've confronted directly, I dealt with, others that I choose to ignore because I think it's not worth it. I think I told you the last time, given the structure that we're in, I related that sense of mine. Had it not been for the issue of race and gender and for the fact that ...(pause) is again seen as a women's profession and not...

I perhaps would have been considered as head of school, it would never ever enter the consciousness of people that it's possible. Cos' we have White males in the school, so why should an Indian little woman do it. I mean...that's exactly how I read it. I think in terms of the acknowledgements it's been out of my absolute tangible outputs (high intonation). I have been the most productive person in terms of research and publications and things like that (high intonation). Okay, so that had to be acknowledged, at a certain level, at the level of the research office. Right, not acknowledged at other levels, but okay, that was acknowledged as well as, I think in terms of my promotion to being a full professor. Because you can't not acknowledge tangible evidence. If I had not been such a productive person, I think I would never have been

considered because I...(pause) I think just my race and gender would have prevented it (high intonation). You know, so that's why I'm saying in terms of having to prove competence (high intonation), in overt tangible sort of ways, in terms of the recognition.

You asked for examples of the discrimination sort of thing...I really think that this is not spoken, right, but the fact is ...you have management, you have leadership qualities. You academically extremely productive and totally overlooked in the system...(pause) I think is a form of discrimination. For me there is no doubt about that.

**I:** Day to day stuff, you know daily stuff?

**P 3:** I think I spoke the last time that this becomes sort of a non-conscious ideology the way people treat people. You know, they're not even aware of the kind of messages that they send to people, the injunctions that it holds. I know the one time we had something here to present a person with a honorary doctorate, his wife was presented with the doctorate. I was given the task to sort of coordinate his itinerary, in ... while he was here. One of the places that I took him to was ...I took him down there...he's a White guy...very tall guy. And the people who were seated there had obviously just finished their coffee or their tea, and I introduced the guest and we sat down. The other person asked the guest if he wanted tea or coffee and completely and totally ignored my presence. I cannot believe that if 'I were a White woman or White man' that he would have done the same thing. I refuse to believe that.

I subsequently wrote him a letter because this was a guy in a fairly high position in..., for all intense and purposes working against discrimination. And for me I felt when people in positions such as his cannot treat the person next to them with regard and respect, you know you cannot actually work on it, on macro-national levels. It's a contradiction in terms because for me anti-discrimination are demonstrative acts in our day to day lives, we must be able to show it, not as political rhetoric up there. And for this guy, I thought it was purely political rhetoric. And I thought it's very dangerous for people like this in positions such as his, to talk one thing, study one thing and practice another thing (high intonation). Unfortunately, he is reflective of a lot of people around us. I don't think he's atypical.

So what I did the next day, I wrote him a very detailed letter commenting on his behaviour and telling him how I read it and I didn't have the courtesy of a response. I waited two weeks and then I phoned him. When I phoned him and he took my message, he obviously couldn't avoid the issue because I was talking to him directly on the phone. And he apologised, well not apologised for that, he rationalised it and said 'it had nothing to do with my race and gender in any way.' He offered to give me coffee in his office and invite me to coffee. But, those kinds of things you actually get on a daily basis.

**I:** Do you get together in the school to socialise?

**P 3:** No, we don't get together to socialise in the broader school, let's put it this way (laughs).

We haven't done it for ages, we don't.

**I:** Day to day dynamics?

**P 3:** That's a structural issue, I think. That is a structural issue although I think being a center in the school of concern should not impact, I think of issues of representation at the university. The thing is, there are some things that are so obvious. I mean from my point of view, okay. If you had a credible research, you should have a credible researcher, for example on a faculty research committee. Okay. But we have White males, almost all White males on those kinds of committees (high intonation). I don't know, I don't know how it's read, but clearly, you know you're not regarded as being good enough to represent your school at that level.

**I:** These obstacles, you've mentioned them; race, class, gender. You did say that some you've directly confronted, others you've chosen to ignore. How did you manage these obstacles within academia?

**P 3:** No, it really depends on context. I try to negotiate, you know as much as I can. I try to state our point of view and where we come from. Where possible, it has worked. There's another thing that's happening currently in relation to an external donor funder, where I feel the dynamics of race and gender are extremely powerful (high intonation). And I have confronted it for the first time in my professional career, ever, I ended up in tears! You know, where I tried to explain to the two people involved that this is the kind of oppressive structure that I'm experiencing. Four White males over me constantly feeling the need to tell me what to do and how to do and the injunction that I receive all the time from that 'is that you read me as 'inadequate, as ineffective and therefore you need to tell me how to do it and so forth' (high

intonation). The sad thing, I think I've said the last time, I think some people are openly offensive and mean to demean you.

But some of those people actually have good intentions, you know, but so much of racism can be disguised, you know in good intentions. Because, you see from their point of view they want to do capacity building of Black women and I'm a Black women and from their point of view all Black women need capacity building. So even if you have capacity it's not recognised because their design in the grand plan of things is to build your capacity. So they can show case you after that you know 'she's our product, we built her'.

And I find that kind of patronising attitude totally repulsive (high intonation) and I let them know this in no uncertain terms. But in that respect, I must say I got a lot of support from the research office in relation to the external funder. They were informed that they will not allow external funders to treat their researchers in any fashion. So it was nice to have institutional support. But, ja I think they are clearly linked to the issues of race and gender.

I mean I think there are other dynamics as well. You know, like these external people wanting to be in South Africa. I mean it's a land of sunshine and beauty, you know you're living in five star hotels on the beach front, getting all your meals paid and subsistence for that. You know, I think they want to be in South Africa more often but they cannot justify it, being here if the project leader is seen to be in control and is seen to be on top of things and to know what she is doing. So the only way to justify that is to make it seem, as 'I'm ineffective so they physically need to be here to work on it'. Some of the administrators from the agency also feel that way that I'm

being used for their hidden agendas there. But I think it's unethical, it's unacceptable. Then I think if they had an equal counterpart, another White male professor they wouldn't do these things.

**I:** Have you had any present or past career opportunities that stand out for you?

**P 3:** I mean I just got an award at an international level two weeks ago. I represent South Africa and I've been chairing several committees at the international level, one of which was the... I was the chair of the global standards committee for ... We achieved what people thought would be impossible in developing the global standards, which has been adopted by both international bodies. I was given an award for my contribution to the discipline and its education on a global level because I wrote the whole document. Engaged in wide processes of consultation and wrote a global document that people think is truly applicable to any part of the world, developed or developed parts of the world. They all commented on its respect for diversity, the multi-faceted aspects of diversity. I was given an award for my contribution. It was lovely to get affirmation at that level. I also passed my masters degree and all the coursework with distinctions. For my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*), I actually won a national award for a submission based on my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*).

**I:** Was there any organisational support utilised in terms of career development. Such as mentoring, role models, coaching or career counselling made use of?

**P 3:** I think I mentioned the external person Ms D, that in the recent past, the past four/five years. She writes quite a lot around feminist ...theory and practice and anti-oppressive practice. I think she's a person who truly supports Black people in their development. She is a role model for me and I think also her sheer faith and belief in me.

I think I told you about the psychiatrist consultant that I worked with. Again I think it was because of what he believed in and again people like that appeal to me. When there is congruence between what you say and what you do.

I think the other person that sort of played a role in my life more as a student actually, than a lecturer was ...because I thought she was an absolutely dynamic lecturer. A good solid person. I remember in one of the very first few lectures that we had, she was talking about the history of Indians and she mentioned how the history of Indians in terms of ...development has not been documented. I was first year and not clued up in these aspects. She turned around and said 'there Miss...there's a project for you to do...the history of Indians here have not been documented in terms of their ... development'. And I thought it was an off the cuff comment but its funny how some things stay with you. And I thought there's a lecturer who believes you can do it. And also, you know when I look back; she was the one person who was willing to come out on a Sunday when I was interviewing a family and physically be with me when I was interviewing the family. There are few lecturers, you know, who do those kinds of things.

The other person that stands out... (pause) I was in second year and had done a written assignment for this person. In the class she had handed out the assignments and had asked to see me.

It bothered me as I wondered what I had done wrong (high intonation). But she called me to say that she was impressed with the level of maturity of my written work and enquired about my future plans in terms of my career development. Where would you find a lecturer to take such personal interest? I think in small ways, they influenced perhaps the way I interact with students.

**I:** How do you cope with the demands and expectations of motherhood versus your career aspirations?

**P 3:** Constantly, constantly need to cope with the competing needs around me. You know, I wouldn't even frame it as demands but all the competing needs around me. Because they are really so. I travel a lot and when I think of all the funerals and weddings I have missed due to work related activities, I am constantly missing. I have a teenage daughter who is very understanding; she is well integrated and well adjusted. I am often not there for her and sometimes question the possibility that she may harbor resentment later on in life. When my daughter was younger, hubby was wonderful-very much the nurturer and carer. I felt safe that he would cope with her and has coped presently.

Initially my husband felt threatened by it, although it is normal and natural. At the time when my career evolved and took off, I spent a lot of time outside my home, outside South Africa. Also I think, over time he's seeing that I'm the same person, recognised both nationally and

internationally who has fundamentally grown in leaps and bounds, but I think he is secure because I'm still there. It's not that he doesn't see me; I often take him to meet my international colleagues. He often reads my stuff and is aware of what I do. He does have a sense of inclusion. Although sometimes he takes me for granted. He sees me working for hours and hours at the computer and like for example, I share with him a conflict, you know, when I'm really stuck and immersed in it, I share with him this dilemma about where I am and this conflict that I'm experiencing. He would say 'I know you and I know you will sort it out and be excellent!' It's that kind of thing, 'being taken granted'. And I get mad and I say 'it doesn't happen by magic', you know, it takes a lot of hard work. And it's not that he doesn't recognise that but I think 'he just takes my ability too much for granted'. And he feels that I could never go wrong.

**I:** Can you comment on any useful strategies employed...How, What, When etc?

**P 3:** I believe in hard work, sheer dedicated hard work (high intonation). There are no short cuts, absolutely no short cuts!

**I:** Is that both personally and professionally?

**P 3:** Yes. I constantly work on maintaining staff relations. We informally have tea together. What we have here is so special and I constantly work on maintaining that. You know, relationships don't maintain themselves on sheer momentum. That's how I try to manage the competing demands around me.

**I:** What is your message for women, particularly Black women in academia?

**P 3:** Believe in oneself and believe in one's capacity, I know it took a long time to believe in my capacity. I remember this particular professor requested all students to give him a first draft; there was that entrenched type of message that White students would and could write better. I questioned myself, could I write better than them! I remember my first article for publication; I didn't believe that anyone would be interested in anything I have to say.

In terms of juggling both personal and professional life, I'm the worst example. If you ask my colleagues, I'm the right one, totally skewed. I think that's part of my fear as I told you, taking my academic and career life too seriously. I spend too much of my energy and life here. I have an exceptional loving and wonderful family, when I think of my daughter and husband and consider the number of week-ends I spend working, I think I sometimes take them for granted. One Sunday, I said to my daughter, 'Let's go out'. She responded 'How come mummy!' and I said 'I'm taking time-off'. You know it's so entrenched in my head that I should be working, anything different is special. My hubby responded to that 'It's Sunday, the way you are talking about time-off, it's as if you should be working.'

**I:** Is your husband supportive of your feminist stance adopted?

**P 3:** There was one point, I think, in our marriage where I think he would have preferred an ordinary wife. When I attempted to break the glass ceiling, he felt very threatened, I told you

that. Firstly, I think it was a huge challenge for him to confront. Secondly, I think there was some element of fear of losing me. Because the roles are reversed here, you know I'm doing the travelling, like the subtle sort of messages to my husband from external agents, tried to say my travelling so much was problematic with him losing out. He's also had to deal with those kinds of messages from family 'your place is at home, do you think you should be traveling' you know, if men did it, it is not questioned.

There were a lot of social pressures, you know, you not having a 'normal wife' to cook, clean take care etc. I'm an atypical wife, there were social injunctions were he had to accommodate his ideal of what a wife was. At one point, it was extremely stressful dealing with his sense of insecurity. If I had to reverse the roles, I can understand how threatened he felt. You know, here I am travelling to all parts of the world, receiving invitations, meeting very prominent people, naturally he felt very insecure and threatened by it. It has stabilised since, there's a stronger sense of integration that he is comfortable. You know, it's marvelous that he has integrated-he's had to be jetescent. Naturally, he did know what it was gonna be, we are together for over twenty years.

Student thanked the participant was once again for all her time and effort spent in engaging in the interview. She acknowledged the sentiment and rushed off to another work related engagement.

Interview stopped at 12h30.

## **Research Interview: 4**

**Date of Interview:** 31 August 2004

**Time of Interview:** 11H00- 11H40

The research participant is a South African born, Zulu speaking woman holding the title of Doctor and occupying the position as the Head of school within a particular discipline in academia at a particular campus within a South African university.

The interviewer thanked the research participant for affording the opportunity to be interviewed and assured that confidentiality will be maintained and the identities of all those involved will be masked. The interviewer discussed briefly the topic of research and interests accordingly.

For the benefit of confidentiality, the following terms will be used: Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1) and Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2) in the interviews. Where necessary, all persons, places and other identifying details have been omitted and replaced by '...'.

**P 4:** Participant

**I:** Interviewer

**P 4:** Now, are there set questions or you just want me to respond as a ...?

**I:** As a narrative or in-depth story telling.

**P 4:** Let me see. I don't know where to start or if there is anything worth talking about to start off with. Not because one is not...(pause) cognisant of one's achievement but for me, I'm just thinking of what I said to my students last week Thursday, my undergraduate students you know. Because this discipline is about problematising issues (high intonation). It's about looking at ...(pause) why do we approach whatever we approach in the manner in which we approach them. And one of the things that I wanted them to think about was the definitions of... (pause) previously marginalised and that being a blanket term. You know a blanket term that applies to all people that happens to have 'kinky hair', which happen to have black skin. And I said to them 'me personally...(pause) I want to...(pause) if I look at myself now, in 2004 and what I've achieved and look at what my grandmother had achieved at my age, I think I'm a slow achiever'. Having said that...(pause) you know I come from a very...(pause) not financially but financially somehow...(pause) a very affluent family and you know although I've experienced disadvantages (high intonation) because I mean ...(pause) the group of Blacks, otherwise individually from the family, the clan that I come from are quite privileged.

**I:** What clan is that?

**P 4:** The... clan. And students will ask me, why do I as a radical feminist... (pause) radical feminism is this what they tell me I am? I don't know if I should believe myself to be a radical feminist, if this is what radical feminism is about. But anyway my students will ask me 'How come you changed your name?' You know for me it's actually a question of 'even if I stay with

my maiden name, that was my father's name and my mother's name'...(pause) I mean changing to my husband's name and staying with my father's name will still be patriarchy (high intonation). So I thought (high intonation) let me just have this name ...(pause) you know I'm not of the idea of the barren name.

But having said that, I just want to give that background you know because I wouldn't want to look at...(pause). Of course we look at systems, it's systems that are there (high intonation) that prevent people from performing or from participating resulting in them being excluded. And the systems that we've had and still have are systems that have the legacy of apartheid or systems that were apartheid in nature legislated (high intonation) of course as you know. But having said that, you get pockets of people within who have been marginalised who don't really fit very well the pigeonhole of the marginalised...(pause) and I come from that clan, from that family that doesn't fit that. So having said that, I want such studies to be approached with that in mind. And looking at what I've achieved at this stage, I think, I don't know whether I'm questioning myself too hard that I would have liked by this stage to have achieved much more than what I've achieved, looking at what my grandmother had achieved at my age.

Having said that now, looking at the opportunities because you seem to be more on that. Looking at opportunities that have availed. I'm a person who has not been, you know, previously marginalised, although marginalised of course (high intonation). I don't know whether this has to do with personalities as well but I'm a person who doesn't think twice in terms of grabbing on opportunities. You know, before being in this position, I'm actually the first Black person to hold such a position in this discipline. And having said that I don't think it

is quite a great achievement, I must say (high intonation) because this discipline is a ... (pause) it's a huge programme in terms of the number of students that we have (high intonation). In terms of I want to believe the impact (high intonation) that we make. I mean if you can pick up any graduation booklet, from the previous years you'll see that this discipline being just only one and a half people in terms of the academic people involved in the programme, the number of students that we produce, masters and PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) students will actually shame colleagues. Cos' we're able to produce students and in that fashion, we bring in more money to the university because you know masters students and PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) students... (pause) they mean money to the university purse.

But looking at what we produce and looking at what investment that's put into the department is actually a far cry. And it was only in 2002 that the position was made a permanent position, the director of ... Before that, it wasn't permanent, it was on contract and had been in contract for a year. The woman who was on contract was a foreigner who was marginalised for whatever reason, for not being an English speaking you know, at this university (T.I.1) it's not enough that you're White, you've got to be having British parents for you to be given all opportunities (high intonation) that are available. So (high intonation) she had that problem, being a foreigner and being not British by descent. Of course, there were other personal issues, other academic or professional issues that were there (high intonation).

Now having said that you will see that opportunities that have availed, I didn't want to think twice about taking on opportunities that have availed. I am by training not really a feminist, I haven't been trained in feminism so I didn't want to say 'oh, I don't have a qualification in

feminism' you know. But I have produced many students who have qualified around issues of feminism but I'm a person who takes on opportunities that avail. I believe (high intonation) in whatever experience you have from the past kind of like... equips you to be able to look on challenges that you see and make challenges opportunities. But of course, I can't say I was totally ignorant upon taking the position because I have been teaching in this discipline and I had published papers around ...issues and my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) dissertation was related to women. I was looking at how 'Zulu traditional attire' is symbolised and how it's understood by the way people who wear it and people who see it and how issues of controversy, love, marginalisation etc add to be produced through dress. So thesis was that you don't need verbal means to portray whatever message you want to put across but non- verbal language can speak even louder than verbal language. So that was the whole idea in that dissertation.

So when I was approached by my colleagues who were in the programme...(pause) just to give you a brief background of the programme. We are a marginalised programme in the sense that the university management, faculty and executive (T.I.1) have not, like everywhere else in the world of course, seen women issues as important issues and gender issues as important issues. It's kind of; it's the end of the day thing that has to be attended to. Now that is seen by the resources that are brought into the department, you know. Each resource that we get we've got to fight thrice as much as any other colleague you know to get that. So it's a question of realising now the opportunities, if you have that fighting spirit (high intonation) you know, an understanding that this is not only happening to me because that's the problem that only happens to women, you know...(pause) it's only me and it's me because I'm Black, it's me because I'm marginalised. I've never defined myself thus, because you know having relayed that to you that

I don't believe I was ever, even before I was born marginalised. I think I have lots of opportunities because I must actually think I haven't taken up all of them vigorously as my great grandparents.

So, it's a question of looking at what is available and how you perceive what is available and the question of turning around what is available into opportunities. You know, looking at battles as opportunities. One of the things that this discipline has done is a trying to fight hard to get the two positions, I mean it was only 2002 that the full time one and a half position, half being my colleague. But before this, this discipline was kind of like a voluntarism academic department. It was out of good will that people had to offer their services because of believing in issues of ...equality (high intonation). So we had, we still do...(pause) you know I think this is one strength that we have, it's a question of just looking at where are opportunities and make those opportunities work for you! Because if you look at people who still service us, like in the past it's people who do not regard this discipline as their mother department. These are other people from a variety of disciplines from medicine, historical studies, education, psychology...(pause) people who offered services and continue to offer services here. So it's a question of tapping on those people and you know in my possible definition of the department I cannot afford not to define the likes of these people. So in a way we're small, but very big in the sense that we view people who out there, who've shown their interests through their publications, their interest through attending the seminars, interests through taking on some seminars, teaching taking supervision etc. Having said that, this discipline is not just one and a half, it's actually eleven staff members who happen not to be physically here.

So it's just a question of looking at what people actually say and make them account for them.

Unfortunately, this has had to make us here to be very nagging people, if people prophesize to be feminists, like the group of people I've mentioned and prophesize true gender equality, then they have to prove them by offering services to a short resourced department like gender studies. So it's a question of just looking at that and trying to make the best out of that.

Now having said that because we don't have resources of course, it's also about not (high intonation) looking at the university (T.I.I) as the main resource provider. You know, much of the students that are in the programme I finance them from the research programme that I have. I have six research projects that are funded by outside funders. And each time I write proposals I include the world-renowned people who, of course they are not positioned here physically, if you mention those names anywhere in the world they kind of like know and if you have them in your proposal that strengthens the proposal. Even if they were to check with them, they would verify they are part of gender studies. So I've been able to source out funding from elsewhere, rather than relying entirely on the university (T.I.I) and human sciences.

And I've been able to bring on students, right now I brought a student from another African state. She's come for a period of three months to do her proposal, to work on in the library and that we have discussions on a daily basis. She's even staying in my house to cut on costs, then at the end of her period she's going to go back to her country to do field work. So it's a question of checking...(pause) on what's available, how can you use the slim resources that are there and create opportunities out of the slim resources.

Now having said that, it's just that you've geared me towards looking at opportunities, one cannot stop to decry the situation (high intonation) in terms of resources that are put in by the university (T.I.1) because it actually gets so tedious having to look for funding and not being sure up to the last minute and being turned down and that and that. But the university (T.I.1) and faculty have not been supportive of the discipline. For instance, we have a graduate room across that should be having at least, looking at the terminal points, five computers. We only have one that is working, the rest are not. So I've had to ask a friend who's in ... for a year and a half to borrow us her computer to put in here because it was sitting at home, not doing anything. Of course (high intonation) it's a risk that one takes. It has made my student's, because the are masters and PhD students who need to have consistent, constant, quiet available time to computers at an environment that is homely, like here. It's so homely, they need any help they can come to us or colleagues, not like other Lans where it's like...(pause) everybody else is there.

So having said that, these are things that one has to talk about 'what can you as a person who has networks, who has resources you know, how can we use the resources that you have that are not formal resources turn them around as opportunities that can help students!'. The students now have three computers, two of which are not university's (T.I.1) computers. I want to believe that my doing that, enhancing student's level of producing results and will actually ensure, hopefully that we produce more students. And prove to our colleagues, that we're one and a half in our department and we're able to produce the equal amount of students or double the amount of students that other programmes are able to produce being thrice as much or even four times as much resourced as we are. So that's what one has been trying to get to do.

**I:** I want to hear about your career development, what was the journey like?

**P 4:** The journey was let me see. I was going to be in business of course because I was going to...I grew up in the greater Durban area with my grandparents who were quite well off; I don't know what happened to all that fortune. But anyway, I grew up with them and with a grandmother who was way too successful and was hoping to take over the business. But then due to; I want to believe gender problems and power and all that. So I couldn't do that having being born a 'girl child' in that family. 'Boy children' had to take over the business. So I was hoping to do that! My grandfather was the first Black person in the greater Durban area to own a restaurant, which is something, I don't even have a trade, not that I'm into selling but one has maintained that legacy you know, of really being field rich!

Now having said that, that was my hope but then I ended up, when I matriculated, it was in the 1980's you'll either be a nurse if you're Black or a teacher and on very rare occasions a social worker or office work, something like that. So looking at all this, I went for teaching probably because my mother was and my father had been. Ja, then I got into teaching. I went into a College of Education because I thought three years was shorter than four. So I went to a college in the... area and at the end of that, the year I started teaching in the late 1980's, I only taught for two weeks and I thought 'I'm not ready for this'.

So my mum said 'what can you do'. So I went to a university within South Africa to do a BA degree and majored in anthropology, Zulu and education. I then majored in Zulu with a strong emphasis on 'cultural constructions' not culture in the very limited sense that culture is dress or whatever. And then for masters I did 'oral studies' which is ... somehow but not entirely. ... is

kind of like behavioural systems but oral studies are about 'things that not move as well'. So I did masters in oral studies and did work on 'ceremonies that women get involved in and how gendered that is'. For my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*), which was on oral studies as well, I did research on 'female folk dress' how she dresses, what it means for her and people around her and the associated messages she put across etc. So I looked at the symbolism of that.

I joined Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1) in the early 1990's as a lecturer in the department, fell pregnant thereafter and resigned. I was hoping to stay with the baby and I discovered that I'm not a baby person! I couldn't stay more than four months and had to reapply. I then went to another college of education, stayed there for some time as a lecturer and then head of department. In the late 1990's I then left to another tertiary setting within the greater Durban area as head of department within a specific discipline under the wing of another school. I couldn't stand the politics there (high intonation) and to look for work, I only stayed a year and a couple of months, three months I think it was. Then in late 1990's I rejoined the university (T.I.1) as a senior lecturer. And then 2002, at the end of the year, the post was formalised. That's kind of my career, boring career life.

**I:** Did you ever experience obstacles or challenges, can you comment on this?

**P 4:** Ja, there's always been. Where there is a man there's a challenge of course! Like I mentioned earlier on, there's always been obstacles which are very much gendered I must say! One of which were in the previous department in this one, I had a boss that we just didn't connect from. Even naming what names, blood, to what colour it is...(pause) as little as that up

to huge things. But then the faculty management of the discipline at the university (T.I.1) was on his side and the case was not really taken seriously, it was just left aside.

But besides that there's been challenges, one challenge that was very bad with this university was that of lack of mentoring. You know, you're expected to be thrown into the deep end and know how to swim and swim well! If you don't swim well then you are given names because you are a woman, because you're Black. It's because of whatever, although it's not put like that (high intonation) and even with the swimming, you know when I came to the university (T.I.1)...(pause) it's just so amazing, I didn't know that there were funds for conferences (high intonation), you know simple things like that, something as simple as that is not relayed to you. I guess anybody who joins the university (T.I.1) and more so, people who don't come from a culture of research need to be told that there is a kind of support etc. And just only relay that in the form of a booklet of course, but get to having a mentor, a mentor who will take you through, you know as a mentee! You know that these are the processes and this is how you go through the processes!

A matter of fact, I personally, I don't know about other people, I know about this because of crisis (high intonation). It would only be because 'I know how to do this because of a problem that I had!' You're not initiated (high intonation) in this university (T.I.1). Hopefully things have changed but nobody seems to bother to initiate you and follow on that. It's been ever since; it's still like that I must say. Only when I got a grant that they mentioned that I could have a mentor, I mean that mentioning (high intonation), for me it's not enough! There's got be real support in the workshops, the follow-up's, the reports expected, the suggestions given (high intonation) because there are people employed in these positions kind of like get paid, who make

the living out of these positions of research development. But they don't, at least in my perception do what they're meant to do. Hence, if you look at research activities, it's actually largely White men! And if it is not White men, it will be men of other races! And if you look at who heads that, it will be men again! For me that is very problematic!

The interview terminated at this stage due to the work commitments of the research participant, as she had to rush off. The interviewer thanked the research participant for the time and effort put into the interview and arranged to reschedule a follow-up at a later stage.

**Date of Follow-up Interview:**

21 October 2004

Time of Follow-up Interview: 10H00 – 10H30

The main purpose of the follow-up interview was to clarify aspects that were unclear in the first interview and to engage with more specific details in terms of the career development of the research participant.

**I:** Can you comment on any perceived obstacles, either internal or externally experienced?

**P 4:** The external obstacles will be family. Obstacles, probably commitments that one needs to keep, especially if you have family more so if you have an extended family. So it will be that.

**I:** How does this impact on your career development and advancement?

**P 4:** Ja, it does in a sense that one has this responsibility that one has to attend to.

**I:** For you professionally, is it very hectic in that sense?

**P 4:** Ja, of course, although there is support because one is quite lucky to be into a cultural background that still has a good support system but still with times changing the support systems tend to change as well quite drastically which in turn effect, you know the greater support possible that people in this culture used to enjoy in the past. But still, I guess when I compare relatively, compare myself with my colleagues we find there's kind of more support but equally more challenges as well! You have to care for other people as culture dictates, who are not necessarily your nuclear family.

**I:** Can you shed light on any internal obstacles experienced, if any?

**P 4:** Like I said, it is the lack of mentorship of course! The lack of any distinct and well-communicated form of mentorship, if there's any. Probably some people would argue that there is mentorship but that needs to be well communicated like I said earlier.

**I:** Did you encounter any obstacles along your career path along the way?

**P 4:** No, not really.

**I:** can you comment on any past developmental opportunities, personally or professionally?

**P 4:** No, not really.

**I:** Past developmental opportunities that presented structurally?

**P 4:** Not any that's structural in the system of course because I'm not aware of any that's there. Or at least at the time when I joined the university (T.I.1), I can't say university because I can't actually say it's only the university that's responsible for that because the university's (T.I.1) is kind of my employer since I started the teaching career. But there hasn't been anything that's there in the system that's structural, or at least that I'm aware of or that was communicated to me.

**I:** Can you comment on the useful strategies that you may have employed both professionally and personally in the career development path?

**P 4:** Well I think it's a question of being aware that there are challenges and acknowledging challenges but be reactive in the sense that you look at what's a challenge or an obstacle! Which I won't want to call an obstacle readily, more of challenges that kind of strengthen your career and equip you to have a much more meaningful experience to input even further into your career. It's a question of just looking at that, as not just there's something to moan about but something that's there that's kind of an experience to strengthen your skills or abilities thereby kind of like...(pause) equipping you to be aware that it's necessary because the system seems to be

unfortunate, therefore you have to be pro-active! You have to be not just reactive but pro-active. And you have to plan, have programmes in place and have networks (high intonation) it doesn't have to be in the system. Elsewhere when you get to make your life a better life rather than just kind of like moan about what's there or not there.

**I:** Opportunities that presented in your life?

**P 4:** Financial support. I don't want to say major or minor, but its resources. I mean getting a thousand rands than compared to getting nothing, I regard that as support. I got this from the university (T.I.1) when I was working.

**I:** Were you working and studying at the same time?

**P 4:** No, no ...no. I've never stopped studying in my life, I'm a student and I hope to be for my entire life!

**I:** Why is that so important to you?

**P 4:** It's developmental of course because things tend to change over time. Things tend to develop in whatever field you are in, also exposing oneself to other fields as well. I believe that all fields that are there contacts for a particular field, at face value things may look kind of dysjuncted but they all inter-related. Whatever I've studied ...(pause) I've studied management, law, catering, you know when I look back and look at the kind of studies that I've done you

know they kind of form a continuum. That is, they seem to help one in developing oneself in terms of how you treat people, how you approach, whatever you have to do, you know that kind of stuff. Unless one exposes oneself to a variety of data that is out there, be it hard data or electronic data, or whatever kind of data, one never grows; you know one never makes full sense or rather good sense of the life that one is exposed.

**I:** Were there challenges experienced in terms of the 'culture fit', career aspirations versus familial expectations?

**P 4:** Of course, there will be challenges! Although one can't say its better, I mean its challenges like any other kind of career; will pose such a challenge if you have those identities. Which I want to believe that, actually everyone has! All people have those kinds of identities, not only one identity where one part of your identity will impact whatever career you get to be exposed to. But of course, for women it becomes much more because women have to have more than two, three, four, five identities! You find it becomes much more challenging. At least from my analysis as a feminist, you know.

**I:** Can you comment on the internal and external factors that were influential in your choice of career?

**P 4:** Possibly, it's a social justice discipline, it's about individuals, it's about communities, and it's about groups and societies. It's about behavioural systems; it's about each and every person

that's out there. So it's both internal and external of course. It's a field that everyone should have at least some brush of it. You know it's kind of details of who people are because in terms of gender everything impacts gender in a variety of ways and impacts justice. Justice is about gender and impacts culture, which is gender and gender, is culture! So it's actually...(pause) it's a field about who everyone is and explains who everyone is. It makes a contribution in this sense of who everyone is and contributes to the betterment of everyone's lives. Although ideally this is what it is but practically it's a different case because of a number of reasons. Of course this is not the case.

**I:** Who contributed to your choice of career within this specific discipline?

**P 4:** Possibly my mum, because she was in this kind of field and you know, you tend to take your parents as role models.

**I:** How does your husband feel about your current position in academia?

**P 4:** I don't know...(pause) I don't think he has much of a choice. I don't actually get to analyse and entertain (high intonation) of how he feels about it. I just do what I do and that's it. It's probably bad, but that's who I am. It's kind of like take it or leave it.

**I:** What would be your recommendations to other women?

**P 4:** I'm not quite sure; I don't know whether I've reached what's desirable (high intonation) to start of with. But in any case to respond to your question, I really have to think about it. In any case it's just kind of like...(pause) working on your passion! And not just saying this is a passion that I have and these are role models that I had and just going to emulate them, irrespective of what context presents itself. But it is a question of combining passion with a personal...(pause) programme and looking ahead at a vision! You know, kind of like being on a mission to realise the vision but also using passion and the history that you have and role models that are available to you...(pause) as kind of context to realise the vision! So I can just...(pause) conceptually put it like that. You know, kind of like...(pause) live your life and career that's something like a contribution. When people view your life and when you yourself step out of yourself and step back, you look and think...'this is what I was armed in, this is what I learnt, this is what I as a person brought in to make my contribution or career a different one!. From a person who's been before you or for a person whom you're role modeling or from the lessons that are being taught'. Kind of making your own mark!

**I:** In that respect, did you encounter any obstacles within the institution?

**P 4:** Ja, possibly to an extent. Sometimes this kind of thing still happens were as a woman of course and as a Black person as well, running the department. You get people organising or seeking approval of something that should be happening in the department, is to happen in the department or is sought to be happening in the department but not going straight to you but going via somebody else! Which is kind of like, I don't know, I haven't been wanting to read too much into it but it's irritating and upsetting but anyway my not wanting to dwell too much into it (high

intonation) because I don't want it to control me in terms of thinking that these people are marginalising me.

You know, you find a case for instance where somebody wants to come to the department and create connections. Because for instance, management of a certain discipline has been approached by an organisation elsewhere that wants to have relations with us or wants to come and talk to us or get information on the programmes that we run etc. The person who receives that kind of feels that ...(pause) hat's needs to be communicated to us but goes via somebody else who happens to be a male! You know, one wonders...(pause) why wasn't I approached!

You know in that sense its irritating (high intonation) but one doesn't want to dwell too much on it and allow it to set one back but it's just those things that are irritating.

My last message to women, in particular Black women in academia is exactly what I said earlier. In terms of mapping your own career and kind of having time plans for everything! You know, something like...(pause) this is what you want to achieve by when and how...and walk towards that!

The interview was terminated due to the busy work schedule of the research participant and a prior commitment that the participant had to rush off to. The interviewer once again thanked the participant for the time and effort afforded in the participation of the interview.

## Research Interview: 5

**Date of Interview:** 22 October 2004

**Time of Interview:** 12H00 – 12H45

The research interview was conducted with a South African born, Zulu speaking woman, holding the title of Associate Professor within a specific discipline and occupying a position in academia on a particular campus within a South African university.

The interviewer thanked the research participant for affording the opportunity to be interviewed and assured that confidentiality will be maintained and identities of all those involved will be masked. The interviewer discussed briefly the topic of research and interests accordingly.

For the benefit of confidentiality, the following terms will be used: Tertiary Institution 1 (T.I.1), Tertiary Institution 2 (T.I.2), Tertiary Institution 3 (T.I.3) and Tertiary Institution 4 (T.I.4).

Where necessary, all persons, places and other identifying details have been omitted and have been replaced by ‘...’.

**P 5:** Participant

**I:** Interviewer

**I:** Can you tell me about your route traveled in terms of your own career development?

**P 5:** My story is...(pause) I started in 1995; I made a decision to change my career. I was in business; I was a marketing consultant and had a consultant company. I think deep down (high intonation) within me, based on my personality (high intonation) I felt that academia would be the best place (high intonation) to express myself. And I pursued my master's degree in the ...and I did my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*) in the.... So, when I completed my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*), the final year when I was completing my PhD (*Doctor of Philosophy*), I went to present some of my findings, a paper in ... And when I was there, I met an academic there. This was a professor from a South African university (T.I.3) who then recruited me. So it was great for me because I did my first degree at this university, so I thought it would be very interesting to come back on the other side and be an academic.

I spent one year at (T.I.3), I really liked being an academic there but the problem I had was that I didn't like the area at all, I've never liked the area. But when I came back from the... I felt that I would come back here, develop my career and then go wherever I wanted to go and I had my cites at (T.I.4). But my husband had to move to another city and the only choice for me then was (T. I.1). I came here and I knocked on the doors and then...(pause) then I got a job. I started here at (T.I.1) in 2000, I was at (T.I.3) in 1999 and I started basically at that level. The following year I became a senior lecturer and in 2004 I became an associate professor.

Challenges, lots of challenges! Challenges of having numerous roles, being a mother, being a wife, being an academic, a colleague to my colleagues. And this year also, I had an additional responsibility of being a programme director for the undergraduate programmes, which means also that I'm responsible for the smooth running of the undergraduate programmes. So, that increased my roles, being a lecturer, being an administrator, and...(pause) having to do research!

Because in order to become a professor you've obviously have to go on major research ticket or on a teaching ticket or a combination of both. So which means you've got additional responsibility.

Now, as you can see those are multi-tasks and I've got a two and a half year old baby. Now how do I do it? All I can say to you is that...(pause) I read somewhere a statement that I keep on going back to when people ask me this kind of question and that statement is ' juggling work, as a woman juggling work comes when you have children, family, community responsibilities is not easy. Having career, work and family is not the most difficult thing in the world, it is the second most difficult thing right after achieving world peace!' When I think about that statement I realise how true it is. Everyday when I come from work I have children to attend to, I have to attend to their needs, I've got to cook supper for them, they want me to play with them, I've got to be a wife, be all of those (high intonation)! And I want to tell you, if I say it's easy, it's an understatement!

So, how do I do it, why do I do it! (high intonation). My biggest motivation is the fact in this country for the first time things have opened up for women. And I think as women, it will be irresponsible not to take advantage of the opportunities, just because we have all these responsibilities. Our husband's take care of their careers and...(pause) we owe it to the next generation, we owe it to ourselves to take advantage of this. And I think we are now living in an era where women do not define themselves based on men's identity. We want to be able to express (high intonation) who we are...(pause) not express...(pause) not to be defined on the basis of what your husband's does or be on the shadow of your husband. I think we are

motivated by the same kind of things that motivate men. If you look the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the greatest motivator is self-actualisation, I'm motivated by self-actualisation. Self-actualising, through mastering all of these difficult issues! (high intonation).

I can't do things that other people do; I haven't watched T.V. for over a year for example. I've probably watched T.V. twice this year. I can't afford to watch T.V. The time everybody else, when they come home and put their bags and hang their feet, that's the time I've got to make up for the time I've been at work, for my children, I've got to spend a bit of time with them. I can't afford to go to funerals and wedding cos' that's the time that I've got to make up to my immediate family. I have a very structured life in order to socialise with my family, the structure of my life is that I spend time with them over a Christmas period. So without leading a structured life, I find it's totally impossible because you want to feel that you can cope and you have to have boundaries in your life and the problem with women is that if you cannot define boundaries in your life, it's impossible...(pause) you can't do it...(pause) it's impossible! You have to also do with a little bit of less sleep, you know, I'm those are just simple things that I do in order to cope.

And I think you can never go far as a wife or as woman, without the support of your family and your husband. So what you have to do is to be a great communicator because I communicate with them. Sometimes I'm able to come home every-day at four and be with them, sometimes I'm not (high intonation). And then when I'm not going to be able, I talk to them. I call them ...'I'm in a meeting, I say, this is going to happen, these are the benefits, this is how we all benefit, this is important to me and I need your support' and they support me. And I think I'm

extremely lucky, it's impossible if you don't have a supportive husband, I can tell you right now. It's impossible! So, I'm very very lucky (high intonation) because I have a supportive husband. And I've got supportive children. My middle daughter will bath the younger baby. And I have to be a nice person at home; I've got to be nice to my helper so that when I need her I can call on her for those extra hours. So, I think it's a question of understanding that you have to make time to manage your own personal life! Without managing your own personal life, because a lot of women are in situations where they feel they're out of control. They're out of control; they can't control their personal lives. If you can't control your personal life, if you're not in control of your personal life, you will never survive here! You'll never survive! As a woman, I think, anywhere, not just as an academic.

Challenges (high intonation) at work, yes, there are challenges (high intonation) at work. Cos' especially in the academic environment because first of all you are working with people who are already experts, they are on cutting edge of knowledge and the relationships (high intonation) are not sub-ordinate type of relationships. You also have gender issues; you have culture, a masculine organisation dominated by White males. How do you deal with that? I just think you use a little bit of common sense.

I'm actually doing a similar study. I did a study and I'm working with some women from an overseas university where we are looking at barriers to career advancement of women. And I was interviewing the women; I interviewed one woman who made a lot of sense to me. She's a CEO of a company, she said to me ' you cannot advance as a woman in terms of managing culture, managing corporate culture, managing value systems, even organisational culture. You

can't survive if you don't know what to say and when. Because we are emotional and if you don't understand that, you can't just come across in a male environment anyhow cos' that where we lose it'. And that little innocent statement, I think is a crux because you are working in an environment where you need corporation from everyone, including men. So you've got to be so careful that you don't rub them the wrong way while maintaining your integrity. That is a very difficult balance (high intonation), I can tell you that. But again it's about mastering your own self, your own emotions! Mastering the small little issues! Knowing what to say and when to say it and how to say it!

Because the easiest thing is to say nothing and do nothing! I think you won't go very far. So it's not just a question of being assertive and knowing the balance of being assertive or being too, too assertive. I tell you because it is the most difficult balance because you are trembling, you are walking on eggshells, and you are working with people. I mean, it took me three years of slaving (high intonation) for people to take me seriously and to...(pause) perhaps to say I'm worth my salt. Now when I'm unhappy, sometimes I feel like going, sometimes when you say 'I can't take this anymore' and I think about leaving. And I say to myself, wherever I go (high intonation), it will take me not less than three years in developing those relationships, in trying to prove myself (high intonation) before people start to believe who you are and if you are worth your salt!

And as a woman unfortunately, you can't perform like men, you've got to perform three times harder! You can't publish like them; you've got to publish three times harder! Because you're a woman, because you're an African! Your benchmark (high intonation) is much more difficult, I mean your outputs (high intonation) has to be three times more than perhaps a White male before

they can take you seriously. But that's the challenge we face and if we want to move ahead as women and if we want to be taken seriously we just have to take that stride. We have to face that challenge! We have to work harder!

Now when I went to university, I realised that and I tell my students the same thing. I tell my African students, my Black students that 'you can't behave the same way as your counterparts, you've got to work three times harder because you will be judged.' Not on...(pause) the fact that you've passed your test, you have to prove that you are worth that particular position that they are trying to recruit you into. So it's not easy, it takes a lot of discipline, discipline, discipline! I mean if I talk to you I've got to give you thirty minutes of my time, I can't talk to you and be on the phone. I've got to give attention to everything I do and that means boundaries! I cannot over emphasis that, the fact that you've got to set boundaries!

Mentoring and coaching, very few African role models! Very few mentors and very few people to coach you. I think I was very lucky because when I started in academia I was already mature and...(pause) my role models have been a number of people not necessarily people in academia. I think my greatest motivation is the responsibility that we have and the opportunities that have opened our...(pause) this freedom, I feel it's irresponsible of us not to do something about it. Because our brothers have died for it, kids have died for this freedom; our fathers have died for this freedom (high intonation). (Name of person) was locked for twenty years for this freedom! And if as women, we take the easy route because it's easier not to face leadership and to move on forward, if we take the easy route we are not honoring the very people that gave us the freedom and that's what drives me!

I...(pause) I don't like sometimes, I don't enjoy leadership because it's the most, I want to tell you something, there's nothing as painful as being a leader. Because once you stick out as a leader, first of all you got to understand you're leading a number of people and there's never a time (high intonation) where you make a hundred percent all of them happy (high intonation) hundred percent of the time! And personality dynamics, different people will react differently when they are disappointed or when they are...(pause) they see differently to the leader. And there are infinite variables involved (high intonation). There are cultural variables, there are racial variables, there are background issues, and there is a diverse range of issues. And when you are a leader, you are leading all those diverse issues. So, you are constantly making people happy and unhappy at the same time. So how do you cope? The only way I cope is to be consistent. What is the policy, my integrity? As long as I never ever compromise my integrity and I'm consistent and I'm fair and when I look at myself in the mirror 'now I feel that I can live with myself'.

Another thing is that women come from a culture where everybody has got to like us. Ja, we got to look good, we've got to put on that make up, you've got to be sexy, you've got to be slim, you've got to be all of those things for other people! If you look at them you've got to be all of those things for other people! As a leader there's nothing like that cos' if you try to be nice to people you're going to be a liar, if you're motivated to be a nice person you're gonna be a liar. If you're motivated to making other people happy, which is the way we have been socialised, you're gonna have serious problems. If you are motivated about fairness, integrity and you are motivated by ...(pause) being right, so you got to cut that ego totally out and it's a constant challenge. And it's a painful challenge and it's like you never arrive because what is ego, what

is pain? I read a book and she states 'every time when you're dealing with people and it's painful, it's because it's ego. When you deal with people and they disagree with you and it's still not painful, it means you have managed to deal with that ego'. Can I tell you something, that's the most difficult to do. It's saints who can do it and the Mandela's of this world. And that's what we need to aspire to!

So, it's about personal development, it's about understanding that. It's about not wanting (high intonation) to be a nice person. It's about not wanting to be right at the same time. It's about...(pause) not wanting to be popular. It's about understanding that sometimes you'll be very unpopular and you can still live with yourself. So, maybe in closing I can just say that being a woman and trying to live your life is my biggest motivation. You know, what the purpose is and if you keep examining that question and don't get easily distracted!

Life is a spiritual journey, at my age I take that seriously. It's about achieving a balance, which is very difficult when one is swamped by career and family. It is the second most difficult thing after achieving world peace.

I read in the Business Day, the other day that explains what is presently happening. This guy explains it very well where he adopts two stances regarding racism. First there are those people who don't talk about it but have unexpressed attitudes and secondly there are those who talk about it, express their issues and raise them. He expressed concern regarding the first group, he commented that the first group are those that talk behind closed doors about 'them and us', those

who are still racist, who send their children overseas, buy in separate areas to be away from 'them'.

In this regard, the leadership of the present institution (T.I.1) is questionable. They have a transformed student body but have not transformed as yet. We have a very sophisticated public...(pause) there's no 100% transparency regarding decisions...(pause) committees are set for different things. The White supremacy ensures that this is being perpetuated. Why is it that we are not being transformed? and the favourite defensive statement is that 'African people are being snatched, they won't stay here and earn academic salaries!' That is nonsense!

You know, if you can't speak the English language with the 'Queen's' accent you are looked down upon, people look down upon at those whom have grammatical errors when speaking English. You know, you won't find them, if you don't give them opportunities.

**I:** Your role models that was most influential?

**P5:** There are a number of people that I respect. My father particularly who believed that there's only one place to be and that's excellence! He was a champion in athletics and in 1958 when Bantu education was stipulated, he refused to work and had stopped teaching that day. There are a number of relatives and families who suffered severely in the apartheid regime and I feel I've got to support them, hold them as role models. I am very motivated by Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and all those who fought in the struggle; I feel I'm letting them down if I don't work hard enough.

The interview was terminated due to the participant's busy work schedule. The interviewer once again thanked the research participant for the time and effort afforded in the participation of the interview. The research participant was not able to grant the interviewer a second follow-up interview due to the various work related commitments.