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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The key for the future of any country and any institution is the capability to develop, retain and attract the best talent. Women make up one half of the world's human capital. Empowering and educating girls and women and leveraging talent and leadership fully in the global economy, politics and society are thus fundamental elements of succeeding and prospering in an ever more competitive world. In particular, with talent shortages projected to become more severe in much of the developed and developing world, maximising access to female talent is a strategic imperative for business.

Schwab (2012)

In this chapter I outline the following: a brief background to the study and the problem researched; my personal motivation for choosing this research; the aims, objectives and research questions of the study; and finally the contribution of the study.

This study was motivated by the need to utilise effectively all the human capital that South Africa has in order to be globally competitive while ensuring racially proportional gender equity at all levels in corporate South Africa. The topic of the study has changed since I did my initial literature review. Initially, the study focused on the barriers faced by women in corporate South Africa. The preliminary literature review revealed that gender on its own and the barriers faced by women in particular have been investigated by different scholars (Govender 2005; Hofmeyr & Mzobe 2012; Marthur-Helm 2006; Mashiane 2009; Ndinda & Okeke-Uzodike 2012; Nkomo & Ngambi 2009; Ntshingila 2006; Reddy 2007). However, several gaps were identified. Firstly, there were very few local studies that investigated more than one social identity simultaneously or the combined impact of these identities on women's success at work (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Haslam & Ryan 2008; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010). Secondly, studies tended to focus on one industrial or business sector. Thirdly, methodology used tended to be quantitative, as opposed to in-depth qualitative studies on women leaders in South Africa, in particular qualitative studies investigating the life stories of women CEOs across race and class, thereby giving them a voice (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009; Phendla 2004). Fourthly, research focusing on identifying empowerment strategies and policies to effect change at leadership level was also lacking (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009). Fifthly, most studies were based on Western countries, mainly the United States of America and the United Kingdom and tended to focus on white middle class

educated women. Issues that face women of other races and classes were seldom investigated (Calas & Smircich, 2006; Davis, 1981; Omar & Davidson, 2001; Yukongdi, 2005). The problem is that the information obtained from one class of people in a Western country is used as knowledge that purports to represent the entire body of knowledge on the subject being investigated, whether it is gender equity or leadership (Calas & Smircich 2006; Nkomo 2011). This situation calls for research to be done in researchers' own locales in order to understand and find solutions to issues that are pertinent to them and their societies. The objective of gaining a better understanding of women's lived experiences in leadership using a more holistic approach and understanding their success strategies was to formulate strategies for a racially equitable gender transformation at leadership level.

The under-representation of women at leadership level is a universal challenge that has been investigated by many scholars. However, the inequity persists globally (BWASA 2012; Gastelaars 2002;ILO in Calas & Smircich 2006; Pesonen, Tienari & Vanhala 2009; Van de Vliert & Van der Vegt 2004). Bell and Nkomo (2001), Haslam and Ryan (2008), Hoyt & Blascovich (2007) and Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) are some of the scholars that have investigated the intersection of different social identities amongst women in their corporate experience in the USA.

Nkomo and Ngambi (2009, p. 52) did a comprehensive search to identify published research on African women leaders and managers in the period between 1990 and 2008. Out of 43 publications, 18 focused on women in South Africa. The topic most commonly investigated was barriers to the advancement of women. Only a few studies investigated race and gender simultaneously (Littrel & Nkomo 2005). One surprising finding was the gross under-representation of research focused on identifying empowerment strategies and policies to effect change in the status of women leaders and managers on the continent (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009, p. 59). Nkomo & Ngambi (2009, p. 52) conclude:

The relatively small number of studies focusing on leadership suggests we have yet to fully explore the meaning and practice of leadership among African women leaders and managers. This is clearly a fertile area for future research studies.

The above statement is supported by Williams (cited in Nkomo 2011, p. 367) who contends that there is a complete lack of 'authentic well-sustained African input' as regards postcolonialism.

The target population for the study was women leaders across race and class who held leadership positions as CEOs or chairmen. The resignation of three top women leaders from South African companies was further motivation for gaining an in-depth understanding of women leaders' experiences. Cynthia Carroll, CEO of Anglo American, and Siza Mzimela, CEO of South African Airways, both resigned in October 2012. This was followed by the resignation of Pinky Moholi, CEO of Telkom, in November 2012. These were women from different races and nationalities who presided over top companies in different sectors of the economy.

The current study set out to investigate the intersection of race, class and gender and how this has impacted on the women CEOs' lived experience and their success strategies across different sectors, with the aim of coming up with strategies for gender transformation at leadership level. It was important to include race in the study because of South Africa's historical racial segregation and the racial imbalance when it comes to woman recruitment, promotion and representation at leadership level (BWASA 2012). The racial terminology used in this study is similar to that used in the Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998. South Africa has four racial categories, however the main categories are black and white. Within the black category there are three race groups, namely African, Coloured and Indian/Asian.

Lewis (2006, p. 98) asserts that conflict of gender occurs not only between male and female, but also within the 'livedness' of differently positioned femininities in the context of racialisation and unequal 'power' exchange. Diggins (2011) argues that race, social class and sexuality differentiate both our experiences and our interpretation of systematic oppression that we endure. The realisation that ignoring differences within groups contributes to tensions amongst groups, inspired Crenshaw to develop intersectionality as a way of mediating this tension (Knapp 2005). "Intersectionality' acknowledges and illuminates where disadvantages interplay and coincide or conflict between and within groups where new policy approaches need to be considered. Thus intersectionality alerts us to the need to fine tune policy in a more sophisticated manner than in the past, once we have assessed its impact on people with more than one social differentiation that creates disadvantage." Squires in Franken et al 2009, p. 51. This assertion is supported by Hancock's (2007) view that recognition of the simultaneity of gender, race and class and its impact on the population you wish to empower is critically important in developing effective comprehensive policies. Intersectionality is discussed in detail in section 2.3.

The current study used life stories as an interviewing method that would enable an in-depth insight through a postcolonial and intersectional lens in understanding women's experiences in corporate South Africa, across business sectors. It was important to understand how the simultaneity of race, gender and social class influenced the women in top leadership and how they succeeded. Unpacking the life journeys of these women from childhood gave a better perspective of the people behind the success, which was important for coming up with practical strategies.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The interest in the current study was informed by the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, as stated above. Women make up 52% of the total population of South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2011) and account for 45,1% of the working population (BWASA 2012). However, of the 339 JSE-listed companies and 20 state-owned enterprises (SOEs), only 3,6% are led by women as CEOs and 5,5% as chairmen. Only 21.4% of executive management positions are held by women (SOEs-24.2%), 64% of women in these positions are white. This statistic confirms the underrepresentation of women in senior positions, especially black women. In the following section I give background to South Africa's pre-1994 legislation which gives context to the racial and gender underrepresentation in the different sectors of the economy.

1.2.1 South African Legislation Context Pre-1994

In order to give context to the South African gender and racial journey, it is important to give a brief overview of the country's legal landscape in the greater part of the 20th century. Although the National Party formally entrenched apartheid after coming into power in 1948, discrimination against women and black people had existed well before that. White women were allowed to vote in 1930. However, section 11(3)(b) of the Black Administration Act, 1927 (Act 38 of 1927) accorded black women the legal status of children. They could not buy property or enter into contracts without their father's or husband's signature. The Native Urban Areas Act, 1923 (Act 21 of 1923) controlled the movement of Africans. Black women were relegated to domestic work in white households, which often separated them from their families. Black people were called 'Natives' and had to carry a passbook or 'dompas' (literally meaning a 'dumb pass') after the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act, 1952 (Act 67 of 1952) was enacted. The Act required black men to carry a registration document at all times in white areas, and this became applicable to black women in 1963. Each amended or new piece

of legislation served to entrench the skewed race and gender hierarchy in the country. The few African, coloured and Indian professionals that existed at the time were only allowed to serve their own communities. In the 1980s, when I was at medical school, we were not allowed to work in white hospitals.

The Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953) led to the establishment of the Department of Education which was to administer education for African people, then called Bantus. The education was under-resourced and inferior. The teacher-to-pupil ratio increased from 46:1 in 1955 to 58:1 in 1967 (SAHO). By 1961 only 10% of the black teachers held a matric certificate. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was followed by the Extension of University Education Act, 1959 (Act 45 of 1959). No black child could attend a white university. Tribal colleges were constructed to which black students were allocated according to their tribe. If a black child wanted to attend a white university they had to get ministerial consent. The ministerial office had to give a valid excuse but there was no obligation to give a reason for not giving permission. Thandi and Lolitha, participants in the current study, had to apply for permission to go to white universities because of this Act. While Lolitha was accepted for a master's degree, Thandi was rejected for her junior degree. She then did her A levels in one of the SADC countries because she was not prepared to go to a tribal college. The Coloured Persons Education Act, 1963 (Act 47 of 1963) followed, which was administered by the Department of Coloured Affairs. Education was compulsory for Coloureds. In 1965 the Indians Education Act, 1965 (Act 61 of 1965) was promulgated, and all Indians had to comply with this Act. Of the three departments, the one administering Bantu education was the most inferior and under-resourced. Vuyiswa a participant in the current study related her experience when she worked with disabled people and was having difficulty placing African people back in jobs:

I was placing whites more than Africans. Whites got wheelchairs from government; Indians and Coloureds had a house of representatives that catered for their wheelchair needs; for Africans there was no such.

Since the advent of a democratic dispensation in 1994, the ruling ANC government has systematically been reviewing and dismantling apartheid laws with the intention of freeing South Africa from its racist, gendered past, while simultaneously enacting several laws in order to promote racial and gender equality. Nkomo (2012) details different pieces of legislation enacted since 1994 to deal with gender empowerment. The South African Constitution adopted in 1996 provides a solid foundation for gender and racial equality. One of the initiatives of the current government was the establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality to ensure proper monitoring of gender equality. President Zuma established a Ministry on Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities within both the national and provincial governments. However, both entities are under-resourced and have internal leadership challenges (Waylen 2007). There is a belief that, in spite of all the laws, ‘the prospects for further gains in the post-transition period are influenced by co-existing discourses and a socio-political context that suggests the gender equality imperative today is not as strong as it was in the early post-apartheid years’ (Nkomo 2012, p. 2). Racial inequality, two decades after democracy, has received more focus, and gender equality has had to take a back seat (Seidman, cited in Nkomo 2012). A case in point is when the Black Management Forum referred to the election of Futhi Mtoba as President of Business Unity South Africa as a travesty of racial transformation (Donnelly 2010). According to this, black men are the priority of racial transformation. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below show that though racial equality has been prioritised by government legislation, African and coloured women have not benefited as much as other races. This brings focus to the importance of an understanding of the intersection of race and gender when addressing past inequalities and formulating policies.

Table 1.1 Racial representation of (EAP) at Top Management Level

Population Group	Economically Active Population (EAP)	Top Management Level
African Female	33.8%	5.5%
Coloured Female	5.2%	1.5%

Indian Female	1.1%	1.6%
White Female	5.3%	10.2%
Total Female	45.4%	19.1%

Source: Commission for Employment Equity 2012 Report

Table 1.1 shows the representation of women across race, at top management level, against their demographic representation within the economically active population. While table 1.2 shows recruitment and promotion per race group per the CEE 2012 report. White women accounted for more than half of all the women promoted, while the proportion recruited was more than one-third. The pattern is similar with Indian women. This is very high compared to the economically active proportion of white women at 5.3 percent and Indian women at 1.1 percent.

Table 1.2 Recruitment and Promotion of Women by Race Group

Population Group	Percentage Recruited	Percentage Promoted
African Female	46%	20.7%
Coloured Female	7%	12.1%
Indian Female	7.8%	11%
White Female	39%	56%
Total Female	23%	24%

Source: Commission for Employment Equity 2012 Report

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 reveal the legacy of apartheid which was most oppressive to Africans, especially African women followed by Coloured women.

In the next section I discuss my motivation to do the chosen study

1.3 RESEARCHER'S MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

There is no better point of entry into a critique or reflection than one's own experience.

Bannerji (as cited in Holvino 2008, p. 2)

I am an African woman born in Westville, Durban to a primary school teacher mother and an entrepreneurial father who had a small painting contractor business. My father owned property

in the few areas in the country where blacks were allowed to own land. I would classify my initial background as lower middle class.

The first half of my working life was as a professional; a medical doctor who owned and ran a solo practice. After practising clinical medicine for more than ten years, I decided to go to business school. This was to enable me to change careers. The change of career occurred in my middle age, when I joined the corporate world at management level for two years. My experience both at the business school and at the investment bank where I worked was a cultural shock. I had not studied, worked or socialised with whites before. I had voted for the first time in 1994; so when I joined the MBA class four years later, I was not prepared for the negative energy towards the new dispensation. In a class of 56, nine students were black. Two were local Indians (of both genders), two local Africans (of both genders) and the other five were from outside the country. Of the 47 whites there were only four women. Racism was palpable. I worked hard and focused on passing and finishing in time. The harsh racist environment prepared me well for my work experience at the investment bank. At the bank, I worked for a small team where I was the only African, the only woman and the oldest. The business school environment had taught me to be resilient and to focus on doing what I had come to do. I wanted to learn as much as I could. This would enable me to run a solid business after I left the bank. Going to business school and being employed at the bank meant a financial sacrifice. After two years I felt I had a fair understanding of business, and my business which I had established by then was starting to suffer from neglect.

At the bank there was one white woman in another team who was much younger than I was. She completely ignored me when I greeted her. She would come and chat to my team members and treat me as part of the furniture. This taught me that there was no sisterhood across race. This might be explained by the assertion made by Acker (2006, p. 453) that advantage (of race) is hard to give up: increasing equality with devalued groups can be seen and felt as an assault on dignity. The second thing I learnt was to focus and work hard. I was not looking at getting a promotion (though I was given a promotion after one year) or money; I just wanted to learn and leave. This helped me to cut out the noise. I was the first to arrive and amongst the last to leave on any given day. I had taken a knock in salary so it was important to learn as much as possible in as short a time as possible.

I currently run my own company and sit on a few boards as a non-executive director. In addition, I chair the board of one of the top 40 JSE-listed companies. Each time I went to a

‘census’ presentation of the Businesswomen’s Association, I always wondered what experiences the women in senior leadership could share and how this could inform strategies towards gender transformation at senior leadership level. I wanted to hear their stories. While my experience can be beneficial to the study it also has potential for bias.

Mitigation of potential bias on the part of the researcher is discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study sought to understand the intersection of race, class and gender in women leaders’ lived experiences and career progression in corporate South Africa and the implications of this intersection for racially equitable gender transformation. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to –

1.4.1 investigate the extent to which the intersection of race, gender and social class might have influenced women leaders’ work role experiences and their career progression; and

1.4.2 identify strategies that would assist other women in their career progression as well as to identify strategies for gender transformation at leadership level within corporate South Africa.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Initially I had three questions. After I started analysing the data and the themes began to emerge, it became apparent that my third question, which related to women’s strategies for success, in actual fact formed part of one of the other two questions, namely the one related to the key to strategies for gender transformation. Therefore, in the end, I narrowed down my focus to two research questions:

1.5.1 To what extent does the intersection of race, social class and gender impact on women CEOs' experiences in their work roles and their career progression?

1.5.2 How might an understanding of senior women's experiences in their leadership roles assist with developing strategies for gender transformation at senior leadership level in South Africa?

1.6 SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The choice of study was informed by the gaps identified in the existing literature on research about women in leadership in Africa. Firstly, the methodology used in most studies tended to be quantitative. Secondly, not enough studies focused on strategies and policies for women's advancement in business. Thirdly, these studies did not investigate the intersectionality of more than one social identity at a time (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009). This study addressed the gap in the following three areas:

1.6.1 The study used an intersectional approach which looked at race, gender and class simultaneously, allowing for an in-depth analysis of different inequalities and the interaction between them in different contexts (Bustello & Letelier 2009). The study extends intersectionality theory by demonstrating the importance of taking into consideration the socio-historical context that may shape social identities. Intersectionality highlighted the combined and cumulative effects of marginalisation based on race, class and gender. The impact on women's experiences and their career progression, shown in this study, will assist business and political leaders in the formulation of policies and strategies that are inclusive as far as all races, genders and social classes are concerned. The timing of the study is opportune considering that the Gender Equality Bill is due to be tabled before Parliament.

1.6.2 Themes related to strategies for gender transformation that emerged from the study confirmed the need for a multilevel approach in addressing inequalities: a micro level – women's own characteristics and interactions; a macro level – the role of the organisation through its leadership, structures and practices; and a societal level – the role played by family/extended family, stereotyping by society and policy formulation by government. The WHEEL Theoretical Model was developed as a product of the themes that had emerged from the field and the existing literature. This study will make a practical contribution as it will assist business practitioners in addressing inequalities and transformation within organisations. In addition, this

study will make a theoretical contribution to future research on strategies for gender transformation at leadership level as informed by women leaders themselves and by existing global literature. Furthermore, future research can build on the WHEEL Model.

1.6.3 The qualitative approach using grounded theory and the life stories method of interviewing will give an in-depth insight into a topical area by means of obtaining successful women leaders' input into strategies for gender transformation and investigating three social identities simultaneously as well as their combined impact on career progression. Giving African women leaders a voice in this topic will contribute to the body of research.

The themes that emerged indicated that while race was the dominant social identity for black women, gender was the dominant issue for white women, whereas class and generational issues formed an overlay to the dominant identities. Language and culture were mentioned by two participants, in each case as a source of prejudice. The Afrikaans language and culture were issues in companies or regions of the country where the Afrikaans language and culture were dominant, and Indian culture was identified as prejudicial to women's career progression. South Africa is still battling with postcolonialism, and its biggest impact concerns the colonised mind and the inferior education available to the majority of the population. The impact of postcolonialism is addressed further in later sections of this report.

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter 1 I have contextualised the study by providing the background and the problem statement. I then discussed my motivation for the study, the aims and objectives of the study and the research questions. I ended with the contribution of the study.

In Chapter 2 I present the role of the literature review in qualitative research, especially in grounded theory, as a theoretical framework to the study. I also discuss feminist theory and intersectionality, and explain how I integrated postcolonial feminist theory and intersectionality theory to form the foundation of the study.

In Chapter 3 I present my research paradigm; the historical evolution of qualitative research and how constructivist qualitative researchers ensure quality research; and the development and implementation of the grounded theory (GT) methodology used in this study. Furthermore, I discuss the use of life stories as an interview method, give a brief overview of the history of GT, the version of GT chosen for this study, namely constructivist GT (Strauss and Corbin, 2008)

and the justification for that choice. I also outline the research process that was followed step by step, and give examples. The challenges that were encountered are discussed and the ways in which rigour was ensured (transparency, trustworthiness, peer debriefing and member checking) are explained. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings, but these are preceded by the presentation of the participants' profiles and a discussion of the main themes that emerged from axial and selective coding. A detailed presentation of the participants' views (together with relevant extracts) is also given.

Chapter 5 discusses the enfolding literature relevant to the themes that emerged from the current study.

Chapter 6 discusses first-order constructs (from participants' data) and second-order constructs (from literature) with supporting extracts, as well as the development of the WHEEL Model.

Chapter 7 concludes the study with a discussion of the main themes, a comparative analysis, limitations of the study and recommendations for further studies.

In the following chapter, Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the study, the feminist and the intersectionality theories and the integration of these two theories to form the foundation of the study, are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I discuss the timing of the literature review in qualitative methodology, and GT specifically, the gap identified in literature together with justification for the chosen topic and the theoretical framework for my study.

2.1 ROLE OF LITERATURE REVIEW IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Different scholars have different views on the timing and role of the literature review in qualitative research, based on the methodology to be used. Creswell (2009) defines three uses of a literature review in a report: to frame the problem in the introduction to the essay, to review the literature presented in a separate section, and to include the literature review at the end of the study where it becomes a basis for comparing and contrasting the findings of the qualitative study.

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 67) assert that a literature review should not be done in the substantive and related areas in which the research is to be done, but that the literature search in the substantive area can be accomplished and woven into the theory as additional data for constant comparison when the GT is nearly completed, that is, during the sorting and writing up. This view is supported by Nathaniel (2006) and Holton (2007). Charmaz (2006) also concurs, stating that delaying the literature review avoids researcher bias. However, this view is not shared by Coffey and Atkinson (cited in Dunne 2011), who believe that an ignorant researcher runs the risk of rediscovering the wheel. This assertion is supported by various scholars (Clarke 2005; Cutcliffe 2000; Dey 1999; Eisenhardt 1989; Layder 1998), while Henwood and Pidgeon (cited in Dunne 2011, p. 120) describe the term 'theoretical agnosticism', which they argue 'is a better watchword than theoretical ignorance to sum up the ways of using the literature at the early stages of the flow of work in grounded theory'. This approach does not advocate that the researcher ignores existing theories, but rather that the researcher avoids the imposition of specific theoretical frameworks, as this may cause the researcher to analyse the data through a specific theoretical lens.

Suddaby (2006, p. 635) argues for achieving a middle ground ‘between a theory-laden view of the world and an unfettered empiricism’. Dunne (2011) proposes using reflexivity to counteract the negative impact of or bias from early engagement with theory. He goes on to explain how memoing, described in section 3.6, is based on reflective thinking. As Strübing (cited in Dunne 2011, p. 117) remarks, the fundamental point is ‘not whether previous knowledge should be used in actual data analysis; the important insight lies rather in how to make proper use of previous knowledge’.

Dunne (2011, p. 118) asserts as follows:

[R]egular memos resulting from an early literature review could record and outline the new ideas to which the researcher has been exposed, the propositions, values and context linked with a given theory, the possible shortcomings of the theory, and could also chronicle the manner in which the researcher’s thinking might have changed as a result of accessing that knowledge.

For this study I chose the middle ground (Suddaby 2006). My initial topic was about barriers to women’s advancement in corporate South Africa. My review of the literature focused on previous studies done in the area and gender issues in general. This was done as a natural progression through the university’s stipulated process; from a research proposal, followed by a literature review, to an approval of the research methodology prior to progressing to a field study. However, it was also done ‘in order to identify what work had been done, which issues were central to these fields, and what knowledge gaps existed’ (Dunne 2011, p. 119). This allowed me to identify an area that had not received enough attention, namely investigating gender issues across race and class. More importantly, I found that literature that studied gender, race and social class simultaneously in South Africa was lacking. An in-depth study of women’s stories at CEO level across race, class and industry sectors was also lacking. This realisation was the main reason for my change of topic after going through the literature review approval phase. I was struck by the fact that women were described in terms of numbers (BWASA 2012), therefore, getting the women’s stories as told by them became my area of interest. As a businesswoman who has ascended to the position of non-executive chairman of a top 40 JSE-listed organisation, I had some personal experience of the subject matter. In Chapter 3 I discuss the way I mitigated possible bias of the research findings caused by my prior knowledge.

In the following section, I draw a global comparison regarding gender transformation. I also discuss the two theories that form the foundation of the study, namely, the postcolonial feminist theory and the intersectionality theory.

2.2 A GLOBAL COMPARISON OF GENDER TRANSFORMATION

The gender gap in economic participation is not unique to South Africa as evidenced by the global comparison on gender transformation in different countries and geographical regions in the next section.

Table 2.1 shows the top and the worst performers in closing the gender gap, per country income level. Rwanda had the smallest gap in men's and women's labour force participation, and Arab countries the biggest (World Economic Forum, 2012). The Rwandan genocide might be part of the explanation for the former, and Muslim religious beliefs might explain the latter.

Table 2.1 Top and worst Performers per Income Group in closing Gender Gap

Income group	Top performer	Worst performer
High-income countries	Nordic countries	Saudi Arabia
Upper middle-income countries	Latvia (no. 1) South Africa (no. 2)	Iran, Islam Republic
Lower middle-income countries	Philippines	Yemen
Low-income countries	Mozambique	Chad

Source: World Economic Forum, 2012.

Even after the gender parity scores are weighted by country population, the Middle East and North Africa still have the lowest scores overall, and on economic participation and political empowerment specifically (World Economic Forum, 2012). Bangladesh was the highest-ranking Muslim majority country at number 86. Asia, especially India, had the lowest scores on the health and survival sub-index, while sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest scores on educational attainment. Out of 135 countries South Africa was ranked 69 in economic participation and opportunity and 87 in educational attainment. The worst score for South Africa was for health and survival at 103. The information supplied in Table 2.1 (showing the top and the worst performers, per country income level, in closing the gender gap) confirms the assertion that the Middle Eastern countries were the worst performers and the Nordic countries among the best. South Africa ranked second in its category, and this could be attributed to the transformation laws passed over the last two decades; however, there is room for improvement.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) started measuring the gap in gender parity in 2006. The WEF index measures the gender gap in four areas, namely; education, economic participation, health and survival, and economic participation. The index compares different countries, different regions and different income countries. In the beginning, the index sample included 115 countries but the number has increased to 134, which represent more than 90% of the world population. Though no country has completely closed the gender gap, some regions and some countries within regions have gone a long way towards narrowing this gap. Overall, the political gap has been narrowed – 17% for political empowerment, more than 59% for economic participation, and more than 93% for education. In general there has been a small deterioration as far as the scores for health and survival are concerned (World Economic Forum 2009).

An understanding of the status of women empowerment globally gives perspective to the status in South Africa and lessons to be learnt from more progressive countries. Those lessons are important in trying to formulate strategies for gender transformation.

In the following section I discuss the theoretical frameworks used in the current study.

2.3 FEMINIST THEORY

[T]he reality is that no country in the world, no matter how advanced, has achieved true gender equality, as measured by comparable decision-making power, equal opportunity for education and advancement, and equal participation and status in all walks of human endeavour. Gender disparities exist, even in countries without glaring male domination, and measuring these disparities is a necessary step towards implementing corrective policies.

Lopez-Claros & Zahidi (cited in World Economic Forum 2005)

It is difficult to look at gender issues at work without first looking at the writings of feminist theorists. The American Heritage Dictionary defines a feminist as someone, male or female, who believes in social, political and economic equality between the sexes (Kramerae & Treichler 1996). This section looks at the thoughts of people who have believed in social, political and economic equality throughout the different phases of the feminist revolution.

The feminist movement started in the 1800s, though it only gained momentum in the 1960s. However, the literature review done for this study indicated that gender equality is still elusive many decades later, and this is attested to by the opening quote to this section.

Calas and Smircich (2006) define feminist theory as a critique of the status quo, and, therefore, always political. Calas and Smircich looked at a multitude of feminist theoretical tendencies and how each one contributed to and/or ignored certain areas within the field of feminist organisation studies. Six feminist theories are discussed in their work, namely: liberal feminism, which is concerned with inequality as regards socialisation of people into gender roles; radical feminism, which focuses on cultural practices that value men's experiences over women's; black feminism, which questions which women's experiences are constitutive of gender; psychoanalytic feminism, which focuses on experiences acquired in early developmental relations with parents; and socialist feminism, which is the confluence of Marxist, radical and psychoanalytic, poststructuralist/postmodern and transnational/postcolonial feminism (Calas & Smircich 2006, pp. 286–321). Postcolonial feminists look at 'third-wave feminist theorising', which addresses race and class, amongst other issues.

Feminist scholars' criticism of liberal feminist theory is based on its roots being an ideal world that is modelled after 'Eurocentric, elite, masculinist ideals' (Calas & Smircich 2006, p. 290). This, it is argued, disregards the race issue and social system and their impact on gender issues. Radical feminism is described as seeking to create institutions in which women's needs can be met, as opposed to a change in 'mainstream' organisations to accept women and their differences and treat them as equals. Calas and Smircich (2006) analyse the different approaches used by women in management research. These include psychological and individual level research, sociological and structural research, and research into the organisation and the broader social system. The criticism of radical and psychoanalytic feminist theories by socialist feminists is that they are based mainly on Western patriarchal conditions and give limited regard to culture or historical circumstance.

A closer analysis of radical feminism identifies the theory of radical-cultural feminism which is centred on women's association with nature as a point of strength compared to men's association with culture, and which stresses all women's values regardless of sexual orientation and race (Frye 1983; Lorde 1983; Moraga & Anzaldúa, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006).

Psychoanalytic feminist research favours clinical approaches that connect the mind-world of individuals with their developmental experiences (Calas & Smircich 2006, p. 298), while socialist feminism expresses dissatisfaction with Marxist thinking of the 1970s which neglects gender issues in favour of worker issues. Socialist feminism combines Marxist, radical and psychoanalytic feminism (Ferguson 1998; Holmstrom, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006). Socialist

feminists contend that the conception of human nature is the interrelation between human biology, society and human labour, whereas gender is the intersection of sex, race, sexuality, ideology and experiences of oppression under patriarchy-capitalism. Calas & Smircich (2006) state that methodologies favoured by social feminists are case studies and ethnographies. Their critique of radical and psychoanalytic feminism is that it is patriarchal and has limited regard for culture and historical occurrences.

Postculturalist and postmodern feminism was recognised and better articulated in the 1990s (Calas & Smircich 2006). This approach gives priority to language over knowledge, and it delves into the theory of language. The poststructuralist approach has its own critics who argue that it denies core values (Harding, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006) and morality (Benhabib, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006). Some have argued that this approach has divided women's voice. This has been countered by a reasoning that gender is only one of many issues that need to be addressed, others being, for instance, class, social identity, race, ethnicity and age (Fraser & Nicholson, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006). In the application of poststructuralist feminism to organisational studies, part of the criticism by postculturalist scholars is that masculinity is the unstated but present norm in knowledge reconstruction. Poststructuralist feminism believes society regards women as a secondary group to men through use of language, for instance the use of head**master**, **mankind** and chair**man**. Scholars with this view include Casey (cited in Calas & Smircich 2006); Gray (1994); Krefting (2003) and Wilson (2001).

Transnational/postcolonial feminist theorists critique Western feminist theorisations of gender as perpetuating images and social experiences of mostly privileged men and women in the First World. The radical and black feminists' criticism is not as wide as that of the postcolonial feminists (Calas & Smircich 2006). Postcolonial feminists question Western knowledge which is based on the experience of the West to the exclusion of non-West history; this questions the representativeness of knowledge of all people's views and stories, power, identity, justice and ethics in practices of globalisation (Spivak, cited in Calas & Smircich 2006). Mohanty et al. (cited in Calas & Smircich, 2006, p. 318) state that people in the Third World/former colonies are likely to identify with the call for the rewriting of history, based on:

... specific locations and histories of struggle of (post)colonial people ... the need to voice "other knowledges" which would illuminate the simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental for grounding feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism.

There are different views about the input made by feminist theorists. Some believe there is a gap between feminism theory and practice; that the feminism theory may be in conflict with the

cultural values of groups of young women other than white women (Denner 2001). Hurtado (1996) asserts that while white feminists focus on personal political issues, feminist women of colour are more concerned with public issues, mainly racism and political action in general.

To this, Denner (2001) adds the dimension of age. She identifies contradictions in women's behaviour as observed by young women, namely the failure of adult women to work together competing for scarce resources and the division of women according to social class, race and education. She also states that the meaning of feminism depends on the woman's social position, including race. Hurtado (1997) discusses the social position issue by looking at social identity versus personal identity. She cites the work of Tajfel (1981), who defines personal identity as 'an aspect of self-composed psychological traits and dispositions that give us personal uniqueness ... identity is derived from intrapsychic influences, many of which are socialized within family units' (Hurtado 1997, p. 309). Tajfel (1981) defines social identity as those aspects of one's self-identity that derive from one's knowledge of being part of categories and groups, together with the value and emotional significance attached to those memberships. She argues that the formation of social identities is the consequence of three social psychological processes, namely: social categorisation (nationality, language, race and ethnicity, skin colour or any other social or physical characteristic that is meaningful in particular social contexts); social comparison (comparison of groups regarding status or degree of affluence that achieve significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value attached to those differences); and lastly, psychological work (self-evaluative, related to social values and self-defining).

Hurtado (1997, p. 311) cites Stephenson who argues that scientists fail to examine dominant groups, for instance white American heterosexual males, in a critical way. He argues that men are the cause of the most evil in society ranging from wars and abuse of children to federal deficit. He concludes that researchers are so preoccupied with examining stigmatised groups that they actually fail to see men, especially white men, as a group (Hurtado 1997, p. 311). Hurtado further argues that historically, assimilation/acculturation researchers have focused on cultural adaptations that are not necessarily healthy, for example assimilation into the dominant culture versus multiculturalism. The response of feminist writers like Rendon (1992) and Cuadraz (1996) to this has been to emphasise successful adaptations to cultural transformations in spite of the costs associated with the rejection of assimilation (Hurtado 1997, p. 312–313). Hurtado has coined the phrase 'excellence through diversity' which refers to positive cultural adaptation attained through critical mass, in other words through the increase in the numbers of each group

within specific social contexts. According to Hurtado, ‘excellence through diversity’ results when the number and variety of positive cultural adaptations increase.

Addressing the issues that impede equitable gender representation at leadership level, especially of black women, might lead to ‘excellence through diversity’ and reduce the feeling these women have of being outsiders. Such negative feelings have negative consequences, for instance, the women involved try to fit in and do not bring their best to their job.

Hurtado quotes different writers, for instance Phinney, Fledman, Mont-Reynaud and Rosenthal, Jones, Reid and Zuckerman, who state that there is greater variation within ethnic/racial groups than between groups regardless of gender and/or race (Hurtado 1997). She further argues that the differences in personal identities are more a function of different access to social and economic power. As regards the differences between men and women, research literature focuses on one or several psychological dimensions, one at a time, as opposed to seeking a true understanding of the significance of gender on human behaviour, which will require a study of a significant number of variables simultaneously (Hurtado 1997, p. 315). The majority of people studied are a homogenous group, namely white, college-educated men and women (Eagly, cited in Hurtado 1997). What exacerbates the problem of representativeness is that until recently most writers have not given the socio-demographic characteristics of their study sample. Hurtado (1997, p. 316) states:

By ignoring social identities in our study of individual psychological characteristics, we have a priori made dominant social identities the only ‘normal’ context for all human beings – an implicit bow to the assimilation/acculturation framework.

Hurtado (1997) cites the work of Stewart et al. who propose seven mechanisms to study women’s life in order to mitigate exclusion. One of these seven mechanisms is exploring other aspects of social position like race, class and sexuality. Hurtado discusses an alternative framework for understanding cultural transformation which studies the groups’ spheres of social engagement. This framework looks at taking the definitional approach from the perspective of group participants. This militates against using the dominant group’s perspective as the standard perspective. She also argues that focusing on mean differences between groups de-emphasises areas of similarities between the groups.

Hurtado (1989) explains the exclusion of women of colour in feminist theory as a function of lack of education and poverty across lower classes of all races and women of colour throughout the different classes. She further states that women of colour are subjected to race, class and

gender discrimination simultaneously by members of their group as well as by white men and white women, which was confirmed in the current study. This, she asserts, is not acknowledged and thus integrated by white feminists. She ascribes white feminists' failure to understand the complexity of oppression towards women of colour to the feminists' social class and their relationship to white men. The relationship between white men and women gives white women relational power, she infers, though they are still subjected to subordinate roles relative to white men; another assertion that was endorsed in the current study. Different black women activists, as far back as the 19th century, fought for the rights of all women regardless of colour or class, which was different from the fight by white women activists (Hurtado 1989).

Looking at the amount of work that different feminists have tackled over more than a century, starting with liberal feminism around the 18th century, it is disheartening to see that the issue of inequity still persists amongst other oppressive social identities, not only as regards gender but also as regards race and social class. Feminist theories have evolved from looking at gender issues for a selected group of women to include other groups of women and other oppressive social identities over and above gender, to looking at how these issues impact on communities, organisational studies and across nations. I agree with the view that the 'post' in postcolonial might be a misnomer because colonisation is still alive and well, with the biggest challenge being the colonised mind. The 'One-Third' world still determines the world agenda without significant input from the 'Two-Thirds' world, leading in some cases to wars. Some believe that if the struggle for true empowerment of women across colour, class and/or sexual orientation is won, the wars driven by greed at the expense of life will be stopped and the right to be equal but different, as well as the right to human dignity, will be addressed. What prolongs the struggle for women's equity, in part, is the disunity amongst the oppressed gender, across class and race, and sometimes within groups (Hurtado 1997).

2.3.1 Feminist Theory Framework used in this Study

A postcolonial feminist epistemology not only focuses on patriarchy as a source of oppression, but also examines how social inequalities are inscribed within a historical, political, social, cultural, and economic context that influences access to benefits

Racine (2003, p.18).

According to Rahman (2005), postcolonialism began in the 1960s after the collapse of the European colonies as a result of national liberation struggles waged by oppressed peoples. Young (2001, p.2) describes postcolonialism as a way/framework which offers someone who is

part of a culture but feels excluded by its dominant voice, inside yet outside, a way of seeing things differently, a language and a politics in which your interests come first. It offers all people on this earth the right to the same material and cultural well-being; it asserts the right of African, Asian and Latin American peoples to have access to not only resources and material well-being, but also to the dynamic power of their cultures, cultures that are now intervening in and transforming the societies of the West (Young 2001, p.4). Young (2001) goes on to state that postcolonial feminism seeks to produce a more just and equitable relation between different peoples of the world, irrespective of race, gender, class, sexual orientation and other marginalised categories.

As a paradigm of inquiry, postcolonial feminism seemed the most appropriate framework for the setting of the current study since it reflects the multidisciplinary influences of cultural studies, sociology and political science, and it recognises the history and specific location of postcolonial people. Paradigms of inquiry are social constructions; they cannot be seen as true or untrue; they provide the analytic lens for looking at the impact of multiple social identities on shaping women's work experiences in the Third World (Racine 2003). Postcolonialism focuses on the interlocking nature of oppression arising from racism, sexism, classism and other forms of discrimination that have affected racialised women's access to good education, health and economic opportunities (Racine 2003; Mohanty 2003), thus affecting their work and life experience. Quayson (2000) explains that postcolonialism is a process of coming into being and struggling against colonialism and its after-effects. The after-effects of colonialism were witnessed several times during the current study. While it was easy for black women to share their stories and the role their multiple identities had played in their lives, I found this to be difficult for the white participants. There was a racial, cultural and/or class barrier. However, one white participant told me how she had adopted a black child, while another shared how she had assisted Mandela to organise white business. The wall of our colonial past and an element of defensiveness (Roman 1993) were palpable. It felt as though in the eyes of my white participants my racial identity was more prominent in their minds than our common gender and education level which did not seem enough to transcend race. This is confirmed by Edwards (cited in Racine 2003, p. 21) who states that the concept of race is formulated in the context of particular economic, social and political circumstances. Racial differences enter into the consciousness of individuals and groups, and determine conceptions of themselves and others as well as their status in the community.

The use of the postcolonial feminist framework in the current study was directed towards accessing the silenced knowledge erased by the history of colonial domination; and exploring how the dominant ideologies and culture in corporate South Africa influenced women leaders' experiences and their career progression, with the purpose of allowing the disenfranchised knowledge of colonised and gendered populations, across race, to be heard and acknowledged (Quayson, 2000). The political, social and cultural history of South Africa, before and after apartheid, informed the choice of this framework. Carrim (in Thosago 1999, p.104) describes the use of the postcolonial lens as a mechanism of providing space for people to express their multiple identities in a way that fosters the evolution of a South African national identity.

In the next section I discuss the intersectionality theory. However, it is hard to separate the feminist theory from the intersectionality theory. Therefore, some aspects of intersectionality are discussed within the feminist theory framework above.

2.4 INTERSECTIONALITY

The career of the triad of 'race–class–gender' started in the USA around the late 1970s and early 1980s when feminists of colour voiced vehement criticism of what they saw as a white middle-class bias, an unrecognised self-centredness in much of feminist theory and politics. Understanding race, class and gender as interrelated structures of oppression, as Patricia Hill Collins called it, was most strongly advocated in the context of black feminism with its comparatively marked radical (left) tradition of social theory (Collins 1990; Napikoski 1982; Davis 1981). The political observation that ignoring differences within groups contributes to tensions among groups inspired Crenshaw to develop the concept of intersectionality as a way of 'mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics' (Crenshaw, cited in Knapp 2005, p. 255). According to McCall (2005), one could say that intersectionality is so far the most important theoretical contribution to women's studies, along with racial and ethnic studies. McCall distinguishes three approaches: anti-categorical approaches that she mostly sees represented in deconstructionist and poststructuralist theories; intra-categorical approaches, which focus on differences and inequalities within the frame of one of the categories, be it class, race, ethnicity or gender; and third, inter-categorical approaches, the study of relations between categories. In the current study the focus was on inter-categorical and intra-categorical approaches.

In the past ten years, intersectionality has evolved and expanded from being primarily a metaphor within structuralist feminist research to an all-encompassing theory (Carbin & Edenheim 2013, p. 233). There are different views on whether it should be defined as a ‘theory’ (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Winker and Degele 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006), a ‘framework’ (Hancock 2007; McCall 2005), or as ‘politics’ (Crenshaw 1991). Hancock (2007) describes three approaches to the study of race, gender and class, namely the unitary, multiple and the intersectionality approaches. Table 2.2 below shows six dimensions of the three approaches. In the intersectional approach different categories matter equally, the relationship between categories is explored for sameness and/or difference, there is a dynamic interaction between individual and institutional factors with recognition of the importance of layers of society, members within a category are diverse and differ in politically significant ways, while individual and institutional levels of analysis are integrated and multiple methods are used (Hancock 2007, p. 71).

The intersectionality approach recognises the diversity of members within a category (women of different race and class within the gender category). Multiple marginalisation of race, gender and class at individual and institutional levels create social and political stratification, which require policy solutions that are attuned to the interactions of these categories (Hancock 2007, p. 65).

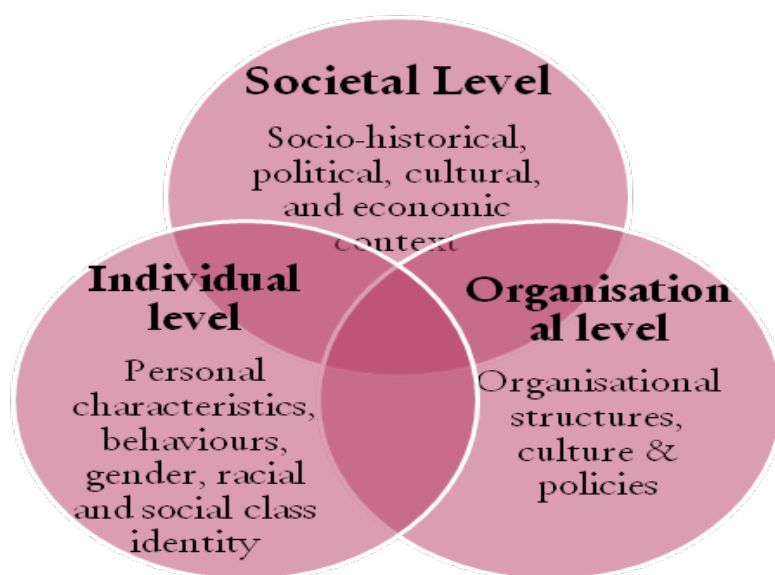
Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) propose the use of African feminism and postcolonial theory as theoretical frameworks in order to achieve an intersectional meso-level analysis which should be expanded to include the unique socio-historical, political, economic and cultural context of Africa. Figure 2.1 shows the meso-level approach incorporating the societal level in dealing with intersectionality.

Table 2.2: Conceptual Differences in Approaches to Categories of Difference

	Unitary approach	Multiple approach	Intersectional approach
1. Number of categories addressed	One	More than one	More than one
2. Relationship between categories	Category examined is primary	Categories matter equally in a predetermined relationship to each other	Categories matter equally; relationship between categories is an open empirical question
3. How are categories conceptualised?	Static at the individual or institutional level	Static at the individual or institutional level	Dynamic interaction between individual and institutional factors
4. Presumed makeup of each category	Uniform	Uniform	Diverse; members often differ in politically significant ways
5. Levels of analysis considered feasible in a single analysis	Individual or institutional	Individual and institutional	Individual integrated with institutional
6. What is the methodological conventional wisdom?	Empirical or theoretical: single method preferred; multiple method possible	Empirical or theoretical: single method preferred; multiple method possible	Empirical and theoretical: multiple method necessary and sufficient

(Source: Hancock 2007, p. 64)

Figure 2.1 A Meso-level Approach to Women Leadership



Source: Nkomo & Ngambi (2009, p. 61)

The multilevel analysis of intersectionality is supported by different scholars. Winker and Degele (2011) advocate analysing the effects of intersecting social categories at the level of social

structures, the level of constructions of identity (individual level) and the level of symbolic representations. They argue that there is a lack of methodological analysis, and they recommend that intersectionality, as a framework, can be used in both qualitative and quantitative studies. Winker and Degele discuss the multilevel approach in analysing the social categories of difference; examining the micro level of the lived experiences (Smith & Shields in Winker & Degele 2011), the meso level of organisations (Acker 2006) or social structures (Risman 2004), and the macro level (McCall 2005), including internationality (Bilge and Denis, in Winker and Degele 2011, p.52). An understanding of the nuances and differences within the marginalised groups and at different levels is important for policy makers in order to redress past and current oppression equitably. One example of policies that address certain aspects of marginalisation is the black economic empowerment policies in South Africa which have benefited mainly educated black middle-class men as opposed to all previously disadvantaged individuals (Booyesen et al. 2007). Identifying the different marginalised subcategories within race and/or gender will assist in the formulation of policy that is sensitive to and empowers diverse subgroups within categories (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall 2013; Hancock 2007).

The collection of data, looking through an intersectionality lens, allowed the researcher to interrogate the overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender and class (Lykke 2011). Using life stories as a method of interview in the current study allowed for an in-depth understanding of the different women within the same race and/or class. In the current study intersectionality was applied to investigate categories of identity and compare similarities and differences intra- and inter-categorically.

In the following section I define the three social identity categories examined in the current study.

2.4.1 Social Class

The study examined the participants' initial social class, acknowledging that there is mobility between classes in one's lifetime and/or between generations (Knapp 2005). It also looked at the consequences of class, if any, in the women's work life experience. It was interesting to observe how, at the initial stages, the participants were reluctant to discuss class even when responding to direct questions on class. This could be informed by South Africa's past history of racial discrimination when race determined social class. However, this changed as people reflected deeper on their lives.

According to Felski (2000), a social class is a broad group in society who have common economic, cultural or political status. Acker (2006) asserts that the concept of class illuminates the economic experiences of white men more clearly than those of white women or people of colour because it was developed primarily from a privileged white male perspective. Karl Marx based the stratification of people (class) on those with private property and those without. Max Weber identified three stratification structures: political power, economic means, and status (social prestige) in the community. For this study Max Weber's definition seemed most relevant. Though blacks had no political power before 1994, the use of social and economic status as a way of differentiation in the different communities was prevalent. One of the main differentiators in social status was education. Being a teacher or nurse was highly regarded. If one had tertiary education, then one was seen as upper class. Blacks who could send their children to boarding school had a higher social status. The true upper class sent their children to neighbouring SADC countries where education was of a high standard for all races. Three (one Indian and two Africans) of the participants in the current study benefited from this high standard of education. Being an owner of a shop in a township or having a car elevated one's economic status. People from urban areas were also seen as being of higher social status than people from rural areas since they tended to be more assertive and better groomed. Grooming and self-presentation was also highlighted by three participants as having an influence on your perceived social class. Relational power through political and social networks and relationships (Weinbach 2006) also mattered. As related by some participants in the current study, blacks with political network connections stand a better chance in the black economic empowerment space.

There was further stratification within the black community based on the privileges given by the apartheid government. Indians were superior to other blacks, followed by Coloureds, while Africans were the lowest class. Within the Coloured race the closer one's looks were to those of whites, the better social status one enjoyed. However, this was more prevalent in Cape Town.

2.4.2 Gender

Gender functions as a social category, similar to race and class, that 'establishes, in large measure, our life chances and directs our social relations with others' (Andersen 1993, p. 31). According to this definition, gender is a social structure which places women and men in different and unequal positions in society based on expectations, division of labour and access to power and resources, thereby shaping the life experiences of men and women (Andersen 1993, p. 33). Wekker (cited in Franken et al. 2009, p.73) defines gender as a layered social system that

gives meaning to the biological differences between men and women and which operates at three levels:

- 2.4.2.1 On a personal level, gender organises society by attributing characteristics to women and men: women are socialised to be emotional and caring, while men are supposedly rational and less prone to enter into nurturing relationships.
- 2.4.2.2 On a symbolic level, gender assigns differential values to the activities of women and men: generally masculinity is evaluated more highly than femininity. Masculinity and femininity give significance to our lives, to us, to the things we undertake. For example, when there are many women in a particular profession, that profession will not have a high status (education, nursing, the care sector). As soon as more men enter the profession, its status will rise.
- 2.4.2.3 On an institutional level, gender sets a mechanism in motion that builds on a 'natural' conceptualisation of gender. For example, women take care of the household and men are the breadwinners. Not only are we confronted with a different valuation of these activities, but there is also an institutional translation: women still do not get the same remuneration for the same labour as men; women do not build up pensions at the same rate as men and women suffer disproportionately from a fall into poverty.

As discussed earlier, in this study gender was perceived as the main oppressive identity by white women while race was perceived as the main issue by black women. Class received similar prominence across different races.

2.4.3 **Race**

Race is defined as a social category or social construction that we treat as distinct on the basis of certain characteristics, some biological, that have been assigned social importance in the society. It is not the biological characteristics per se that define racial groups, but how groups have been treated historically and socially. That is, society assigns people to racial categories such as black, white, and so on, not because of science, logic, or fact, but because of social experience.

Crossman (2011)

Wekker (cited in Franken et al. 2009, p. 73) asserts that ethnicity and race are two sides of the same coin. She defines ethnicity as the social system that gives meaning to ethnic differences between people – to those differences that can be made on the basis of people's origin, appearance, history, culture, language and religion. Language and culture were mentioned in the

current study as additional social identities that impacted on people's acceptability and access to benefits.

In South Africa there are four racial classifications; three fall under the black classification, namely African, coloured, and Indian/Asian. White is the fourth group classification. In this study the participants fell under the coloured, African, Indian and white categories.

My choice of using narrative (life stories) as a method for in-depth interviews allowed the voice of the minority to be heard (Holvino 2010). The current study investigated the differences not only between black and white women but also within racial groups (Buitelaar 2006; McCall 2005).

2.5 INTEGRATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This point of intersectionality is not to be assimilated into one of its parts, nor does it melt away the differences. It requires intricate translation, a creative idea to interpret the differences in terms of the other. In order for the translation to be successful, the interpreter must understand the theories of both participants involved. Conscious reflection aids the process of interdependence between differences without assimilating the differences into our larger going theories.

(Bardwell-Jones, cited in Bowen 2013, p. 1)

According to Bowen (2013, p.3), intersectionality and postcolonialism are two opposing theories; while intersectionality strives to bring things together, postcolonialism refers to the struggle of the colonised to create a new perspective in relation to the oppressive pre-existing perspective of the Old World. Kerner (2012) discusses the differences between postcolonial feminism and intersectionality, and these include how intersectionality compares differences between social groups while postcolonial feminism focuses on complex forms of power, conflict and interaction between marginalised groups (interpersonal relationships between members of different groups). Intersectionality tends to be local/national versus postcolonial feminism which tends to be global in scope.

Postcolonial feminism draws attention to the cultural aspects of the colonial experience and political, social and economic expectations (Yokota 2007, p. 265). Criticism in the literature is directed at the asymmetry of power in research production between Western female researchers and non-Western female researchers (Schurr & Segebart 2012)

Holvino (2010, p. 248) looks at contributions of postcolonialism theory to the study of intersectionality. Firstly, race, gender and class are embedded in other social and complex relations, which include those of nation-state and sexuality (Briggs 1998; Holvino 2003; Kempadoo 2001; Mendoza 2002) Holvino proposes studying the differential impact of globalisation and colonisation on women and men in developing and developed countries, also adding nationality, ethnicity and sexuality to the common triad of social identities, and studying the implications of organisational change. Her suggestion of examining organisational structures that acknowledge the different social identities, using domestic work as an example of how this should be regulated, is in keeping with a suggestion by one of the participants in the current study (Glenn 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, 2002).

In this study my multiple yet intersecting identities influenced my access to white participants and also my experience in the field which differed according to the race of the participant (Kobayashi 1994). The tricky aspect related to South Africa's multiple identities is class. Because of the country's past colonial history, class was mainly based on race. The inferior education received by Africans in the pre-1994 era under the Bantu Education Act (1953) perpetuates the stereotype that Africans are inherently inferior, due to the (unskilled) working positions held by the majority of Africans. It is therefore difficult to know if only my race was a limiting factor in certain areas of my fieldwork or whether it was a combination of race and perceived lower class. My experience in the field and the findings from interviewing black participants confirm that there is no mutual solidarity between black and white women in South Africa (Schurr & Segebart 2012). The emergence of the concept of intersectionality is closely linked to postcolonial feminists' intersection of various forms of struggles; antiracism, anti-imperialism, sexual orientation and feminist struggle (Mohanty 2003). Intersectionality seeks to establish platforms for the analysis of the intertwining processes of social categories (Sotelo 2012, p. 239).

Both postcolonial and intersectionality theories formed the theoretical framework of the current study. The multilevel intersectional analysis was done at individual, organisational and societal levels as confirmed by the findings, taking into consideration South Africa's socio-historical, political, cultural and economic context.

In the next chapter I discuss the methodology applied in the current study with a step-by-step description of the research process; data collection, data analysis and steps taken to ensure trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

[O]ne can't judge the appropriateness of the methods in any study or the quality of the resulting findings without knowing the study's purpose.

Patton (2002, p. 10)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In my preliminary literature review, one of the gaps identified was that most of the studies on women had used a quantitative methodology (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009), and that research using qualitative methodology was lacking. The purpose of the study was to understand the participants' experiences and to develop theory from the participants' data. This made qualitative methodology using life stories seem more appropriate than quantitative methodology.

In an effort to define qualitative research, Merriam (2009) gives four characteristics that describe qualitative research. Firstly, the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meaning attributed to individuals' experiences, and to study individuals' understanding of their experiences as opposed to the researchers' perceptions of individuals' experiences. Secondly, the primary instrument used to collect and analyse data is the researcher herself or himself, which might introduce an element of bias. The way to address potential bias is that it should be accounted for and monitored. Thirdly, qualitative research is regarded as an inductive process as researchers often use qualitative studies to gather evidence in order to establish theories and hypotheses that previous research has neglected. Finally, qualitative research provides highly descriptive data in the form of pictures and words as opposed to numbers produced by other types of research.

Having decided to use a qualitative methodology, the next stage was to identify the appropriate qualitative method. Merriam (2002) describes eight different types of qualitative methodology: basic interpretive, phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical and postmodern. The most recognised qualitative methodologies are grounded theory, ethnography, narrative enquiry and phenomenology (Lal, Suto & Ungar 2012). After a comprehensive study of the different qualitative methodology types, I chose GT using life stories. GT seemed the most appropriate methodology for understanding the participants'

experiences and developing theory. In the next section I discuss my research paradigm, the evolution of qualitative research methodology and the chosen grounded methodology using the life story interview method.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

All research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial.

Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p. 22)

According to Schurink (cited in Burden and Roodt 2007, p. 11), qualitative research stems from a largely antipositivistic, interpretive approach that is ideographic, holistic and typically aimed at understanding social life and the meanings people attach to it. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings so as to make sense of or interpret these phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. One practice that has become very important in qualitative research in general, but more especially in organisational studies, is GT (Burden & Roodt 2007, p. 11). GT is discussed in detail in the section that follows. There is also a brief section on the life stories method which was used as an interviewing method.

Before choosing a methodology, researchers need to know and declare their research paradigm; this paradigm, together with the purpose of the study, influences the methodology researchers choose to use. The 'right' methodology is the one that will answer the research question(s) (Holloway & Todres 2003; Holloway & Wheeler 2002; McPherson & Leydon 2002). Furthermore, Creswell (2003) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) assert that a clear understanding of the research paradigm is essential. My paradigm is constructivism (i.e. each individual constructs his or her own reality; therefore, there are multiple interpretations). This is sometimes referred to as interpretivism. According to Ponterotto (2005, p. 130) a constructivist-interpretivist researcher may interview only a handful of clients for longer periods of time and when analysing the transcript data will not seek other researcher consensus on identified themes. The point is that there are multiple meanings of a phenomenon in the minds of people who experience it, as well as multiple interpretations of the data (multiple realities); the researcher neither attempts to unearth a single 'truth' from the realities of participants nor tries to achieve outside verification of his or her analysis. The rigour of the study is based on the thick descriptions and constant comparative analysis. Although I was the only analyst in this study, I had peer debriefing with

my promoter, Prof Mnguni, and to a lesser extent with Profs Schurink and Nkomo. GT as a methodology was intimidating initially, but I learnt as I went along.

Table 3.1 outlines the research methodology framework used in this study.

Table 3.1 Research Methodology Framework

RESEARCH PARADIGM Qualitative study Constructivism/Intepretivism
METHODOLOGY APPROACH Grounded theory
DATA COLLECTION Semi-structured in-depth interviews using Life stories
STUDY POPULATION Woman CEOs and chairmen of public and private companies and state-owned enterprises
SAMPLING Theoretical Snowballing Purposive
DATA ANALYSIS Theoretical coding Constant comparative method

3.3 GROUNDED THEORY

The grounded theory method offers a logically consistent set of data collection and analysis procedures aimed to develop theory.

Charmaz (2001, p. 245)

These procedures allow the identification of patterns in data; by analysing these patterns researchers can derive theory that is empirically valid.

Glaser & Strauss 1967; Martin & Turner, cited in Fernandez (2004, p. 43)

The GT method involves the discovery of theory from data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The term GT is used to label a specific mode of qualitative inquiry and the resultant product(s) of that inquiry. In GT studies, the discovery of theory from data is accomplished by systematically

discovering, developing, and provisionally verifying theory throughout the process of data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The strength of GT is its ability to develop theory through the use of prescribed, yet flexible, tools for analysis (Charmaz 2005).

3.3.1 History of Grounded Theory

Jones and Alony (2011, pp. 99–100) give an account of how GT was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the early 1960s in response to the positivist grand theoretical work that was becoming the favoured methodology in their field of sociology. Grand theory is predicated on ‘the notion that the purpose of social research is to uncover pre-existing and universal explanations of social behaviour’ (Suddaby 2006, p. 633).

Glaser and Strauss were critical of this approach to research and viewed grand theorising as too far removed from real people and the problems they attempt to solve in their everyday lives (Goulding 2002). Glaser and Strauss strongly favoured direct participant observation by researchers and interactions between participants and researchers. They were also influenced by the field of symbolic interactionism and its focus on how people interpret the meaning of objects in the world, the lived realities of individuals, dynamic interplays of human behaviour, and the social construction of social behaviour (Charmaz 2005; Gephart 2004; Goulding 2002; Locke, cited in Jones & Alony 2011). With GT, they sought to elicit fresh understandings about patterned relationships among social actors and to explore how these relationships and interactions dynamically construct reality for the actors (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

GT as a research methodology provides ‘a set of systematic procedures extending and significantly supplementing the practices long associated with participant observations in order to achieve their purpose of developing grounded theories of action in context’ (Locke 2002, p. 19). While GT is comprised of various analytical tenets, it is the collective, iterative cycling of these tenets that creates a holistic methodology for theory building. GT is not a loose collection of tools for handling and analysing data or merely a means by which to code data, nor is it a synonymous descriptor for any emergent qualitative design. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 26) state that, ‘The [GT] procedures are designed to systematically and carefully build theory. Taking shortcuts in the work will result in a poorly constructed and narrowly conceived theory’. In practice, while many research studies cite the use of GT methodology, a substantial number have merely applied particular pieces of the approach, as noted by Gephart (2004), Glaser (2001), Johnston (2009) and Suddaby (2006). This fractional adaptation of GT can be

problematic. Urquhart, Lehmann and Myers (2010, p. 359) assert: 'Researchers who use grounded theory only as a way of coding data are neglecting the main purpose of the method – which is to build theory'.

O'Reilly, Paper and Marx (2012) assert that the power of GT is only achieved when GT is considered from an epistemological viewpoint and employed as a holistic methodology, not simply as part of the process of data coding and analysis.

A GT study begins with a general opening of a subject area. As stated by Dey (1999, p. 3), the researcher will usually start with a 'general subject or problem conceived only in terms of a general disciplinary perspective'. From this initial opening, the study becomes continuously focused towards an area of social concern. From the current study's target population (where the sample would be drawn from), 30 women were identified. These women were CEOs and chairmen of state-owned enterprises and JSE-listed companies and women who headed divisions within the same companies. Ease of access, however, was a challenge. This is discussed later in this document. Glaser comments that 'all is data', which means that:

[E]xactly what is going on in the research scene is the data, whatever the source, whether interview, observations, documents. It is not just what is being, how it is being and the conditions of it being told, but all the data surrounding what is being told.

Glaser, cited in Jones & Alony (2011, p. 103)

Keeping a research journal allowed me to capture the research scene and my observations during and after each interview.

O'Reilly, Paper and Marx (2012, p. 247) assert that the analytic guidelines that comprise GT are its fundamental tenets, which include the constant comparative method, theoretical coding, theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation and theoretical sensitivity. Before describing the fundamental tenets of GT the following section describes the different versions of GT and the version I chose.

3.3.2 Deciding which Version of Grounded Theory to use

After deciding to apply GT as my chosen methodology, I had to decide on the appropriate version. When choosing GT, one can apply the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) version, the Corbin and Strauss (2008) version which has evolved over time, or the constructivist version by Charmaz (2006).

Table 3.2 below describes the different versions.

Table 3.2 Different grounded theory approaches

GT version	Difference	References
Glaser	Has remained loyal to the original data analysis approach, which was flexible.	Heath & Cowley 2004; Glaser 1992; Walker & Myrick 2006
Strauss and Corbin	Wrote three books in an endeavour to define the data analysis process more clearly. The third book introduced flexibility. Their theory was criticised as being too pragmatic and prescriptive.	Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1998 Corbin & Strauss 2008 Glaser 1992; Melia 1996
Main variation/conflict between the above two methods is whether verification should be the outcome of data analysis. Glaser stresses induction and theory emergence. Strauss stresses deduction and verification. Corbin and Strauss suggest member checking with participants as the study progresses. Corbin and Strauss's version has evolved to be in line with constructivist GT.		Boychuk, Duchscher & Morgan 2004; Charmaz 2000; Heath & Cowley 2004 Heath & Cowley 2004 Byrant & Charmaz 2007; Heath & Cowley 2004 Corbin & Strauss 2008
Charmaz	Paradigm-multiple realities Co-constructing data with participants Rich accurate description Themes rather than concepts and categories	Charmaz 2006

My choice of methodology was based on three criteria, namely, a clear guideline on the application of data analysis (since this was my first encounter with qualitative methodology and GT), compatibility with my constructivist research paradigm and the potential to generate theory. This made the Strauss and Corbin approach appealing, but the process was intimidating initially. I do agree with the assertion that the process might pull researchers towards looking for data rather than looking at data, especially at the axial coding stage (Kendall 1999; Melia 1996; Robrecht 1995). I became so caught up in the coding that I was not being critical in my analysis, but my promoter was helpful in assisting me to look at data critically. I studied the narrative inquiry methodology to get a different perspective, but I excluded the narrative enquiry from the main report because it seemed like an afterthought while my main methodology was GT. It is interesting that even Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 295) warn researchers about getting too caught up in the analytical procedures. Though the Strauss and Corbin approach is criticised for being weak at theory building (Artinian 1998; Glaser 1992), I believe their approach helped me

in my study to build theory, the theory that has emerged from the data was co-created with the participants and is both relevant and able to guide action (Corbin & Strauss 2008).

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to facilitate the interviews. With two exceptions, where the participants had time constraints, each interview was scheduled for about two hours per interviewee, with an option for a follow-up interview. The participants were allowed to tell their stories with minimal interruption from me to ensure that the research questions were addressed. After a technical problem with the audio recorder at the first interview, I used two tape recorders at subsequent interviews. This was done after obtaining the participants' permission. While Byron (1993) and Aberbach and Rockman (2002) advise against the use of a recorder during interviews, Berry (cited in Mikecz 2012, p. 488) has a different view: 'How can you make a clear-headed decision about your next question when you're listening, trying to make sense of the answer, and taking notes at the same time?'. I agree with Berry, especially after the audio recorder failed during the first interview. However, with my training in fast note taking at medical school, I believe I captured most of the data.

I transcribed all the interviews personally and verbatim, taking five to six hours with each interview. I did only one to two interviews per fortnight. This allowed for writing of detailed field notes, data analysis and recording my observations and experiences in my research journal. In this journal I also recorded observations of setting, body language and my interpretation of the context. When a participant accepted the invitation to take part in the study, I sent the participant a consent form and a brief overview of the study by email. I would then collect the signed consent form on the date of the interview. A few offered to send the signed form after the interview. I chose life story methods for the in-depth interviews, as discussed below.

3.4.1 Life Story Methods of Interviewing

As a method of looking at life as a whole, and as a way of carrying out an in-depth study of individual lives, the life story interview stands alone.

Gubrium & Holstein (2002, p. 123)

The life story method has become a central element of the burgeoning subfield of the narrative study of lives (Cohler 1988; Josselson & Lieblich 1993) for its interdisciplinary applications in

understanding single lives in detail and how the individual plays various roles in society (Cohler 1993; Gergen & Gergen 1993). Roberts (2002, p. 4-5) gives a few reasons for this interest, namely; a rise in the popularity of qualitative research and disillusionment with static approaches to data collection, a growing interest in the life course, an increased concern with lived experience and how to best reveal it, and a rejection of positivism. The life stories method is used in different disciplines; historical, psychological, feminist, literary and cultural studies. Life stories are credited with giving research a holistic perspective. Feminist scholars employ the method primarily to uncover the diversity of women's experiences and to project women's voices into areas where they have previously been ignored (Ojermark 2007, p. 2). Different terms are used to describe life stories, including oral history, biography, life history and personal narrative. Roberts (cited in Ojermark 2007, p. 3) differentiates between life story and life history; he defines life story as the story as narrated by the author, whereas life history is the later interpretive, presentational work of the researcher. Table 3.3 describes the different terms used in life history.

Table 3.3 Life History Terminology

Biographical research: Research undertaken on individual lives employing autobiographical documents, interviews or other sources and presenting accounts in various forms (e.g. in terms of editing, written, visual or oral presentation, and degree of researcher's narration and reflexivity).

Ethnography: Written account of a culture or group.

Family history: The systematic narrative and research of past events relating to a specific family or specific families.

Narrative: A story, having a plot and existence separate from the life of the teller. Narrative is linked with time

as a fundamental aspect of social action. Narratives provide the organization for our actions and experiences, since we experience life through conceptions of the past, present and future.

Oral history: Personal recollections of events and their causes and effects. Also refers to the practice of interviewing individuals on their past experiences of events with the intention of constructing an historical account.

Case history: History of an event or social process, not of a person in particular.

Case study: Analysis and record of a single case.

Life history: Account of a life based on interviews and conversation. The life history is based on the collection of a written or transcribed oral account requested by a researcher. The life story is subsequently edited, interpreted and presented in one of a number of ways, often in conjunction with other sources. Life histories may be topical, focusing on only one segmented portion of a life, or complete, attempting to tell the full details of a life as it is recollected.

Life story: The account of a person's story of his or her life, or a segment of it, as told to another. It is usually quite a full account across the length of life but may refer to a period or aspect of the life experience. When related by interview to the researcher it is the result of an interactive relationship.

Narrative inquiry: Similar to 'biographical research', or 'life history research', this term is a loose frame of reference for a subset of qualitative research that uses personal narratives as the basis of research. 'Narrative' refers to a discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a personal unity by means of a plot.

Testimonio: The first-person account of a real situation that involves repression and marginalization.

Source: Ojermark (2007, p. 3)

Final forms of life stories can vary greatly. On the one hand, a life story can be read as mostly the researcher's own description of what was said, done or intimated. On the other hand, it can be a full first-person narrative in the words of the person interviewed. The life story interview is employed by researchers who take two primary approaches, namely the constructionist and the naturalistic. I believe that it is important, in trying to understand other persons' experiences in life or their relations to others, to let their voices be heard, to let them speak for and about themselves first. If we want to know the unique perspective of an individual, there is no better way to get this than in that person's own voice. What is important is that the life story be told in the form, shape and style most comfortable to the person telling it.

Just witnessing – really hearing, understanding and accepting, without judgement – another’s life story can be transforming (Birren & Birren 1996; Gubrium & Holstein 2002, p. 125). It was important for this study to hear the women’s voices and their stories as told by them. As women who have succeeded in a patriarchal society, it was my belief that they were best positioned to inform the transformation agenda in South Africa. Lack of local studies that investigated women leaders’ work lives across race and class informed the choice of in-depth interviews. My purpose in this study was to understand the women’s worlds, their different social identities and the role these multiple identities played in their lives, starting from early childhood (Ochberg 1993). I believed that the inductive, interpretive and explorative features of the life story method would assist in the generation of theory (Oplatka 2001). The study required the participants to examine their life of work and if and how their different identities played any role in that life.

Researchers’ biographical bias and subjectivity originate not only from their professional backgrounds, but also from their personal backgrounds (LeCompte 1987), especially when the researcher and the researched are from different cultural backgrounds and from different advantaged and disadvantaged social groups. Constant reflection, trust and responsibility are essential to successful life story research. Kouritzin (2000, p. 20) identifies two important benefits of life history for the participants; they are provided opportunities of being listened to, and it helps them ‘recognize moments of adversity in one’s life and the uses to which they can be put’.

Miller (2000) describes three ways of analysis for life stories, namely: narrative, where the interview is analysed and themes emerge from the narrative; realist/inductive, which uses grounded theory (the methodology followed in this study); and neo-positivist, where the approach validates pre-existing theory.

Going through the interviewing process was transforming for me at a personal level. Most of the participants acknowledged that it gave them time to reflect on their lives. In the following section I discuss the target population for the study.

3.5 STUDY POPULATION

The target population of the current study was women CEOs and chairmen of private and public companies (in corporate South Africa these include state-owned enterprises). The term

chairman is used and understood as a gender neutral title. In keeping with the topic the women had to come from different races and social classes. My choice of the first participant was guided by ease of access and by her rich experience of having led three institutions across three sectors, namely government, a state-owned enterprise and her own black economic empowerment (BEE) private equity company. Except for the third participant, who was recommended by Participant 1 (therefore obtained through snowball sampling), data analysis directed the choice of the other twelve participants. The choice of participants was strategic without being rigid. Different races and classes had to be represented in order to answer the research question. Fernandez (2012) identifies sampling that is too superficial as one of the dangers in any type of research. Miles and Huberman (cited in Fernandez 2012, p. 54) propose that to counteract this risk, the foundation cases selected should provide the 'meatiest' and most study relevant information, in other words cases that will provide rich data. This assertion guided my choice of the first and subsequent participants.

Coleman as quoted by Berg (2006) states that snowball sampling is created through a series of referrals that are made within a circle of people who know one another. While according to Biernacki & Waldorf (1981, p.141) snowball sampling is a method that yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share and know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest. Participant 3 was identified by the first participant as someone with characteristics that were of interest to the research, hence her inclusion in the study.

3.6 DIFFERENT TENETS OF GT: DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is a means of gathering data in a logical manner based on earlier data and the researcher's analytical thinking. This ongoing process of data collection and analysis directs the researcher to obtain further samples (Goulding 2002). Through theoretical sampling, a researcher will be guided to the next data based on the theory as it emerges. According to Glaser (1998), theoretical sampling is the prime mover of coding, collecting, and analysing data which is directed by the emerging theory, and it directs its further emergence. It is the 'where next' in collecting data, the 'for what' according to the codes, and the 'why' from the analysis in memos (Glaser 1998, p. 157).

With GT, emerging theory informs the data collection; theoretical sampling leads the researcher from participant to participant as new conceptual ideas are captured and then compared and contrasted against the original idea to refine the conceptual idea and facilitate theory generation (Glaser & Strauss 1967). This may lead to the research question itself being modified by the relevant data incidents from the first and subsequent participants. The migration of data collection across various venues for the purpose of supporting a theoretical framework is the essence of theoretical sampling (Locke 2001).

O'Reilly, Paper and Marx (2012) discuss the three principles of data collection; using multiple sources which lead to construct validity, creating a database which other people can access (thus creating reliability), and maintaining a chain of evidence which allows an external observer to follow the derivation of evidence.

The selection of the first participant was strategic in terms of who would provide information that was rich in data which was relevant to the topic. Ease of access also played a factor. She suggested and facilitated the interview with Participant 3. Getting white participants was quite a challenge. Of the ten approached initially, only two accepted. With persistence and the help of a black woman executive, a third participant accepted after six months of trying to involve her. The fourth was easily receptive to the idea of participating in the study. All black participants were quite easy to access. The sample was diverse in terms of the participants' academic qualifications; economists, pharmacist, engineer, infrastructure specialist, chartered accountant, HR specialist, media specialist and lawyer. It was also diverse in terms of the business sectors that different participants represented; transport, mining, media, financial services, ICT, BEE Investment companies, government departments, state owned enterprises and medical equipment.

After eleven interviews no new categories emerged and it seemed that each category was densely described, as outlined above. However, I was reluctant to stop and scheduled three further interviews. One of my concerns was the limited number of white participants who had agreed to be part of the study. While it took one phone call or email to engage the black participants, it took months and persistent follow-up to obtain the two white participants that eventually formed part of the study. Even though I believed that no more new data was coming out of the field after eleven participants, I was not satisfied with only two white participants. I used all the contacts I had to plead with one of those that had declined my request. I have to thank her young black woman subordinate who did everything in her power to facilitate the interview. She

agreed on condition that I only interviewed her for 30 minutes. This was a challenge considering that I had spent 90 minutes to two hours with all the other participants. My strategy was to do research on the internet on her biography and her worldviews. I believed this would allow me to make the most of the allocated time. I ended up interviewing her for 50 minutes. However, although my past experience was that the ice was broken during the first 45 minutes or so, after which the interviewees shared more about themselves (towards the last 30 to 40 minutes), I did not have that privilege with this participant.

My experience with the third participant informed my decision to focus on women CEOs as opposed to non-executive chairmen. Women in executive positions provided rich information on the subject because of their hands-on involvement in their companies and the dynamics brought by working with other executives across race, gender and class.

3.6.2 Theoretical Saturation

In GT the completeness of data categories, or ‘category saturation’, leads to successful, robust theory generation (Goulding 2002). Category saturation occurs when ‘subsequent data incidents that are examined provide no new information, either in terms of refining the category or of its properties, or of its relationship to other categories’ (Locke 2001, p. 53). Saturation is reliant on data collection, coding, and analysis reaching a state of completeness within and across contexts (Goulding 2002). After coding several incidents into a single category, it becomes easier to identify whether subsequent incidents in the same category are illuminating new aspects of the category, in which case categories are not yet saturated and require further data collection, coding and analysis. If no new aspects of the category emerge, the category has reached saturation. This is vital to verification in GT (Strauss & Corbin 1998). According to Goulding (2002), GT has a built-in mandate to strive towards verification through the process of category saturation.

In the current study I thought theoretical saturation was reached after the eleventh participant. However, someone recommended a further participant (Participant 12) who could provide rich data. Though no new categories were added from this interview, it added ‘colour’ to the class issue (discussed under findings). The motivation for taking on participants 13 and 14 was to try to get a better race representation. It took six months and various contacts to get Participant 13. Participant 14 added an important class and race perspective to the study. Both participants 12 and 14 had gone to the USA around the same period. Participant 12 already had a master’s

degree and was upper class and black, while Participant 13 was white and upper class with only a junior degree. Their experiences reflect the impact, trans-nationally, of race in women leaders' experience. While their participation did not add new categories, it confirmed and enriched the existing data. I found it challenging to do a study on a subject that I am passionate about. I found it difficult to leave the field even though it seemed that saturation had been reached. Using life stories as a data collection method gave a voice to women leaders which I believe was lacking in local research.

While there is no set number of participants that is required, a number between four and ten is recommended (Eisenhardt 1998). With fewer participants than four, it is often difficult to generate theory with much complexity, and its empirical grounding is likely to be unconvincing; with more than ten cases, it becomes difficult to cope with the complexity and volume of the data (Eisenhardt, 1998, p.545).

3.6.3 Theoretical Sensitivity

The term theoretical sensitivity is defined as a researcher's ability to give meaning to data and to recognise data that is pertinent and meaningful as regards emerging theory versus data that is not. According to Glaser (1978), the first step in gaining theoretical sensitivity is to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible. The researcher can remain sensitive to the data by recording events and detecting happenings without first comparing them to pre-existing hypotheses and biases. The researcher's mandate is to remain open to what is actually happening (Glaser 1978, p. 2). Goulding (2002) asserts that theoretical sensitivity necessitates a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study to enable new theory development. Fendt and Sachs (2008, p. 450) argue effectively in support of Goulding's notion and highlight 'acknowledgement and disclosure of the researcher's previous practical and theoretical experiences and knowledge. Such experience should be viewed as an asset and not a liability'. The theoretical sensitivity of the researcher is commonly demonstrated by a deep theoretical understanding of the field and through active professional experience. 'From this perspective, knowledge and theory are used as if they were another informant' (Goulding 2002, p. 42). As disclosed in section 1.3, I have personal experience about the chosen topic. I support the assertions of Fendt and Sachs (2008) and Goulding (2002) that my experience is an asset rather than a liability. However, I believe reflection, member checking and the rigour of GT addressed any bias that could have arisen. Thick description with extracts from data increased the trustworthiness of the study.

From an epistemological perspective, it is the very nature of these tenets and the interplay between them that allow for the development of theory. These qualities make GT a unique research methodology.

3.6.4 **Grounded Theory Data Analysis**

The following section describes the process followed in the analysis of data; constant comparative method, theoretical coding and memoing.

3.6.4.1 The Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method involves the coding and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss 1967) that are done simultaneously with data collection. As explained by Locke (2001, p. 25), 'The constant comparative method is a procedure in which two activities, namely data fragments and comparing data incidents and names, occur in tandem'. With constant comparison, all new data is iteratively compared to earlier data to enable adjustment of theoretical categories based on the ongoing analysis surrounding participant issues, problems and concerns (Glaser & Strauss 1967). As data is collected, the goal is 'comparing incident to incident and then incident to concept for the purpose of generating categories and saturating their properties' (Glaser 2001, p. 185). Central to the idea of constant comparison is the notion that the simultaneous collection, coding and analysis of data are crucial to the development of theory and that these three operations must be done together whenever possible. They should 'blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end' (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 43).

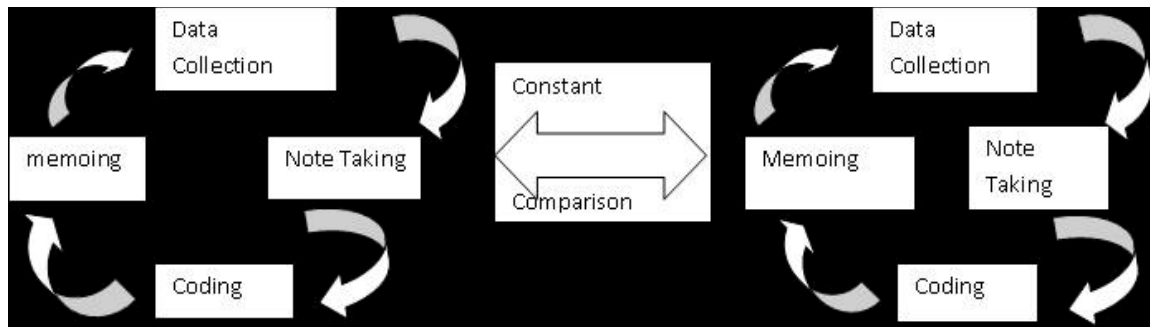
Constant comparison is experienced as a continuous cycling back and forth from the first set of data through to the last; with insights about data comparisons best recorded by 'quick coding "jots" in the margins [to] keep the constant comparing moving' (Glaser 1998, p. 147). I found this exercise quite useful as I made notes on the transcripts immediately after transcribing the recordings, trying to make sense of the data. Instead of using pieces of paper, everything was recorded on the word documents. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify four stages of the constant comparative method:

- Comparing incidents applicable to each category
- Integrating categories and their properties
- Delimiting the theory
- Writing the theory

Through the continuous cycling back and forth between collecting, coding and analysing data, the theoretical underpinnings begin to form in the mind of the researcher.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the rigorous process of the constant comparative method.

Figure 3.1 Constant Comparative Method



Source: Glaser, Glaser & Strauss (cited in Jones & Alony 2011, p. 105)

After the first interview, a series of memos were generated to reflect what the first participant had shared, what needed more exploration, and what the primary categorical ideas or themes were from the interview. This process was repeated for each participant, with data from previous interviews simultaneously informing the questions for subsequent participant interviews. This was more useful for participants who needed probing. As discussed later, most of the participants found it easy to tell their life story with minimal interruption from me. As a result, the process continually refined the data categories for fit and relevance. Using the constant comparative method, I was able to explore participants' insights into the subject.

3.6.4.2 Theoretical Coding

Theoretical coding is a systematic process used to make sense of research data by categorising and grouping similar examples from the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe three stages of coding, namely open, axial and selective coding. The coding process in GT is used to identify dimensions, properties and boundaries of each initial and subsequent data category in an effort to expose the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenon (Fendt & Sachs 2008; Isabella 1990).

Open Coding

Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorising and describing phenomena found in the text (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

In the study I did all the coding manually, using Excel. After personally transcribing the first interview verbatim into a Word document (making notes on the document as described above), I went line by line identifying data relevant to the research questions. I transferred *in vivo* codes, namely verbatim quotes from the participants, to the Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix 1). Each worksheet was labelled according to the number of the participant, for instance, Participant 1. I then used colour coding to identify categories and started relating codes to each other. However, I was very unsure about what I was doing. At the first peer debriefing with my supervisor, I invited Professor Schurink, who was recommended as a GT specialist, with my supervisor's blessing, to guide me on the methodology. I presented my research paradigm, the GT version I had chosen, the open codes on Excel and the emerging categories. That interaction made me understand that I was mixing open coding with axial coding. But I could not get further guidance than that. I show an example below of what came out of my line-by-line labelling of an interview response:

What I still don't understand is why I chose not to share the work load with my partner who held a similar position in government. I decided kids were my problem (Lolitha).

I categorised this as 'women as their worst enemy'. It also fit into the category of the impact of societal stereotyping. Another example of a code that fit into the category of 'women as their worst enemy' was:

Looking back, I think I harboured the feeling that people are out to catch me out; I set barriers for myself (Lolitha).

This category, amongst others, led to the decision that the strategy of gender transformation starts with women themselves as the core of the strategy. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Identifying this category early on in the data enabled me to look out for this trend of self-sabotage in subsequent interviews, for instance. The frustration with the guided approach to coding was that it started to become constraining. Once I immersed myself in the data, it became less important to me which stage of coding I was dealing with. The focus on conversing with the data to come up with theory took over. I therefore believe that once you have graduated from being a novice researcher, a less formal coding system becomes more appealing.

Axial Coding

Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and properties) to each other via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Table 3.4 illustrates the process followed during axial coding using data from Participant 1. I opened further

worksheets that were labelled as axial coding – role experience; axial coding – strategies for success; and axial coding – strategies for gender transformation. This was in keeping with the initial research questions. The Excel spreadsheets became my code book that contained all the codes and their explanations.

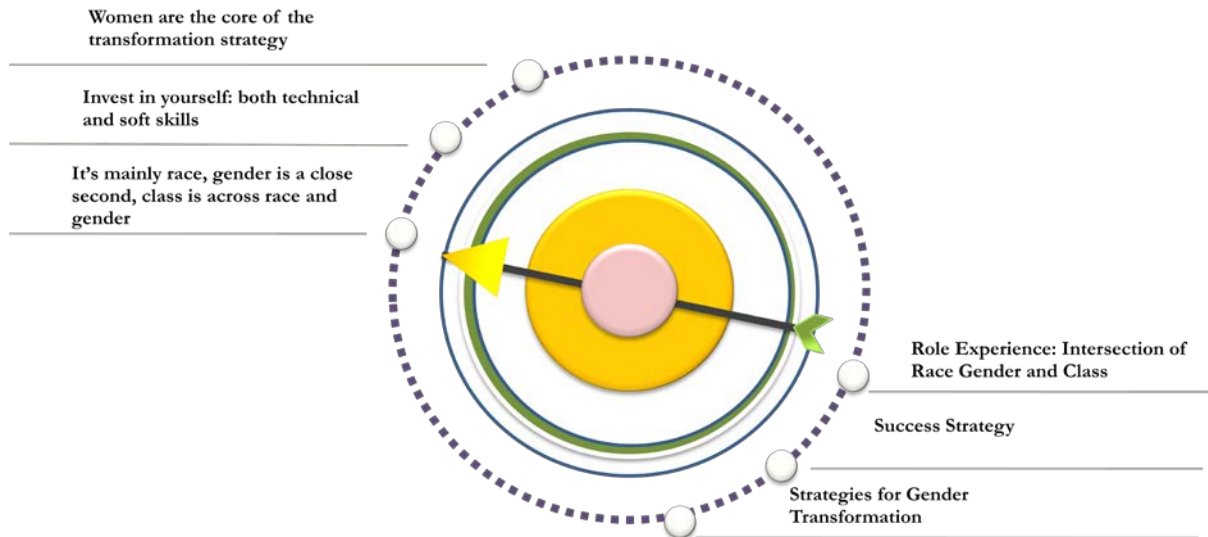
Table 3.4 Basic Frame of Generic Relationship: Axial Coding Process

Element	Description
Phenomenon	Work farmed out to consultants
Causal condition	Being undermined
Context	Prejudice because of race, gender and age
Intervening conditions	First job, only black woman amongst old black men
Action strategy	Reacted aggressively
Consequence	Loss of self-confidence

I compared categories to each other as I decreased the number of categories. For example, I identified a category called ‘women investing in themselves as a strategy for success’. The subcategories for this would, for example, include developing technical and soft skills. Categories were identified according to the research questions. For example, women’s work experience according to social identity and the intersection of the attributes of gender, race social class informed the identification of categories and subcategories to address each research question. As themes emerged, I identified subcategories under a reduced number of categories. As data collection progressed, each piece of data was ‘systematically and thoroughly examined for evidence of data fitting into categories’ (Isabella 1990, p. 13); thus, subcategories were continuously challenged and restructured as necessary. Since some subcategories had more than one dimension, I had to compare new data to each dimension in the subcategory to test whether the dimension was inclusive and able to incorporate new incidents or if new subcategories and/or dimensions needed to be created or revised.

Theoretical notes were recorded on a Word document in preparation for selective coding and theory building. Figure 3.2 shows the categories arranged according to the initial three questions. As I allocated the codes and categories to answer the research questions, it became clear that I had to collapse the categories of women’s success strategies to the overall strategies for gender transformation. This is discussed in detail under the findings in chapter 4 (section 4.3).

Figure 3.2 Organising Categories according to Research Question – Axial Coding



The rich comparison resulted in subcategories that were directly informed by the data. The coding process is important for generating theoretical properties of the subcategories and ultimately enables discovery of the ‘core category’, the term Glaser and Strauss (1967) use to designate the key explanation of behaviour that occurs in a specific situation.

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process of choosing one category as the core category, and relating all other categories to it (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The essential idea is to develop a single storyline around which everything else is draped. The core category has supporting subcategories that include more specific incidents of behaviour. As Locke (cited in O'Reilly, Paper & Marx 2012, p. 147) explains: 'ultimately the quality of grounded theory rests on the goodness of fit between the empirical observations and the conceptual categories they purport to indicate'. This can be evidenced by dozens of instances in the data that relate directly to the core category (Urquhart, Lehmann & Myers 2010). Figure 3.3 is an example of the build-up to one storyline. This was developed from theoretical notes captured throughout the data analysis period.

Figure 3.3 Example of Build up of One Storyline for Role Experience

It's a patriarchal system; when you push boundaries as a woman in trying to increase equity or get better benefits you realise that there is another game being played as opposed to just work which makes you focus on what value you can add.
Women get undermined, especially when they start pushing boundaries in their pursuit for recognition for their contribution, by just being ignored, leading to them quitting or starting to be pseudo-men.
People from different classes and races will have a different journey and experience because the more different you are to the dominant culture, the harder it is for you because you have to prove yourself or come with a track record in order to be recognised and considered for promotion.
Business is patriarchal; people from different classes and races will have a different journey and experience; women have to invest in themselves, work hard, seek support and manage their expectations, especially if they are black, because the more different you are from the dominant culture, the harder it is for you to progress unless you come with a track record, are presentable and upper class; however, there are good men who will give you a break. Look out for them. It's double jeopardy for black women because discrimination according to race is top in the list and gender is a close second.

3.6.4.3 Memoing

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 10) describe two types of memos, viz. code notes used during open coding (which focus on conceptual labelling), and theoretical notes used during axial and selective coding (which assist with identification of a storyline and operational memos). Glaser refers to memoing as 'the *core stage* in the process of generating theory, the bedrock of theory generation' (Glaser 1978, p. 83). Memos have four basic goals: they should develop ideas and codes, these ideas should develop freely, they should be stored centrally, and they should be sortable (Glaser 1978, p. 83). All my memos and codes were stored electronically for good record keeping. Martin and Turner (1986, p. 151) describe this style of writing as a free-flowing

style which is free from any self-editing. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 10) define memos as short documents that one writes to oneself as one proceeds through the analysis of a lot of data. Figure 3.3 illustrated the use of theoretical memos in building a storyline. During and after the interviews, I used memos to reflect on data, the context and my own and the participants' body language. I recorded everything, and interrogated my feelings and thoughts constantly. An example of operational notes or code notes used is given below.

Denial of gender discrimination; is it a sign of weakness to acknowledge this or is it a way of protecting class and racial privilege?

This note was made on reflection after my interview with Participant 7. In the following section, I discuss common challenges in the use of GT and my own challenges.

3.6.5 Challenges of Applying Grounded Theory Methodology

This section discusses documented challenges in applying GT methodology and my personal challenges as a novice GT researcher.

- a) 'The need for researchers to adhere rigorously to the systematic procedures of the method is antecedent' (Ng & Hase 2008, p. 162). While for a novice this is critical as a step-by-step guide in the field of GT, once the researcher becomes familiar with the methodology and gets immersed in the data, a more informal approach becomes preferable.
- b) Rigorous and constant comparison of data to data and incident to incident is paramount in GT (Ng & Hase 2008).
- c) The shuttling between the different stages of coding was cumbersome and exhausting but the rigour was worth all the effort for the researcher to get a good understanding of the data and to build theory, and, furthermore, it added richness to the categories. Using life stories allowed for more depth to be obtained on participants' backgrounds. 'Generating GT takes time and is a delayed action phenomenon' (Glaser, cited in Ng & Hase 2008, p. 162). Putting together different parts that are grounded in the data to make sense of the research findings was time-consuming and challenging, yet fun. My initial symbolic presentation of the theoretical model, the output from the data, was of an onion that had many layers that needed to be peeled layer by layer. The more I interrogated the data and categories the more the onion lost its appeal, and finally the symbolic presentation evolved into a wheel. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.
- d) The researcher has to guard against the early closure of data collection before theory saturation (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Strauss and Corbin (cited in Ng & Hase 2008, p. 162)

state that theoretical saturation can occur at three levels in the research: firstly, when new data does not reveal new categories; secondly, when each category is richly and densely described and all of its properties have been revealed; and lastly, when the relationships between categories are well established and validated by data.

All the above challenges entail time, persistence and resilience when using this methodology. In order to address these challenges, I prepared for fieldwork from September 2012 (when my methodology was approved) to November 2012. I then went on study leave from December 2012 to November 2013 when the thesis was submitted. This allowed me to work around busy participants' diaries which changed at short notice; it also allowed for focus on analysis as data was collected. What was meant to take three months in the field turned out to take nine months.

3.7 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE RIGOUR

The GT methodology through constant comparison ensures rigour. Furthermore, the detailed narrative described in Chapter 4, together with thick description and participant excerpts, add to my attempt at ensuring rigour. I also applied bracketing, reflexivity, peer debriefing and member checking to add to the rigour and thus ensuring the trustworthiness of my study. I discuss these applications in the next section.

3.7.1 Bracketing and Reflexivity

Parahoo (1997, p. 45) defines bracketing as the suspension of the researcher's beliefs, prejudices and preconceptions so that they do not interfere with or influence the participants' experience. Streubert and Carpenter (1999, p. 12) add that bracketing means remaining open to data as it is revealed. Reflexivity is a continuous process of reflecting on a researcher's preconceived values and those of participants (Parahoo 1997, p. 292). Addressing both bracketing and reflexivity was achieved by keeping a research journal to reflect on my experience and the participants' experiences. Listening to the women's stories at times felt like looking at a reflection in a mirror. At times I found an explanation for decisions I had taken in my career. It forced me to look at my life and the participants' life stories objectively and without judgement.

3.7.2 Peer Debriefing and Member Checking

Throughout the fieldwork process, I scheduled peer debriefing sessions with my supervisor. We invited a GT specialist to the first debriefing since I was not sure if I was on the right track. I realised that I had gone from open coding to axial coding and had started identifying and allocating subcategories to categories. It was important to understand that open codes are in the participants' own words. I sent my transcripts to Prof Mnguni after every two to three interviews. She went through some of them and gave pointers on further questions to ask.

Towards the end of the fieldwork, Prof Stella Nkomo assisted. Her input enabled me to revise the inappropriate description of my method of interviewing from case studies to life stories. Though I had collected life stories, I had described my method as multiple case studies. Prof Nkomo also assisted with one of the challenges I had with the participants. My initial intention was to arrange focus groups discussions consisting of four to five women for member checking. However, my participants were very private and did not have time. She suggested that I send them a summary of my findings and request no more than 30 minutes to go through the findings and check their final input. Though only five of the fourteen participants made the time for a second interview, the input was valuable. One of the criticisms I received from one participant had to do with the diagrammatic representation of findings on women's role regarding strategies for gender transformation. I had used a pie chart to show the different attributes that women had mentioned as part of their success strategy. The participant pointed out that this was inaccurate because it assumed that all the attributes were of equal importance. This assisted with changing the illustrative tools used to present the findings. Another participant pointed out that the economic benefit of inclusivity should also be mentioned as a motivation for gender transformation. The rest of the findings resulting from member checking are described in Chapter 5.

3.8 VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

No theory that deals with social psychological phenomena is actually reproducible in the sense that new situations can be found whose conditions exactly match those of the original study, although major conditions may be similar.

Strauss & Corbin (1990, p. 15)

Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe different criteria that can be used to assess the adequacy and grounding of the research process. These include an explanation of the selection of the original sample and an indication of the major categories that emerged, the categories that informed theoretical sampling and the criteria used to select the core categories. In trying to address these criteria I offered a detailed description of the research process with examples. Claims of themes that emerged were substantiated by extracts from the participants' stories. I believe the rigour of the process, the detailed presentation of findings with thick description, and member checking addressed the question of trustworthiness and validity within the context of a qualitative methodology.

In the next section, I discuss the evolution of qualitative research and how issues of trustworthiness, validity and reliability have evolved with different phases of the qualitative methodology.

3.8.1 Different Qualitative Research Phases

The literature review of the appropriate qualitative methodology revealed different views and periods during the evolution of qualitative research, including ways of ensuring the trustworthiness of the research process. In the following section I give a brief description of the evolution of the methodology and ways of ensuring validity and reliability.

Lewis (2009, pp. 3-9) has traced the history of qualitative research and the ways reliability and validity have been defined and measured. He describes five phases of qualitative research in the 20th century:

3.8.1.1 Traditional period (1900-1945)

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers were concerned with proving the reliability, validity and objective interpretations of their findings. Methodologies employed by qualitative researchers were mainly ethnomethodology, phenomenology or ethnography. Qualitative researchers in this paradigm still exist and are labelled as positivist, bound by external and internal validity.

3.8.1.2 Modernist phase (1945-1970)

This phase, also known as the second moment, moved qualitative research closer to quantitative research as researchers experimented with different experimental designs encompassing internal and external validity as well as causal narratives and quasi-statistics. Methods of data collection ranged from participant observation, interviewing and the study of human documents. Data was analysed through grounded theory and analytical induction. Traditionalists and modernists believed that any knowledge claim should be verifiable (Schwandt 2007). From this perspective, qualitative research is

seen as reliable if the findings can be replicated by another researcher. Traditionalists use an audit trail which includes field notes, documentation of decisions made along the research journey, analysis of transcriptions and categorisation of procedures (Schwandt 2007). While quantitative researchers could dismiss reflexivity and reactivity, qualitative researchers could not because more often than not the researcher was the data collection instrument. In order to address threats to validity, traditionalist and modernist researchers developed checks and balances to enhance the validity of their findings, for example member checking, triangulation and collaboration.

3.8.1.3 Blurred (interpretive) genres phase (1970-1986)

Seale (2002, p. 100) describes this phase as the 'blurring of boundaries between humanities and social science'. During this phase, positivists and postpositivists retained the scientific model, while constructivists and naturalists moved away from 'confining' definitions of reliability and validity. It was important to them to report all the data they had collected (Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Wolcott 2005). They replaced the ideas of reliability and validity with credibility that focused on truthfulness of what was being reported. Internal validity was ensured both prior to and during the research. Constructivists and naturalists also questioned the concept of external validity. They defined it as transferability instead of generalisability. Transferability was accomplished through thick, rich description of the research findings, thus allowing the readers to draw their own inferences about transferability of the research findings to different groups and/or events. Constructivists and naturalists also replaced objectivity with confirmability, thus placing the emphasis on the data collected and the onus of confirming the data on the reader. They also replaced reliability with dependability.

3.8.1.4 Crisis of representation (mid-1980s)

During this period the assumption was that it was not possible for a researcher to be objective. The critical social science perspective placed the responsibility of validity on the researcher who should report actions taken throughout the research process, including any biases or other relevant factors that he or she brought to the research which could have affected the findings.

Though there is no agreement on the definition of reliability between positivists (traditionalists and modernists), constructionists and critical researchers, there is an understanding that there is a need for trustworthiness, accuracy and dependability of research findings. Creswell (1994) asserts that qualitative researchers should report on their biases, preconceived assumptions and values, as well as

how the sample was selected, in order to enhance the replicability of the research and assist the reader in determining the reliability of the research.

3.8.1.5 **The fifth moment (1990s)**

The basic assumption during this phase was that the participants should speak for themselves since the researcher could not capture the participants' lived experiences.

Lewis (2009) describes four methods that can be used to test reliability of qualitative research, namely; research worker reliability, variations in observations, use of various data collection techniques and split-half method. In the current study, Creswell's proposed method of research worker reliability was followed to ensure validity by disclosing potential bias and the researcher's interest in the chosen study. Mitigation using reflexivity (Creswell & Miller 2000), member checking (Lincoln & Guba 1985), thick rich description (Creswell & Miller 2000) and frequent ongoing peer review sessions (Lincoln & Guba 1985) were disclosed throughout the current research report. The process of sample selection was also disclosed in order to assist the reader in determining the reliability of the findings.

The identification of five threats to the validity of qualitative research (Maxwell 1996), with proposed procedures to mitigate these threats, was supported, but somewhat amended, by other scholars (Creswell & Miller 2000; Kvale 1986; Lincoln & Guba 1985 cited in Lewis 2009, p. 9):

a) Descriptive validity

The researcher must record interviews accurately and completely, including the physical setting. In the current study an audio recorder was used and all the interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to address descriptive validity.

b) Interpretation validity

Researchers should use open-ended questions that allow the participant to elaborate on answers. I addressed this in the current study by giving participants an overview of the study, the research questions and a brief interview guideline, prior to the interview. During the interviewing process participants were allowed to relate their life stories, as was relevant to the study, for about 70 minutes; the stories were only interrupted if clarification was required. If anything of interest was observed or heard during the participant's narration, this was noted for further questioning at the end of the interview. The last 20 to 30 minutes were used to zoom into areas noted during the

interview and/or to ask further questions. Any issue identified during transcribing as requiring clarification was clarified at the member checking stage.

c) Theory validity

Researchers normally enter the research field with certain theory or hypothesis. They should guard against forcing data to fit certain theory or discarding data that does not fit certain theory. This was addressed through thick rich description of findings in chapter 4.

d) Researcher bias

Researcher bias varies from issues related to race, ethnicity, culture, certain personal beliefs and gender. I addressed this by declaring my interest in the subject matter upfront and by transcribing the interviews verbatim. Lastly all the participants were given a copy of the findings for their input.

e) Reactivity

Interviewees might react to the interviewer in different ways to manipulate the interviewer's perception of them. This could be done through making them appear tougher or weaker or more or less important than they are, for instance. This is difficult to prevent or at times to identify. In the current study it was more apparent across race. I felt as though being black was a barrier to establishing rapport with some of the white participants, and this, I believe, could have influenced their accounts of their life stories.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research. The research process creates tension between the aims of research to make generalizations for the good of others, and the rights of participants to maintain privacy. Ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm.

Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden (2000, p. 93)

The target population for this study is prominent individuals, and the thick description, which will include quotations, might be identifiable and lead back to the source. This was discussed and explained to the participants. I have used pseudonyms wherever possible to ensure confidentiality.

Informed consent was obtained before each interview by way of a consent form that was provided to each participant (see Appendix 4). Confidentiality was observed at all times. Where quotations were used they were anonymous; nevertheless participants' consent was obtained (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden 2000).

3.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented theoretical descriptions of the qualitative and life story methods, as well as of GT, together with practical explanations of the processes followed during the study (e.g. sampling, data collection and analysis), using examples wherever possible. In addition, I discussed the study population (the final sample size was 13 women CEOs and one chairman). In Chapter 4 I introduce the participants and discuss the data analysis and findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 I presented the preliminary literature review, and in Chapter 2 I presented the theoretical framework of the study. According to UNISA guidelines, chapter 3 or chapter 4 should consist of a review of the literature. However, in this study I followed a middle-of-the-road approach in terms of the role of literature in grounded theory. While conducting my search of existing studies prior to getting to the field (discussed earlier) I decided on the methodology I was going to use and subsequently suspended the literature review process. My report layout reflects the process I followed in this study. I resumed reviewing the literature on the topic and area of the chosen study towards the end of the fieldwork process in order to check the findings that were unfolding versus what was already known. In the following section I present the research findings, starting with the participants' profiles (Table 4.1), followed by the themes that emerged from axial coding and the storyline that emerged from selective coding. I then present a narrative account in which I use interview extracts and allow the participants to tell their story. I organised the data into data set 1 and 2. Data set 1 was findings on women's role experience from an intersectional lens, while Data set 2 was findings on strategy for gender transformation. To ensure participants' privacy was protected, I used pseudonyms for participants (explained in chapter 3).

Racial classification used in this study is black, where black is a collective classification of three races, namely, African, Indian & coloured; and white, as described in chapter 1. This racial classification is in keeping with The Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998.

Table 4.1 Participant Work Profiles and Global Exposure

PARTICIPANT	WORK PROFILE AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE
Participant 1 Lolitha*	53-year-old middle-class African woman from rural Eastern Cape: master's in Infrastructure (local white university), master's in Economics (Ivy League university), PhD (local white university); father was a school principal and

PARTICIPANT	WORK PROFILE AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE
	<p>mother a housewife. Married with two children, husband is an executive in business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to joining the BEE company where she is currently CEO and shareholder, her main work experience was within two levels of government and a state-owned enterprise. All her places of work were within her training competence, i.e. development economics, town planning, and specifically infrastructure development. • Is a non-executive director of JSE-listed companies • Completed postgraduate studies in the UK but never worked outside SA
Participant 2 Khetshiwe	<p>48-year-old upper middle-class African woman from Gauteng: BA (Economics and Statistics); father was a clerk in a mine and mother bought and sold soft goods and food; raised by her elder brother who was a bank manager; grew up and studied in one of the neighbouring SADC countries; went to an all-girls' private boarding school Married with two kids, husband is a professional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked in a financial institution for three years, then in the energy sector for two years before joining the transport sector. The two companies that she led are state-owned enterprises. She was CEO of the one for seven years and CEO of the other for two years. Currently she is a non-executive director of a few companies while deciding on her next project. • She was in charge of global passenger services and later of global sales, and worked from SA.
Participant 3 Lonwabo	<p>49-year-old middle-class African woman from an Eastern Cape township: MSc (Social Policy and Planning) (Ivy League European University); PhD (local white university); father was an insurance sales person and mother was a teacher. Married with two children, husband is a business person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She started her life as an occupational therapist; was a programme manager at a state-owned development financial institution; started a financial savings and credit scheme for the poor and financially excluded; consulted for various companies on policy and economic development; chaired the board of a state-owned enterprise for two terms. She is a National Planning Commissioner. • She studied in the UK but did not work abroad.
Participant 4 Jenny	<p>62-year-old middle/working-class white woman from Gauteng: BSc (white local university); father worked at a bank with matric as his highest qualification, and worked his way up to general manager; mother was a housewife who played competitive sport. She's married with three children and has a stay-at-home husband who was a professional before deciding to look after the kids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in an energy company in the UK, then for an international consulting firm (spending a few months in the UK) for 13 years before joining an investment bank. She was CEO of the main sections of one of the big financial institutions. Currently she is chairman of one of the big JSE-listed financial institutions. She has been an executive director and shareholder of a women's BEE investment company for the past nine years.
Participant 5	54-year-old middle-class African woman from the Western Cape: BComm

PARTICIPANT	WORK PROFILE AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE
Vuyiswa	<p>(local black university); MBA (USA); parents owned a bookshop and both worked; was very close to her maternal grandfather; was in the first group of five girls who studied in an all-boys' special school (got a merit bursary to enter this school). She's married with two children, her husband is an academic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She studied in the USA for her MBA, worked in the USA for a short while in an energy company, then spent a few years working for a German insurance company (two visits to Germany annually). After that she joined a local investment bank, then became CFO of a state-owned enterprise (5 years); has been CEO and shareholder of a financial services boutique and investments (black women owned company) for the past 19 years. She sits on various boards of companies listed on the JSE.
Participant 6 Thandi	<p>54-year-old upper-class African woman from KZN (urban township): BSc Engineering (Europe); MSc (USA); MBA; went to an all-girls' boarding school; father was a respected lawyer and mother a professional nurse and also a feminist activist. She's married with two children, husband is a professional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After matric, she studied in a SADC country, the UK and the USA; worked part-time as a student in Europe; worked for a research and development company in the USA as an engineer; then worked for a global IT company in SA, USA and Namibia over a seven-year period; was CEO of a private equity firm for five years; held different executive positions in a JSE-listed telecoms company over ten years; currently CEO of a JSE-listed mining company; has chaired boards of some state-owned enterprises
Participant 7 Penny	<p>47-year-old upper-class white woman from Gauteng: grew up in Western Cape; two master's in law, one from Ivy League College in Europe and one from local white University; went to a girls-only high school; father a well-known lawyer who studied at a Ivy League University in Europe; mother an upper-class socialite (farmer) who later became a farmer together with the participant's father. She's married with two children and has a stay-at-home husband.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked for only two companies – a legal firm and a respected financial services company she heads currently; became a partner at the legal firm in her 20s; became executive director at her current company at the age of 34; deputy CEO at age 37; CEO at age 45
Participant 8 Swasthi	<p>56-year-old middle-class Indian woman from Gauteng: MA (university in Europe); studied in SADC country, the UK and USA; worked in the USA for one year as a research assistant; father was a political activist; mother the breadwinner on her salary as a secretary and later factory worker; parents later had shops and the mother also became an activist. Married with two children, her husband works for government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is a social entrepreneur who owns and runs a media company; has been CEO for 17 years; has been involved in education and media all her working life; consulted for three years whilst raising children
Participant 9 Karen	<p>53-year-old working-class coloured woman from Western Cape: highest qualification an advanced management certificate from Wits; did graphic design in Europe; worked in Germany for a short while; mother a domestic;</p>

PARTICIPANT	WORK PROFILE AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE
	<p>father was killed when she was a three-year old. She's married with three children, and has a stay-at-home husband.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is a trade unionist turned businesswoman; worked for the union for 13 years before representing the union in business; was executive director of a BEE consortium that bought into listed entities; sat on various boards representing the union, also chaired some of them; later executive in a JSE-listed telecoms company; currently CEO of her own telecoms company which she started from nothing
<p>Participant 10 Mabel</p>	<p>43-year-old upper-class African American woman based in the USA: bachelor's degree in Communications and Marketing; master's degree in organisational dynamics (USA); father was an executive; mother was the first woman engineer at GE and later became an entrepreneur. Married with no children, husband resigned from an executive position to support her in Europe, he now consults and is an author.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 17 years and several years in the consumer business and pharmaceutical business; started her career in marketing and product development before moving to HR; has been Global Chief Diversity Officer for the past two years; her international financial services company is represented in SA; she is based in New York; spent two years working in Europe
<p>Participant 11 Lizelle</p>	<p>38-year-old working-class coloured woman from Limpopo: BComm from University of Cape Town; CA (SA); attended a co-ed boarding school; mother, a single parent who had no tertiary education; grandfather, the breadwinner, was a school principal and owned a shop where her mother worked. She's engaged and has no children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked for an auditing firm as an articled clerk, then for a state-owned enterprise in energy; private equity company; managing director (MD) of the biggest division of a JSE-listed financial institution
<p>Participant 12 Dudu</p>	<p>43-year-old upper-class African woman from Gauteng: BA in Economics (USA); MBA; father was an HR consultant with offices in town; mother was a salesperson in a fashion retail shop; lived in Sandton during apartheid days and attended a white private school. Divorced twice and has no children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She did her junior degree in the US; held a PR position for a short while before going to work for a financial services company in the USA for one year; rose to the level of vice-president of a private equity boutique; spent a year as head of unit of a state-owned development finance company; MD of a division in a BEE investment company for six years; now CEO of the group
<p>Participant 13 Jackie</p>	<p>54-year-old (European immigrant) working-class white woman who arrived in SA at age 6; lived in Vereeniging; BComm (Hons) from white local university; MSc in Economics (European Ivy League university); father was a labourer; stay-at-home mother. Married (late in life) and has no children. Husband is a politician.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked as a lecturer for a few years before going to work for a bank; has held senior positions in government; deputy director-general (DDG) and later director-general (DG); led a state-owned enterprise in logistics/infrastructure; now CEO of a JSE-listed

PARTICIPANT	WORK PROFILE AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE
	financial services company
Participant 14 Paula	<p>63-year-old upper-class white woman from KwaZulu-Natal: BSc (Pharmacy-local white University); MBA (European University); father was a corporate accountant and mother a school principal; went to an all-girls' private school. She's divorced with no children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She worked as a hospital pharmacist, then for a medical devices company for many years; asked for a global assignment from the company and spent thirteen years in the USA; within one year became a vice-president for international business; came back to SA and ran her consulting company for a few years before going back to the medical devices company as MD

4.2 MAIN THEMES

This section presents the themes that emerged from data analysis. The findings are organised around the research questions. Data set 1 is in response to the first question, namely; to what extent does the intersection of race, social class and gender impact on women CEOs' experiences in their work roles and career progression. While data set 2 results are in response to the second question; how might an understanding of senior women's experiences in their leadership roles assist with strategies to transform gender at senior leadership positions in South Africa.

4.2.1 Influence of the Intersection of Race, Gender and Social Class on Role Experience and Career progression

Although the study concerned the intersectionality of three social identities, women related stories of prejudice based on one social identity that was perceived to be the cause of prejudice, more often than on all the identities investigated taken simultaneously. The open codes were organised according to participants (see Appendix 1). A total of just over 294 open codes emerged from data analysis which was consolidated into 26 axial codes (see Appendix 2). The themes, derived from axial coding, were organised according to the participant's view on which social identity she believed led to prejudice. In the discussion chapter, Chapter 5, these views are discussed. Gender had the highest number of themes at 11, followed by an intersection of gender and race at six, race at four, class at two, intersection of race, gender and class at two and lastly race and age with one theme. Table 4.2 outlines the main themes/categories, subcategories and the participants who mentioned the themes.

Table 4.2 Themes from Data Set 1 – Axial Coding & Participant Extracts

A. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: GENDER	
<p>1. Off ramps due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-life balance>I had to choose between my marriage and work • Tired of fighting paradigm incongruence • Lack of alignment with shareholder vision • Hostile boys’ club; lack of progress of other women • Overlooked for promotion; my work should speak for itself 	<p>Lolitha, Jenny, Khetshiwe, Penny, Lizelle</p>
<p>2. Work-life balance is a myth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some industries are not flexible and do not accommodate women’s needs, like financial services • You can have it all, but just not at the same time 	<p>All Lizelle, Jackie, Mabel</p>
<p>3. Extended family support, supportive husband, and domestic help make it possible to work and still have a family</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>4. It’s a patriarchal society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to understand men’s rules in order to succeed • Women try to mimic men and lose their femininity • Men think women are variants of men. • In an organisation that is full of men, even women stop seeing gender, men become the standard. • Women’s authority undermined 	<p>Khetshiwe, Lolitha Thandi Thandi, Lizelle Jenny</p>
<p>5. Women are their worst enemy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-guilt and shame when balance is not attained • Lack of confidence leads to lost opportunity • Afraid to bring our diverse perspectives into play because of inferiority complex • Tiara syndrome (expecting your work to “talk for you”) • Queen BEE Syndrome: • Failure to raise a hand to lead (Jackie) • Walking away from a challenge (Jackie) 	<p>Lolitha, Khetshiwe Lonwabo Lizelle Swasthi, Mabel, Dudu, Jackie</p>
<p>6. Societal and cultural stereotyping prejudicial to women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialised to expect being less than equal and learnt to cope • Being asked to make tea was not demeaning (Paula) • Postponing having a family judged negatively for women but not for men (Mabel) • Highly qualified Indian women are stopped from working by their rich husbands once they have kids (Swasthi) 	<p>Swasthi, Lolitha, Mabel, Paula</p>

<p>7. A tactical approach is more successful than a confrontational approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women need to understand men and their perspective to win them over • I do not have the energy to fight men • I am a traditionalist, I want women to get married, have kids and cook for their husbands. Those things do not harm us. 	Khetshiwe, Lonwabo, Vuyiswa
<p>8. Pushing boundaries brings gender prejudice to the fore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did find the gender issue when I started pushing boundaries, such as, when I got married. When I got pregnant, there was no maternity policy • We were hit from the black men and white men side. White business shunned us. They did deals with connected black men. • We had to fight very hard to increase our shareholding. I do not think the mother company took us seriously, and I think it was because we were two women running the company 	Jenny, Vuyiswa, Swasthi
<p>9. Policies not accommodating to women's needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternity leave • Some sectors cannot accommodate flexi-time 	Jenny, Paula
<p>10. Hostile environment to women (especially investment banking industry)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment, blatant threats • Awards called big-swinging-dick awards • Women seen as trophies, the culture was demeaning to women 	Jenny, Vuyiswa, Jackie
<p>11. Women are undermined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demeaning jobs for women • Women in support roles • Women excluded from decision-making positions by glass ceiling at junior and middle level • No sanction to a man reported by a woman executive for sexual harassment; woman executive's authority undermined 	Jenny, Thandi, Swasthi, Karen, Dudu, Paula Lizelle, Dudu Jenny, Karen Vuyiswa, Thandi, Swasthi, Dudu, Jackie

B. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: RACE	
1. Africans are the lowest on the pyramid because of apartheid legacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worst education during apartheid • No assistance to their disabled • Still fear white people (colonised mind persists) • Racial prejudice experienced from an early age (getting off the bus because of race) • A South African black not taken seriously across the board; a black from anywhere else more acceptable • Inferior education for Africans and coloureds continues to influence their career progression 	Khetshiwe, Lonwabo, Thandi, Dudu
2. Global exposure minimises racial sensitivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving the country and socialising across race helps you not to be conscious of race; race stops being a barrier in your mind • Working with people who have no qualms, going for drinks with you after work (across race) is important 	Khetshiwe, Thandi, Vuyiswa
3. Out-spiralling because of racial prejudice; lack of promotion	Khetshiwe, Lizelle
4. Blacks discriminated against at different levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluded from training • Excluded from networking with the client • Not allocated work • Unconscious prejudice at performance appraisal • Cultural barrier to promotion of blacks • Prejudice at recruitment 	Vuyiswa, Lizelle, Dudu, Mabel, Thandi, Jackie
C. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: RACE AND GENDER	
1. Double jeopardy for black women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undermined by other blacks and across race and gender • Held to higher standards by everyone, including themselves • Have to manage their expectations in order to survive • Black women have to ignore the gender and racial prejudice in order to survive, otherwise they become defensive 	Lolitha, Thandi, Lizelle, Dudu, Jackie, Mabel
2. Hostile environment for tokens/solos beats their confidence and compromises their performance	Lolitha, Lonwabo

3. White women not seen as allies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't think of a white woman who could have mentored The lukewarm relationship between black and white women is because white women have a superiority complex I don't see white women as role models 	Khetshiwe, Vuyiswa, Dudu, Thandi, Lizelle
4. Demeaning jobs for black women; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> token jobs with no responsibility you were not allowed to interact with the client, you were a minute taker 	Lizelle, Dudu, Jackie
5. Senior black women fail to take risk on other black women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I went to the only black senior woman in the company, looking to be assigned, big mistake 	Dudu
D. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: RACE, GENDER AND AGE	
1. Young black women undermined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older black men did not believe I could do the job, in spite of my technical skills You would say something, and they would pretend like you didn't say anything, I guess I had to prove myself 	Lolitha, Thandi
E. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: CLASS	
1. Higher expectations from upper-class individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would be criticised if I got 80%, whereas other kids would get 40% and be praised. They rewarded effort. 	Lolitha
2. Intragroup prejudice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Cape Town it starts with, are you Muslim, even within the Muslim group there is the proper Muslim and the Malay Muslim Cape Coloureds think they are a different race. If you have straight hair, blues eyes and fair skin you are a much better class, even if you are a drunk. Being a migrant from an Eastern European working-class family means you have to prove yourself to yourself first, then to other people. The journey for upper class is so much easier, across race 	Lolitha, Thandi, Karen, Lizelle
F. AXIAL CODING – ROLE EXPERIENCE: RACE, GENDER AND CLASS	

<p>1. Race, gender and class do matter in your career progression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It matters how you look, how you talk, how you present yourself. • The more different you are from the dominant culture the harder it is for you to fit in and succeed. • For industries, serving the elite class matters; in some it is institutionalised (financial institutions). • Black women with no political brand struggle to get deals. • Where you come from and what school you went to (private school versus public school) matter over and above gender and race. • Black women who stood a chance for recognition are those who came with a track record 	<p>Khetshiwe, Jenny, Vuyiswa, Thandi, Mabel, Lizelle, Dudu, Jackie</p>
<p>2. A 'better' black has a better chance with better privileges and fewer barriers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The black South African woman who grew up in a SADC country never felt threatened because of how she was perceived and her resultant confidence • Blacks with a foreign (white) accent are perceived to be better than your ordinary South African. • A black from anywhere else except SA is perceived to be better. 	<p>Khetshiwe, Vuyiswa, Thandi, Dudu</p>

4.2.2 Strategies for Gender Transformation at Leadership Level

A total of 180 open codes emerged from data analysis (see appendix 1). After a lot of time had been spent on the axial coding stage, a theme emerged which identified five role players required in the strategies for gender transformation. Participants were of the view that an intersection of different role players at different levels was important for successful strategies for gender transformation. This led to the identification of five main themes, namely; the role of women, the support roles by family, the role of society, organisational leadership, structure, culture and policies, and government. Table 4.3 shows the different categories and subcategories.

Table 4.3 Themes for Data Set 2 – Axial Coding

MAIN THEME	CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY
Women	Develop your technical, personal and people skills. (All participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be authentic. • Invest in yourself, both soft and technical skills, know current affairs. • Be confident and humble. • Be prepared to work hard. • Be visible, work in a revenue generation division (Thandi). • Do not trivialise your assignments. • Monitor your performance and have it appraised every six months. • How you present yourself matters. • Raise your hand for leadership position even if you need help. • Get a line management job (Thandi; Lizelle) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work hard (all participants). • Know all the parts of your company (Thandi) • Take a global assignment (Vuyiswa; Jenny; Paula) • Have a good reputation of delivery with peers (Khetshiwe). • Trust your intuition (Khetshiwe; Thandi; Dudu)
	Interaction with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support other women (Mabel; Dudu). • Join transformation committees on boards to influence change (Karen; Vuyiswa). • Socialise across the board (Thandi; Mabel; Dudu). • Get a sponsor with influence (Thandi). • When you take an off ramp, keep contact with the company (Mabel). • Informal networking/Global networks with people of influence (Lizelle; Dudu; Karen). • Know all parts of your company's business (Khetshiwe). • Work in different industries (Mabel). • Sacrifice for your passion (Vuyiswa; Penny). •
External support	Family support/Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive husband is key (all except Lizelle who is still single), acknowledge them; appraise them on your work so that they give you support (Vuyiswa). • Domestic support and support of extended family are important (all). • Domestic workers (lower class) are exploited for the benefit of upper class women (Swasthi).

	Stakeholder support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align your vision with that of your subordinates and seniors (Khetshiwe; Lonwabo). Define expectations upfront (Khetshiwe).
	Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek male and female mentors across race and peers (ALL) Mentoring of boys and girls (Vuyiswa) Good men should be acknowledged (Vuyiswa; Lonwabo)
Organisation	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformational and progressive leadership (Khetshiwe; Vuyiswa; Thandi; Penny; Karen; Lizelle; Dudu; Jackie; Paula) Having a woman CEO shows that the organisation is women-friendly (Penny).
	Organisation structure, policies and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal mentorship programme (Mabel; Swasthi; Karen) Women forums supported with resources (Paula; Jenny; Swasthi; Mabel) Transparent performance management (Jenny) Monetary penalties and incentives to encourage transformation (Karen) HR that is diverse and thus able to identify talent across race (Thandi) Well-resourced leadership development programmes for talented women (Mabel; Lizelle; Paula) Development and monitoring systems that identify and manage unconscious bias in performance management (Lizelle; Thandi; Jackie)
Community	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Husbands are becoming more domesticated; it now has to translate to the broader society (Thandi). We need to mentor both girls and boys. Boys seem to be in trouble, which makes them abusive (Vuyiswa). Society needs to embrace progressive men who choose to be stay-at-home fathers (Penny). Societal stereotyping of gender roles needs to be addressed with community leaders (Lolitha).
Government	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of State that promotes gender equality; Quotas need a champion (Vuyiswa).

	Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quota system (Lonwabo; Jenny; Vuyiswa; Thandi; Penny; Karen; Dudu) • Prepare the environment and give support to women who are brought in. Do not set women up for failure (Lolitha).
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4.2.3 Themes from Selective Coding

Selective coding involves the integration of the categories that have been developed to form the initial theoretical framework.

Pandit (1996)

Pandit (1996) asserts that a story is simply a descriptive narrative about the central phenomenon of study and that the storyline is the conceptualisation (abstraction) of this story. When analysed, the storyline becomes the core category (Classen 2004). Strauss and Corbin (1998) agree with Pandit's assertion but add refining of theory to pure integration. I initially came up with two storylines which answered the two research questions. These are presented below.

Central Category for Role Experience

There is an intersection of gender, race, culture (ethnicity), generation, and class which determines your life journey. Race has the main impact on your destiny, gender is a close second, and race and gender are overlaid with class and generation. If you are a lower-class black woman your career progress will be harder and longer compared to women with a different combination of social identities. Looks and personality also matter across race and gender.

Business is patriarchal, and people from different classes and races will have different journeys and experiences. Women have to invest in themselves, work hard, seek support and manage their expectations, especially if they are black, because the more different you are from the dominant culture, the harder it is for you to progress unless you come with a track record and are presentable and upper class. However, there are good men who will give you a break, and you must look out for them. Husbands, family and domestic support are key elements to progress, so you must acknowledge their roles.

Central Category for Strategies on Gender Transformation

As far as gender transformation is concerned women are the core of the solution, followed by support from family, organisation (leadership, systems, culture and structure) government and society. Women have to invest in their technical skills, their soft skills and their spiritual development. Supportive

husbands, domestic help and the extended family are important for women's success. Networks and mentorship across race, gender and nationalities form the second layer of that support which will assist in building confidence. Leadership that is transformational will ensure that organisational structures, policies and structured programmes embrace diversity. Business on its own has not achieved much in embracing all its human capital, especially gender. The intervention of government will ensure that the relevant legislation is implemented and monitored. A partnership of business, government and society will make strength in diversity a reality, not only in government but also in business and society at large.

Table 4.2 highlights the main themes that emerged from data analysis. Further rich thick description of findings is presented in section 4.3.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES (WITH RELEVANT EXTRACTS)

As alluded to above, I initially separated the sections into three data sets. When I started reviewing the results of the axial coding stage, I decided to collapse the section on what made the women successful to the section on strategies for gender transformation. This seemed logical since it became apparent when I looked at the results critically that one of the main parts or ingredients of gender transformation was women themselves and that both data sets were providing answers to research question 2.

In this section I discuss the participants' experiences as regards the intersection of race, class and gender in their work lives. Each participant is introduced with the main overall themes that emerged from data analysis, a brief family/social-political background followed by a rich thick description of the participant's experience in response to the two research questions.

4.3.1 Participant 1 (Lolitha)

Summary:

There is an intersection of race, class, generation and gender which influences how you perceive yourself, hence your reaction to the environment, and how you are perceived by others, and hence their response to your authority. Black women are assumed to be lower class in spite of their status and therefore they always have to do more to prove themselves. This prejudice is found across race and gender, especially in respect of a young black woman. From an intragroup perspective the woman is punished for having made it; from an intergroup perspective there is disbelief that the woman could make it.

Lolitha (middle-class African woman) was born and raised in the rural Eastern Cape. She is one of five siblings, all girls, and her father saw her as the son he never had. He was a school principal in a different village and she stayed with him to assist with domestic chores. Her mother, a housewife, took care of the other siblings back home. She grew up close to her father; she described her relationship with her younger siblings as transactional.

As was the norm during apartheid South Africa, she was not exposed to any other race except Africans from childhood till the end of her first tertiary qualification. The impact of this segregation will be unpacked later. As a principal's daughter, expectations were high for her to do well. She went from being a shining star at primary school to being an ordinary achiever when she went to boarding school. Her first degree was at a well-known black university where she did well and was offered a scholarship to study a master's degree at a white university. In terms of the Extension of University Education Act, 1959 (Act 45 of 1959), which disallowed blacks to attend white universities, she needed ministerial consent to attend this university. She got this permit from the minister.

On Role Experience

Lolitha had her first experience of the intersection of race, gender and class when she enrolled for a master's degree in a white university in the early 80s. Incidentally, the education standard was a hundred times better than the standard at black universities. Because of the Group Areas Act, 1950 (Act 41 of 1950), even if you were lucky to get the ministerial permit, it only allowed you to study during the day; you had to find accommodation in a black area/township. This

implied that the few students who attended white universities had to travel every day to black townships. There was no socialising amongst black and white students and there was a subtle hostility towards the black minority. I attended the same university she attended and experienced the hostility first-hand. The medical school was separate from the main campus, but once in a while we would go to the main campus for important gatherings. One episode is still vivid in my mind. We had gone for an address by some 'guest', Nelson Mandela's daughter, Zinzi Mandela. Within the first ten minutes, white students were throwing tomatoes at us. Needless to say, I never went back for the next five years of my university life. Graduation at the main campus, for all medical students was in absentia as a matter of principle. It was our passive aggressive response to apartheid. Lolitha relates her experience at the same university below.

Gender, Race and Class:

Lolitha relates:

I was the only black person and the only woman in the department. I came with my confidence, having done well thus far and armed with a degree from a 'prominent' black university. My confidence was dealt a blow in the first lecture when the lecturer spoke about the 'seminar' that was due. I had no clue what a seminar was, and I had no one to ask. For the first time, I was too self-conscious to ask for clarification. My confidence took a knock. At the black university I was the first one to ask; other students relied on me to ask on their behalf. I was conscious of myself, my blackness and my gender.

This was her first encounter with whites in the same class. It was a cultural shock and for the first time she was not confident of herself. In those days, in the eyes of a white person, black people were all lower class and blacks perceived all white people as upper class. Though she passed, she did not do as well as her parents were accustomed to. The next phase in her tertiary journey found her in an Ivy League university in Europe where she did her second master's degree.

I decided to do a second master's degree. I was accepted in an Ivy League university. I related to this environment differently after my experience at the white university ('AV'). I got the award for being the best master's student! Only eight years earlier I was battling to cope at AV, and now I was the best master's student in an Ivy League university! My intellectual capacity had not changed. How much of this was the environment, how much of it was me? I still grapple with that question. I came back from Europe very confident. I remember after coming back, I was invited to deliver a paper at a conference at the AV. The lecturers that taught me were still there. Immediately after the presentation, they offered me a job. How do we get this self-confidence?

Global exposure for South Africans, especially black South Africans, brought back the human dignity that had been stripped away by apartheid. An environment where you were not barred from socialising across race and where you could live anywhere brought back self-confidence.

In another phase of Lolitha's life as a career woman she encountered **the intersection of race, gender and age**. In her first job, before doing her second master's degree, she worked as an 'infrastructure official' in a rural part of the Eastern Cape where her colleagues were all black but mostly older men. Though she had the technical skills, other blacks did not believe that she could do the job (**intra-racial group prejudice**). Her gender, age and race did not inspire confidence from her superiors. Thandi also mentioned not being taken seriously earlier in her career because of her age.

Race, Gender and Age:

After graduating with a master's, I got a job in the Transkei where I established a planning unit. I had to deal with gender and generational issues. We were all black but the department was mainly men, older men. The Deputy Head of Department called me 'makoti' [*daughter-in-law*]. There was a sense that I could not do the work in spite of my technical skills. They farmed the work out to white consultants. The way I handled being undermined was by becoming aggressive instead of being assertive. Looking back, I think I harboured the feeling that people are out to catch me out; I set barriers for myself. This begs the question: as women, do we set the ceiling for ourselves?

Different dynamics are brought to the fore by this experience. There is an **intragroup racial dynamic** and a **societal or cultural expectation** of what she can or cannot be as a young black woman. These dynamics further contribute to destroying women's confidence and exacerbating self-doubt. Lolitha left to do her second master's after this job. Her job after qualifying as both an infrastructure specialist and an economist was in government. Her experience here again shows the intersection of race, gender and age.

The department was full of white men over the age of 50. I held the highest position as a black woman as one of the DDGs (Deputy Director General). The other DDG was a white woman; the DG was a black man. One day stands out vividly; it was the day I chaired my first meeting. I ran up the stairs into this room full of mostly middle-aged Afrikaner men. The room itself was intimidating; there was a row of big busts of previous presidents of (apartheid) South Africa, a huge board table and huge chairs. The chairman's chair was even bigger. I tried to get everyone's attention unsuccessfully. I went to the chairman's chair. I am short and tiny, so I had to sit on the edge of the chair to reach the table. When I failed to get the audience's attention, I tapped on the table. When I introduced myself, I could see the disappointment and disgust on people's faces. The way I handled myself was different, I was more confident and technically astute. I had fun! The first impression is very important. Though I'm small in stature, I have a strong voice; I use this to assert myself. The engineers in the room tried technical jargon to test and intimidate me, but I was technically strong so I could handle it. What I've learnt is that you have to be very formal and do everything right. If you are black and female, you have to know

your story! Guys will expose you intentionally and otherwise. Know what you are bringing to the table; you can't be an expert at everything, but you should know your value add.

This experience again shows the intersection of gender, race and age. The difference is that the perceived racial prejudice is across race rather than intragroup. It also shows confidence built by the participant's investment in herself academically and otherwise, and her international exposure (if I can excel in Europe, I can succeed anywhere else).

Race and Gender:

Later in her career Lolitha again experienced the intersection of race (intragroup) and gender.

I had just taken up a position as a new CEO in a parastatal. I was confronted with a governance issue by a member of the board (black man). I decided to tackle it head-on without throwing a tantrum. I relied on facts to back my allegation of the flouting of governance. What I learnt over time is that the black and white issue is easier to address because it's in your face. Within six to twelve months people know how to get on with it. However, the issue amongst blacks is more complex and heavy. When you demand work and governance, there is an attitude of, 'who do you think you are?' You also start getting confused [and wondering] 'Am I right?'

In one organisation where I was CEO, I had a bad fallout with two black women executives. In any fallout both parties contribute. ... When I discovered that a certain report wasn't ready, I overreacted. I probably subconsciously expect more from black women; black woman, you are on your own, you can do it! I was pushed as a black woman; all of us can be there.

The encounter with the black woman subordinate confirms the higher standards that black women are held to, even by other black women (double jeopardy). This encounter was still a sensitive experience for the participant and she did not expand on it. She was still blaming herself for the harsh reaction.

Race, gender and age seemed to have been the main factors in the participant's life, in that order. Class played a role earlier in her life. She was held to higher expectations because of her background; this assisted her in expecting more of herself. She left formal employment in frustration. She felt she had to choose between staying married and succeeding at work. She chose the former. At that stage she was a CEO at a state-owned enterprise.

What I don't understand is why I didn't share the workload with my husband who held a similar position in government. I decided that kids were my problem.

The question is twofold: do the **high expectations and societal stereotypes** lead to women's guilt when they cannot live up to these expectations, or are feelings of guilt innate to women? The participant's mother was a stay-at-home mom; the children were her sole responsibility. This could explain Lolitha's assumed responsibility. We discussed the societal stereotype at our

second interview at which I presented preliminary findings for her input. She stated that though her husband made his own tea when the two of them were on their own, when her mother was around they had to change their arrangement because she had to be seen serving her husband. I could relate to this at a personal level. Lolitha's experience confirms the impact of societal stereotyping on women and their behaviour; expectations that have to be conformed to in order to be accepted.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Invest in yourself, both technically and in your soft skills.
- Seek a formal mentor.

Mentorship:

- She was mentored informally by men (black and white) and she now mentors young women.

Government's and Organisations' Roles:

- Quotas will only work if the environment is conducive to the success of women in organisations, otherwise the women will fail.

My take on quotas [*looking a bit apprehensive*] is that they have both good and bad sides. You need them to level the playing field. However, they are very difficult to implement both for the environment and the beneficiaries. You have to find the women and then support them if you are to do it properly. This is similar to the issue around people with disabilities. You need to work [on] the environment to be conducive ... [to the success of] women. Don't set up women for failure; it will reinforce the prejudice against women. You can take women who are ready and those with potential. Without support you will kill any potential. It has worked very well in the Scandinavian countries. The women there are confident, without losing their femininity. The environment is woman-friendly; all the buses cater for women pushing prams.

Lolitha spent three months in one of the Scandinavian countries compiling her thesis towards her PhD. Her husband encouraged her to complete her doctorate.

4.3.2 Participant 2 ('Khetshiwe')

Summary:

The intersection of gender, race and class impacts on your career progression. Lower class is an additional barrier for career progression. White women are not seen as allies. Even someone with no racial baggage still encounters racial prejudice. However, if you are perceived to be upper class you are treated as a different black and it is easier to progress. Apartheid baggage still holds black people back, and this impacts negatively on their confidence. Support from a husband and family is key. Get everyone to buy into your vision, and do not take things personally. Men are in charge, so you need to win them over in order to move women's empowerment agenda along. Women have to look and behave professionally to succeed. There will be supportive men and women; embrace them. Quotas are fine provided they are implemented properly. You can have it all. Racism and sexism will exist for a long time. In order to succeed you need to ignore these and work hard.

Khetshiwe is a 48-year-old, **middle-class African woman** who was born in Gauteng to a mining clerk father and a mother who was a hustler/entrepreneur, buying and selling goods in the township. She is one of 11 siblings, she is number 10. From the age of two she left to stay with her brother in one of the neighbouring African countries which offered a very good education. That was the reason why the parents had sent their children to that country. Her brother was a bank manager; he and his wife acted as parents to her while her biological parents were more like grandparents. She grew up in a middle-class environment, attending an all-girls, private, multiracial (boarding) school. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor's degree from a university in a neighbouring country. She is married and has two teenage children.

In the earlier phase of Khetshiwe's life there was no racial, gender or class encounter. She grew up as a tomboy, engaging with people across race in a country that was 'free' of overt racial prejudice. All her school and varsity years were spent in the SADC region. She was one of the least qualified participants in the study. This could be because of her self-confidence built by a better education, and because she had enjoyed protection from racial prejudice.

On Role Experience

Race, Gender and Class:

In her career she encountered racial and gender prejudice, but she was a beneficiary of class differentiation. She was perceived by whites as a better black because she had grown up outside the country and had received superior education (superior to local Africans).

When I left the bank I was frustrated with the bank; I would always be reminded that I came in at a supervisory level. This level was reserved for white graduates. I was one of the few black graduates at this level. At the time this didn't mean anything to me. I grew up in a country where whites were my classmates. I socialised with people because of a similar value system; colour was not an issue ... This helped me to be able to progress as quickly as I did because I didn't know any better, I didn't have any hang-ups ... Later in life when I reflect ... at the meetings when they introduced me, they would then add ... 'but she grew up in country B'. I didn't understand why that emphasis always. Because of that I never felt threatened.

This was her first encounter with a racially hostile environment. After leaving the bank she encountered further racial prejudice at a job interview. The elderly white male who interviewed her was patronising.

Racial prejudice at recruitment:

I went to the interview and actually decided that I wanted the job. The guys who interviewed me; the one who was going to be my boss was actually very nice. The other one was an old white guy who was very patronising. He would ask you the same question over and over again. It's funny because I have poor memory of things but I can vividly remember him asking over and over again what I understood by overheads. I was getting so irritated. I wasn't looking for a job so I had nothing to lose. I said ... listen, you cannot keep on asking me the same question over and over again unless you are the one who doesn't understand what an overhead is. My boss was quite nice, up to this day he is just a nice person. I left thinking I wanted the job just to shake up the attitudes. Three years later I was the old guy's boss. He was in shock. Actually I think that is the difference between men and women, I think ... if you find a woman who is grounded it's very unlikely for a woman to be vindictive because of past disagreement. But that is also our downfall, we never see it coming. He retired (at the time he was supposed to), and no issues. As women we never think there is a game to be played, we just do the job.

She is not the only woman who spoke about games that men play which women do not understand. Jenny and Penny had similar views. Lolitha called it sabotage by men, intentionally or otherwise.

Khethsiwe had a long successful career in the transport industry where she was CEO of two companies in succession.

Gender and Class:

On her experience with gender and class (her interpretation of class), she said:

It's about dressing for the occasion, it's so important. For a man it might not be important. The same dress tardiness for a man is interpreted positively, 'oh, he's such a nerd' ... How you carry yourself, how we talk does matter. Being highly professional does matter. People tend to be more lenient to men though. Your actions won't be interpreted in a similar way.

The above extract was her response to a direct question on class. Thandi's view on the importance of looks was slightly different. She believed looks are important across gender and race for career progression. I believe there is merit to both assertions. Men pay a lesser price for tardiness.

On Gender and Race:

All the jobs that I have done, I've been the first woman. Half the time I would not realise it immediately.

I needed to understand where her confidence came from because in contrast to Lolitha she was very confident and had no self-guilt.

My parents were like grandparents to me. I was mainly raised by my brother and another brother who came to stay later. I was more of a tomboy; the first time I bought a doll was when my daughter was born, who is now 12. She came out and was such a girly girl. I did not know anything about dolls but I used to spend time with my brothers who would call me when they were fixing cars. So if you asked me about cars, I would have quite a bit to say. So I was never taught that certain things are reserved for girls and some for boys. Also because my mother did a very good job, the boys could cook. Everyone in the house had a speciality. If my brother arrived early he would cook. This played a major role in how I turned out ... My mother was an entrepreneur, she bought and sold stuff. She always worked.

In contrast to Lolitha, Khetshiwe's mother worked. Lolitha played a caretaker role and looked after her father, which was quite different to the tomboy that Khetshiwe was. These might be instances of societal stereotyping or lack of it, leading to how women see themselves. Stereotyping that causes women to see themselves in certain ways is also evident in her account of how she perceived people across colour. Her account also highlights the role of the environment in how people perceive themselves.

I grew up in 'country A' where whites were my classmates. I socialised with people because of a similar value system; colour was not an issue. This helped me to be able to progress as quickly as I did because I didn't know any better, I didn't have any hang-ups. I was supervising older people who had been at the bank for many years. There was an old (black) man who never understood when I got angry with whites and expressed my anger. He didn't understand how I could talk to white people that way. ... When I look at South Africans, even my siblings, you find that there is that level of fear when someone is supposed to take a stand, there is that level

of fear, it's because of the way they grew up and you can't throw that aside even now that we are free. People think I have no fear, because ... I wasn't raised to fear anyone because of their race or to think people are more capable because of race.

Khetshiwe's confidence is apparently based on not being told from a young age, directly or indirectly, that her race was inferior. She related her experience about this confidence:

There is a guy who used to say I'm a bumblebee ... I had to go and find out why he thought I was one. He told this story about the bumblebee: 'A bumblebee is not supposed to fly and people wonder why it flies. Ultimately they came to the conclusion that it flies because no one told it that it couldn't fly! Because no one has told you that you can't do this, we can't ignore you.'

I wanted to know how she balanced work and a home life. My wanting to know was informed by Lolitha's story about her work-life balance.

Thank God for my family, my mother. My mother lived with us and did everything in the house. My son was so attached to my mother. What I always try to do, we have a deal in my household, it doesn't matter where I travel to, we've got to be home for the weekend. It doesn't matter that I might spend the weekend sleeping, but I'm there. To some extent it's bad because they'll say, oh, she's sleeping but it's okay. I would be exhausted, but the kids know weekends are their time. That's the other thing I wanted to say, having a supportive husband is important. Even when he does travel, we are strict about having one parent at home. On a few occasions when that is not the case, my sister comes to stay with the kids.

Support from her husband and extended family (her mother) has played a role in her success. This was not the case with Lolitha; however, her husband encouraged and supported her when she wanted to quit her PhD studies.

Khetshiwe gave her view on women forums:

I believe as women we are wasting a lot of time discussing how we want to change things. How do you talk amongst yourselves trying to bring about change while we are not in authority? Why not bring those people who are in authority, men, they are still holding those positions. We have to win them over. We spend too much time worrying about the fact that women try to pull each other down. It does happen but probably because there are such few positions that women tend to hold. We need to have enough women to have an impact.

I wanted her view on mentors. Lolitha did not have a formal mentor, but she had informal male mentors across race.

There are one or two or three people who meet you and decide they will watch you (your progress). I remember one time there was a lady, actually, which was quite disappointing, actually. She was in HR. When I got a promotion, she called me; she wanted me to feel that she had played a role in my promotion. I got a feeling that I should be forever grateful for this. You know it doesn't work that way, you should not do something for people because you expect something out of it. To be honest, it was more men than women who tended to assist with the learning.

I asked Khetshiwe about white women as mentors:

... in the earlier times it was black males and white males, later black females, in fact I've never had that with white women ... *Why?* ... I've never stopped to think about that ... I don't know ... very strange. I think it's very few white women who are successful in their careers who have done that without sacrificing some part of their lives, which would not be interesting for me ... I want a balance ... if I said I cooked dinner for my husband I want a person who won't think of that as weird; tomorrow I'm a CEO of a company but if I'm here I'm a wife, a mother. How many of us ... what have you sacrificed? ... for me finding value in that person would be a problem because balance is important; I would be keen to understand how to find that balance. A good relationship with your family is important. With white women, it's either they would not have children or if they do have children they are far away.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Be authentic.
- Be presentable and professional.
- Understand the whole business of your organisation
- Ignore racisms and sexism to get ahead
- You should have a reputation of hard work and delivery with your peers
- Get the right people and get buy-in on your vision.
- Define your expectations upfront for your transformation candidates.
- Understand what motivates your employees.
- Get mentor(s).
- Invest in yourself.

I arranged to have a second interview with Khetshiwe to check my preliminary findings. She gave me the following input:

It is important to obtain a broader understanding of the business and not just your specialist area to get ahead. Understanding how all of the parts of the business fit together is critical ... that is what gets you noticed by decision makers. Having a good reputation for hard work and delivery amongst your peers is equally important in your path to senior leadership.

Expect racial and gender discrimination in the workplace. No matter how good the company policies, racial and gender discrimination still exists and will still exist for years to come. It helps to be colour blind and not overly gender sensitive yourself to deal with this challenge. When you are 'blind' to this issue, you will be less sensitive and less prone to automatically go into defence mode as opposed to just pushing ahead and refusing to see these issues as obstacles. I always think of small children in this instance. Children have no inbred fear (until we drum it into their heads) and keep trying to climb over things, fall, but still get up and try and climb again. If you think somebody is superior to you, they will be because you give them the space

to be. Class plays a major role in how quickly people progress. Firstly, social standing already provides beneficial access to decision makers. So a lower social standing is an additional barrier when starting out.

This was a good summary of her thoughts regarding role experience and strategies for success.

Family:

- Relationships with family are important for family support.

Support from Male Business Leaders:

- Men are in charge; you need to win them over to succeed in gender transformation.

Government's and Business Leaders' Roles:

- Quotas are acceptable only if applied properly. Expectations are to be defined upfront by business leaders.

Khetshiwe qualified her support of quotas (similar to Lolitha). Family support did not feature in the case of Lolitha, whereas it was quite important for Khetshiwe. Khetshiwe seemed to be quite comfortable sharing the responsibility of childcare with her husband. She was one of the least educated participants, yet she did not seem to have a need to prove anything to anyone. She displayed no self-guilt.

4.3.3 Participant 3 ('Lonwabo')

Summary:

Intersection of race, gender and disability influences access to opportunities. It is a patriarchal society; you need to understand men's perspective to win them over. Africans should embrace their multiple identities and bring them to the table. Africans need to celebrate their Africanness. Elderly white men helped a lot when we gained independence, and they need recognition for that. Family and husband's support is very important. Women should be authentic, work hard and be confident.

Lonwabo is a **middle-class African woman** born and raised in a township in the Eastern Cape. She obtained an MSc (Social Policy and Planning) from an Ivy League university in

Europe, and a PhD in Development Economics from a local white University. She was recommended by Lolitha to take part in the study. She is a business and development entrepreneur. Her mother was a teacher at a farm school and her father worked for Old Mutual. She is the only girl out of five children, two of whom are deceased. Their parents divorced when she was 14 but retained a relationship for their children's sake. She chaired a parastatal board for five years; her CEO at the time was also an African woman and the relationship between them was good. She has run her strategy and development planning consultancy for the past twenty years. She is married, with two grown-up children.

Lonwabo had a very progressive upbringing. Her views on gender roles when she was growing up are as follows:

There were no gender role expectations. I wasn't expected to be in the kitchen; my mother was ubekhuthela [*diligent in house chores*], she would do most of the work. I got married not knowing how to bake. There was a lot of emphasis on responsibility, education and career. I knew I would be a career woman. My parents insisted on no lobola, and my relatives were intrigued by this since I had an honours degree by then (and this was unheard of in my culture). My dad was of the view that I was still young (I was in my early twenties) and my future husband had to create a space for me to do what I still needed to do. My dad applied for me at an Ivy League university in Europe. My husband asked why this man had to decide for his family because he had to move with me. This was well after I got married; I even had two kids. He (my father) believed I was born with a special talent.

Her confidence was nurtured by her parents' love and confidence in her. Her career journey has been different to those of all the other participants. She has run her consultancy most of her working life. This has involved policy formulation, strategy and development. Her first job concerned employee assessment, especially of employees with disabilities.

On Role Experience

Race and Disability:

Lonwabo told of her encounter with racial prejudice in her first job:

I became interested in working with people with disabilities and policy formulations. I was involved with placing people back into employment. It struck me that it was more whites with disability that got back to work; I could not place black people. ... *Why were you placing more white people?* ... Most of the people going back to work were at managerial level; there was also a problem with wheelchairs. Whites got wheelchairs from government, Indians and coloureds had a House of Representatives that catered for their wheelchair needs, for blacks there was no such [assistance]. That got me into the space of activism for people with disabilities.

Her experience brings another prejudice to the fore, namely that against people with disabilities, and the double jeopardy of being an African person with a disability. Lolitha had also spoken about people with disabilities and making sure that the environment accommodated them.

Race and Gender:

Lonwabo admitted that she was not confident at first. She knew more than men but she was not confident enough to express her opinion in a meeting.

There are instances in the past where I allowed myself, in a situation where I knew more on the issue than my counterparts, but I didn't have the guts to challenge. We need to empower each other in terms of the work we do to influence change.

She expressed the belief that we needed to understand men's perspective so as to win them over. This was similar to the opinion that Khetshiwe had expressed.

The challenge is getting men to see the bigger picture. It takes a lot out of you because you have to read to understand where they are coming from, to have an appreciation of what they are talking about. For instance, their input might deal with efficiencies whereas you also want to deal with issues of redress and structural issues. You should not be emotional; you need to accommodate their perspective to win them over. You also need to show how much you know.

All the participants mentioned the need for women to work that much harder. However, there is another perspective to Lonwabo's opinion; understanding men to win them over. Khetshiwe spent more time with men in her earlier life, Lonwabo went to a boarding school that was mainly for boys (and her siblings are all boys). Their 'tactical' approach in dealing with men might be informed by their earlier socialisation. Vuyiswa has a similar background to Lonwabo in terms of the common boarding school they went to. She was more vocal about a tactical approach in dealing with men.

On Being Authentic:

I believe in Africans defining themselves, knowing who they are, and it's happening. I see a lot of people who have achieved starting to focus on self-identity as Africans, knowing who you are ... Actually it's not just women, blacks in general, because of our baggage from apartheid, try hard to seem confident to prove to their white counterparts ... We are so used to dual/multiple lives, rural life, urban life, we leave these experiences in silos; when you are in a business meeting, you don't bring the experiences from your other lives. We have to build these bridges, for making it cool to introduce it.

On Support from Husband:

My husband is very organised, he toilet-trained all our kids. When he was a GP he had time to take care of a lot of things. I'm the scatterbrain. What I've learnt from him is organising your

thoughts. Even for business ideas, he listens and offers advice. He would say, you need an office, you need a driver. He was an enhancer that way. I am not the type of wife who has a credit card from the husband, but my husband would leverage his position to help me get one and he would save me if I didn't run my financial affairs appropriately.

Supportive Husbands:

The importance of husbands' support was raised by all the participants. Though Lolitha's husband did not help with the children, he encouraged her to complete her PhD. Even Dudu, who had divorced her second husband, acknowledged how supportive he had been of her in her career. Two of the white participants, Jenny and Penny, had husbands who stayed at home full-time to take care of the children. Paula's (white) husband relocated to the USA to support her, to the detriment of his legal practice and later of their marriage. Karen's (coloured) husband also became a stay-at-home father in order to take care of the children. Mabel's husband resigned from his executive job to support his wife who had to relocate to Europe to pursue her career. It's not a finding I expected before going into the field. It's interesting that it is across race, class and nationality.

On Gender (locally and globally):

If you look at Latin America, the economy has grown, the middle class has grown and one million women have entered the economy but only 5% hold leadership positions. Patriarchy is entrenched and systemic. The alignment of our reproductive issues and patriarchy is something that society has to deal with and accommodate it, it won't just happen.

All women were in agreement, directly or indirectly, that it was a patriarchal world.

Mentoring:

Lonwabo credited white men with mentoring blacks when the new dispensation had been ushered in.

When you think of what the white old men had to deal with, we don't credit them. One of those people is a guy who was the minister of transport under apartheid, he worked for "BTT". I was a young consultant working with BTT. When he gave me my first cheque of R500 000, he sat me down and said, 'Little girl, this is a lot of money, you must not misuse it', like a dad. Jakobus van As, for instance, when I had issues as chairman of a parastatal, he came to me and advised me on how to tackle it. I feel this has to be recognised.

I needed to find out if she had white women as mentors, in order to compare her experience to Khetshiwe's experience:

Black men (as mentors), I had lots; Eric, he would come and say, 'You are not your typical corporate person; stay that way'; they would work with me. Nadia Gordon, a white woman, I

mention her in my thesis. She was a Jewish woman who lived in Clifton, Cape Town. When I was young in CT and I was doing my activism and volunteering work, she helped with the fundraising for disabled people. She was amazing. I'm the child she never had. She had two kids of her own, they ended up in music. She was a historian. She started when I was pregnant, when I delivered she was my baby sitter, she knitted for both my kids. She taught me transcendence in terms of race and age; she was old. She would correct my racial prejudices.

Lonwabo's experience was limited in terms of mainstream business. It was therefore difficult to get detailed information on the intersection of race, gender and class that she experienced in her work. She had no first-hand exposure to class-related prejudice, for instance. After I was confronted with this scenario I decided to only include women CEOs, as opposed to non-executive chairmen, in the sample. I also looked for women who had worked in different companies and further decided that it would be even better in terms of exposure to different experiences if the women had worked in different sectors because that would provide me with rich data.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Be authentic; bring all your different experiences to the table.
- Build self-confidence.
- Accommodate men's perspective to win them over.
- Support from husband and mentorship are important.
- Acknowledge men that helped along the way.

Government's and Organisation's Role:

- Quotas are very important.

Quotas are not just about numbers. It is of significance that the cultural environment at work also has to change.

I compared the confidence of Khetshiwe and Lonwabo to that of Lolitha. I wondered if something in Lolitha's childhood had made her feel that she was less important. Her father treated her as the son he never had. Did this make her feel inadequate in spite of her achievements? I have to agree with Khetshiwe's statement that a person's upbringing means a lot.

4.3.4 Participant 4 ('Jenny')

Summary:

Ethnicity/culture, race and gender do influence your journey in business. The more different you are to the dominant culture, the tougher it is for you. Black women are subjected to double jeopardy. When you start pushing boundaries, gender oppression becomes more evident. In certain sectors (financial services) the environment is hostile to women; women are not taken seriously and their authority is undermined. Women should invest in themselves, be assertive; if things do not work out they should leave. Organisations should create a culture that is conducive to the thriving of women. Incentives and performance evaluation should be transparent in order to mitigate discrimination, and leaders need to lead this change. Quotas should work, as employment equity is working. Women forums and mentorship are important.

Jenny is a 59-year-old **middle-class white** woman, married, with three children. She is the eldest of three siblings. Her highest qualification is a junior degree (BSc). She is a respected businesswoman who ran a big division in a top financial institution. She is one of the founders of a prominent civil organisation in South Africa. Her husband, an engineer, quit his job to be a full-time father in support of his wife. She was mentioned as a mentor by one of the participants (coloured) in this study.

She changed the dates for the interview so many times I almost gave up. She promised to facilitate my access to other participants; however, this promise was not kept in spite of several attempts to get her attention. Overall, accessing white women was a challenge.

Jenny's first job was in England. She later worked at an international management consultancy firm where she rose to senior partner (one of only four women senior partners globally). Her next job was in a financial institution, both retail and investment banking, where she headed a big division. She is a founder of and shareholder in a small women-owned BEE investment company and is currently one of its executive directors.

On Role Experience

On Gender:

- Jenny was exposed to sexual harassment:

The harassment that used to take place was mind blowing – sexual advances. I developed disappearing acts. I never carried a bag to functions so that I could disappear easily, as if I was going to the loo. There were threats, openly, if you don't do this you won't get the following ... blatant threats.

- On organisation policies that did not accommodate women's maternal needs, Jenny said:

I did find the gender issue when I started pushing boundaries, such as, when I got married. When I got pregnant, there was no maternity policy, no partner had fallen pregnant before, they didn't know what to do with me. I had to help develop the policy, which was quite tricky. They came up with the policy that you could only have one child and as long as you kept your chargeable hours up there was no dispensation for any leeway. I worked right through the pregnancy and made my chargeable hours. Then I fell pregnant again; now there is a problem – we had to change the policy for two, and I had a third child.

- On a culture that is demeaning to women:

Even the awards are called big-swinging-dick award, that's what they were called. Cultural shock! I was always aware of it, the dealing room culture, migrating to the pub, the toxicity that results is unhealthy; conducive to treating women as trophies ... things ... it's very problematic. I had a problem dealing with it, I found it quite disrespecting. There were lots of women but they were in the back office or in HR or marketing; there were very few in deal-making areas. I was the only woman on exco.

- On being undermined as a woman leader:

When Jenny reported sexual harassment on behalf of other women, her experience was as follows:

Discussing with the top three, they looked at my note and said, 'what a boytjie'. I was completely stunned. I said you can't allow this, it's demeaning. They said, 'We'll talk to him', I said, 'Not with that attitude ... I'll speak to him'. I spoke to him and they went behind my back to reassure him. They moved him but did not discipline him.

Jenny's account is an example of the undermining of women's authority. Having an award that only men can relate to shows how little the leadership expect from their women employees. This is demeaning. Jenny was the first participant whose working life was spent mostly in the financial sector. The blatant sexual harassment occurred in a global company.

On Race and Gender:

- It was tougher for black women, Jenny thought:

Black women ... they had it a lot tougher, especially in the investment banking culture which was ... I think it's changed ... it tended to attract more of the same; guys, white, macho guys. The black women who managed are those who came in with a track record somewhere else; if they came in from a position of authority.

Her view was very different to Penny's view. Both were white but belonged to different classes. Penny is upper class. Penny said she was not a black woman, therefore she would not know if black women had a tougher time to manage in the work place. However, she thought black women had better opportunities than white men. I questioned Penny on this specifically because of Jenny's observation. However, Penny did admit that her journey would have been much shorter and easier than the journey of someone like me (black woman).

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Invest in yourself – technically and academically – and know about current affairs.
- Proactively manage performance expectations and appraisal and act on feedback.
- Report sexual harassment; if there is no change, leave.
- Work hard
- Be resilient, it's a tough life

Organisation's Role:

- A transparent performance appraisal and reward system mitigates discrimination.
- Women's forums build women's confidence and allow sharing of experience.
- Mentorship

Unlike Khetshiwe, Jenny believed in women's forums; she actually started one herself. Though she did not have a mentor, she, together with her women business partners, now mentors quite a few women.

Government Policies:

- Quota system – employment equity helped, quotas should help.

This was the second unconditional support for quotas. Lonwabo as an activist was quite enthusiastic about quotas. In Jenny's case, social class was not indicated as an inhibitor, but culture was.

4.3.5 Participant 5 ('Vuyiswa')

Summary:

The intersection of race, gender and class (including the political brand), influences your journey in business. Gender prejudice comes to the fore even more when you start pushing boundaries. Women need to be tactical in dealing with gender issues. White women do not see themselves as part of the gender struggle. Women should work hard, acknowledge and use support from progressive men/mentors, husbands and their families. Support for gender transformation needs to come from the highest office in government and quotas are the way to go, they need a champion.

Vuyiswa is a 54-year-old **middle-class African** woman from Cape Town whose highest qualification is an MBA from a US business school. She is one of ten siblings, is married and has two grown-up sons. Both her parents worked in their bookshop in the township. Her grandfather on her mother's side, who was a pastor, had a big influence on her life. Her first job after qualifying with an MBA was in the USA. She came back with the passing of her grandfather. She worked in different companies, mainly financial institutions, before joining three other black women in starting an investment and financial services company owned and run by black women. The company is respected in business and has been in existence for 19 years.

Vuyiswa, in a book on successful women, gave credit to three things for her success: A hardworking mother who showed her women could do it; a grandfather who believed she would excel in anything and built her confidence; and going to a boys-only special school where there were only five girls. Because they (Vuyiswa and the other girls) were 'ugly', the only thing the girls were interested in was competing with the boys and winning.

The preceding paragraph highlights a few things. Khetshiwe and Lonwabo, who had mothers who worked, came across as much more confident than Lolitha, whose mother was a housewife. Lonwabo and Vuyiswa went to the same special school, which was dominated by boys. Contrary to Khetshiwe's assertion that girls-only schools build girls' confidence, Lonwabo's and Vuyiswa's confidence was built by going to a male-dominated school, or was it supportive families or both?. They both got scholarships because of academic merit, which on its own

builds confidence. There is probably no right or wrong way. However, it may be that studying and competing with males at a young age prepares girls for the real world which is dominated by men.

Vuyiswa believes in co-existence between men and women, and not in the elevation of women. She does not relate to feminists.

I don't like feminists, however, they are described, the issue of gender is a very serious thing, because you are going against the wave of people who have a lot of resources; men the world over have a lot of resources and power, so to deal with gender you have to be tactical in your approach. The feminists do not help in their approach. Also, because I am a traditionalist, I want women to get married, have children and cook for the men, all these things that look submissive, I think it does not harm us; in fact I believe we get more in those areas. Collision with men unarmed does not make sense to me. You lose it all. For me the gender issue is simple; I want men to recognise and accept that we co-exist, I do not have the energy to fight them. I want a person who says I want to be parallel and same with men.

Having studied and competed with men might have taught Vuyiswa the tactical game of dealing with men. Interestingly, similar to Lonwabo, she never complained about not understanding men's game. Her traditionalist way of playing her role as wife is similar to Khetshiwe's approach.

Vuyiswa left the bank to start her own women's investment group with three other black women. She said she left because they were structuring transactions for black men and black women were not benefiting.

On Role Experience

Class:

- Blacks with a posh accent are taken more seriously.

When Ms B and I spoke, white men would go off to sleep, whereas when Ms A (American accent) and Ms C (posh English accent) [spoke] they listened with interest.

The interesting thing is that people with the technical skills who prepared the presentations were the ones putting men to sleep.

Class and Gender:

- Political connections (relational power)

We were hit from the black men and white men side. White business shunned us. We didn't have political brand. We felt that we knew more than they did, we had structured deals. It was a big up-hill, they did deals with politically connected men.

This backlash was experienced when they embarked on a venture to start their own private equity company. Jenny also mentioned experiencing gender prejudice when she started pushing boundaries.

Gender:

I asked Vuyiswa how she maintained balance:

I don't think a balance can be kept; some things fall apart. I am not as available as a wife as other wives.

Gender and Race:

- Not being taken seriously in spite of technical skills

We would do an analysis of a mining company and go and present to them (white business) and they would ignore everything we said and point us to a rose farm. They didn't take us seriously. Our closest friends did not think we would succeed.

- Hostile environment (investment banking)

[T]here were more women than men, however, it's a man's world, the rudeness was there, you had to survive it. If you rebuff that, they don't know what to do. Women were more junior than men.

The hostile culture in investment banking was also mentioned by Jenny. Going to a predominantly male school seemed to have taught Vuyiswa how to handle men's attitudes. I wanted to find out if she had a white woman mentor.

- White women are not seen as allies.

I am thinking which white woman could have mentored me, and I can't think of one. Do not forget that white women are struggling to accept that they were marginalised; the fact is that they were. They benefited from employment equity.

Vuyiswa studied and worked in the USA. That should have mitigated, to some extent, her racial baggage. Khetshiwe stated that she did not have racial baggage when she came back to South Africa. They both still did not see white women as allies. This might confirm Thandi's assertion that race was a much bigger problem than gender. About her experience in the USA, Vuyiswa said:

In the USA I didn't feel left behind; coming from South Africa it's difficult to see race issues. You work with white people who have no qualms about going to a pub with you after work, very different from home. It was a privilege to work for an elite company (oil company) which taught humility though. You were in an environment where there were many blacks and women

and you did small jobs. Everyone has an MBA. You had to work hard to succeed. It taught me that life doesn't stop with exams; it's a hard 24 hours.

She indicated hard work as one of her success strategies.

Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Get younger generation's commitment and educate them on the issues.
- Join board transformation committees to drive change.

I chair this committee in whatever board I am in. Why does [transformation work at] junior and middle management, yet when you get to the senior management band there are no blacks and they pop up again at executive level. The truth is that at senior management level is where actual work occurs, decisions are taken there.

- Mentorship – define it (long-term, not quick fix), mentor both girls and boys.
- Identify progressive men who are willing to help and seize the opportunity.
- Acknowledge progressive men who gave you a break.
- Sacrifice for your passion.

Family Support:

- Support by spouse

Your husband must not be surprised by what you are doing at work and the pressure that it comes with. Then you will have his backing. My husband has to know the deals I am working on and the stresses I encounter. Find quality time with your partner.

- Domestic help and extended family

We have domestic help, mother/mothers-in-law. They should also know in order to support you. I'm close to my mother-in-law.

Leadership in the Organisation:

- Transformational leader

Company A: The CEO was a German guy; he'd been in the country since 1978. He did drastic things for transformation. There were problems in Soweto schools, public schools in town did not take black students. Private schools had just started taking blacks. He made a decision that all black staff's kids will go to private schools at the company's cost.

Company B: Jacobus gave us real jobs; he oversaw that we were not affected by racism. He made time for us, our opinions were important to him.

Progressive Men in Business:

Vuyiswa acknowledged men across race who had supported her in her success.

MR JS, a white man, from H Company gave us a break. He was CEO of H Group.

She only had men as mentors.

Government:

- Leadership

Mbeki fought the gender issue for us on the women's league behalf. It helps to have a head of state pushing the gender issue ... he was the wind behind us.

- Policies/Quotas

I support quotas; they need a champion.

4.3.6 Participant 6 ('Thandi')

Summary:

Class, looks, age, race and gender do matter. They open the doors and push you to the top, but competence sustains you. Women should invest in all these elements. Hard work and excellence are important. Race is the biggest obstacle still; it is double jeopardy for black women, gender is a close second. Quotas, supportive and transformational leadership should shatter the glass ceiling.

Thandi is a 53-year-old **upper-class African woman** who is a CEO of a JSE-listed 'engineering' company. She was born in a small township in Durban, KZN, to a well-known lawyer and a mother who was a professional nurse, and she is one of three children. She went to an all-girls' boarding school, did A levels in SADC, BSc Hons in electrical engineering in the UK, MSc in the USA and an MBA. She tried to get into a local white university, having obtained a very good matric pass; however, she was denied entry by the Minister of the apartheid government. She defines her family as middle class. She has done much better than her two siblings, and ascribes this to an intersection of luck and opportunity.

On Role Experience

Thandi has always been part of a minority group in her field both in terms of gender and race. She admitted that that desensitised one to gender issues.

Class and Looks:

- Class matters

When you come from upper class, you are pretty, you have a personality that draws people towards you; those things matter MUCH MUCH MORE than competence. Competence eventually gets you through, but it won't get you to the top. I was picked out from hundreds of people; all my life I have been very visible, look, in my field I would be the only female and the only black, so I would be quite visible, in a positive way ...

Thandi has worked in three countries outside SA. She related a story about race and class from when she was a student in the UK:

When I was in the UK I had a student permit and I was allowed to vote! Back home I was not allowed to vote but here I was voting for the first time outside my country of birth. That's why I always have a soft spot for UK, over and above that I had a great time as a student there. SADC had this artificial feel about it, but this was my first experience of being in class with different racial groups. It seemed like a staged acceptance of other races rather than a genuine racial acceptance. ... [*Racial baggage from SA?*] ... I never personally experienced racism in the UK. They always asked why I spoke posh. When people got to know I was Zulu, they would go mad, I was a tourist attraction. I decided to take it a step further and claimed to be a Zulu princess. I used to work at a pub and gave a story that royalty doesn't clean dishes/glasses after the commoners ... [*laughing*] they so bought it. I would have the other waiters getting the dishes and cleaning them. I had a great time. By the time I went to the US I wasn't conscious of race at all.

Her experience in the UK was very different from Swasthi's. Swasthi was younger and found the UK to be very racist and class conscious. Thandi's experience might have been influenced by her being upper class, while Swasthi is middle class.

Thandi related a story about how looks mattered. She was the only participant who was explicit on this point. Khetshiwe hinted at it.

These things are not talked about. When I worked at Company B, we did postings for matriculants whom we provided bursaries for. Somehow we ended up at the CEO's office with three or four of them. The CEO says [to the young girls] ... 'You will do well ... you will do okay'; I said, 'What manner of remark is that?'; he said, 'She's pretty, unfortunately that's how the world works, deal with it'. If you look at women who have made it to the S&P, even the men look more handsome at CEO level than your average guy. When you are younger those things are completely unacceptable, I was all about capability. I now understand that these other things get you to the door.

Thandi is the epitome of confidence. There are multiple possible reasons for this, such as high intellect, upper-class family, worldliness from extensive travel, and looks. She has embraced being in the minority; it has made her journey easier in spite of race and gender.

When we started my engineering degree, there were three women, one dropped out and two remained. In an environment like that, whatever part of your brain that sees gender, dies. I didn't see gender after that. Gender has not been an issue for me; in my upbringing there was nothing that girls could not do. My mother was very involved in feminist activism; she would go to the US etc. My daughter wants to be president, for instance, and I encourage that.

Gender and Generation:

As a woman you get undermined, do you agree, I think that happens when you are younger. It used to happen when I was at the IT company. I was around 30, and they would talk as if you had not said anything, but it was more the case that I had to prove myself.

The above is in keeping with Lolitha's experience. While studying overseas seems to have helped the women's confidence, actually working abroad seems to build confidence more. This was highlighted by Vuyiswa and Paula as something they would encourage young women to do.

Gender and Race:

- The main player is race, and gender is a close second.

This woman, for instance, sent a mail saying she has to stand for women – she's a white woman. She raised a grievance against a union shop steward, so clearly 'I'm going to be biased'. So she raises her grievance to head office, bypassing me. So in this company we are still in the 1978/1984 mode; racism is still quite there, gender issues are second, a close second.

Whites have a cultural barrier to identifying black talent; it's worse for black women.

Thandi told about another happening at work that indicated the subconscious racial prejudice of other blacks, and this might be seen as baggage from apartheid:

Going abroad helped me. When you socialise with people you look at them differently, which is what happened to me when I was overseas. I don't treat white people differently. Because of our history, black people have a special treatment for white people; I don't know how we can change that. Just recently, one senior black guy was introducing me when we had a function – he introduces me by my first name and later introduces one of my subordinates as Mr; it is subconscious.

This is very similar to a comment made by Khetshiwe. I suspect Thandi's initial racial baggage is part of the explanation for her cynicism about the inter-racial harmony she observed in SADC.

- Double jeopardy for black women

There is a certain cultural barrier that whites have to overcome. White people still have an advantage hands-down even today. I see it in this company when I question why a white person received a promotion over a black person. The answers are inconclusive. That is why a black person has to be that much more qualified; women, it's just worse.

The above is opposite to what Penny said. She felt black women had an advantage over white men. Penny's assertion is not supported by any statistic.

Thandi was the only engineer in the study; engaging with her was very interesting. She was quite direct. We come from the same small township but our paths never crossed in the township. Her family belonged to the top four upper-crust families, highly visible, highly educated and sophisticated.

I asked her if she had a woman as a mentor, especially a white woman. She did not have one. She expressed her views about white women:

I'm surprised white women have not done as well as I would have expected them, in all spheres. They got their major lift from employment equity. White women in SA should have done better than women in the USA. I don't understand why [they didn't].

The answer to Thandi's question is in her statement: white women got their major lift from employment equity, but whether they accept this or not is another issue. It is an interesting topic for investigation in the future. Thandi's statement also endorsed those made by Khetshiwe and Vuyiswa about black and white women and **their separate ways**.

Gender:

I wanted to know how Thandi maintained balance.

Family balance? ... It's a myth, it doesn't exist. The good thing is that neglecting your kids is not such a bad thing. The thing that takes the brunt is your relationship with your husband. I deal badly with that.

This statement is similar to the one made by Lolitha. The difference in approach is that Lolitha resigned from work when she could see her marriage was suffering. However, Thandi made sacrifices to raise her children in her own, different way. She opted out in a way, but stayed within the system.

Women have to be very careful; it was easier to raise my kids when they were young because I was in a small company in a small country with no social life. *You* should raise your kids, not a nanny. Weekend was time with the kids.

She was overlooked for promotion and her salary was lower than it should have been. She was not 'visible', and she worked in a small SADC country. She prioritised the upbringing of her children over career progression during a critical stage of her children's development. Dudu, who has been divorced twice, identified prioritisation of relationships that mattered as critical in trying to achieve some balance.

Strategies for gender transformation

Women:

- Be in a line function position.

You have to be part of the frontline that generates revenue for the company. I've never had a support job.

- Work hard and strive for excellence.

Why do I need to be excellent? I don't know. I have always sought excellence.

- Have a sponsor who is in a line function position.

Confidence building and influence

- Be visible and work hard.

Young women of today need to understand that you are on a stage. You have to act the part; being comfortable on that stage is important for you to get ahead. Not in a negative way, make sure that the packaging does not overshadow the content. Strengthen the content too.

Leaders' Role:

- Design appropriate systems for required result (transformation).

I have systematised the elevation of blacks to positions. I sign off on the top four positions. After four years you start to see the change.

Supportive men:

Some people shine a torch on you and make sure that you succeed. I've had a few of those. Mandela did that for a few people.

Role of society:

One of the problems is that in the corporate world the man is a default and we are seen as a variant of that; which is not true, we are completely different. The men of today have changed, they are more domesticated; it now has to come to the work environment.

Quotas:

I support quotas 120%. The problem is that once you get to the position you need to deliver. Quotas will remove the glass ceiling.

Thandi has worked in different sectors of the economy at senior levels. The ICT, financial services, engineering and mining sectors are part of the list of sectors. Her exposure to diverse cultures both locally and abroad contributed to the richness of her experience. She is the only participant who has lived and worked in four different countries in three different continents.

4.3.7 Participant 7 ('Penny')

Summary:

The intersection of gender, class, education and looks are more important than race. Women should invest in good education, develop their soft skills and follow their passion. Mentorship and transformational leaders who focus on meritocracy will assist with gender transformation.

Penny is an **upper-class white woman** in her mid-40s who has two master's degrees in law, which she obtained from a local white university and an Ivy League UK university. Currently, she is a CEO of a well-known South African company. She comes from a prominent family; her father was a respected lawyer and her mother was a socialite. Although her mother went to a top private high school in Johannesburg she did not further her education because her rich father did not believe in further education for girls. Penny's mother was attractive and intelligent; she started out as a stay-at-home socialite but later became a farmer. Penny is married, with two sons. By 'mutual agreement' her husband is a stay-at-home father who takes care of the children.

On Role Experience

Gender:

This was a difficult interview. I felt that I was dealing with denial. In spite of her mother having been a victim of gender prejudice and her leaving her first job because of the unwelcoming 'boys club', Penny insisted she had never experienced gender prejudice.

- Difficult to reach senior levels for women professionals

There were very few women partners. I was very young; I didn't have the appetite to go through the many layers before becoming a senior partner.

- Unwelcoming environment

I didn't see the need to spend a lot of time battling the system. Why should I go to work and spend time figuring out what I should do to belong here?

Though Penny was quite adamant that she did not 'see' gender and did not have a victim mentality, the above comments seem to prove otherwise. I became concerned about her denial of gender and asked how she pushed for transformation if she did not see gender as a CEO. It came out that her predecessor, a white male, started transformation in the organisation immediately after assuming his position. His first promotions were two women that he appointed to exco. She was one of these two women.

- Work-family balance

Work-life balance is in the eyes of the beholder. I am quite hard on the difference between work and family. If you take today; my day started at 04:15 when I went cycling. I passed the family on the road, my husband taking the kids to school, then work, this afternoon I'll be going to my son's school for the teacher-parent review, I'll be home at 7 pm. That's my day. It's personal time, work time and family time. I turn most evening engagements down because that would rob me of family time.

Race and Gender:

Other participants indicated that black women had to do more to get recognition. The participants in this study were highly qualified. Except for two white participants, only black participants had two master's degrees, MBAs (except Paula) and PhDs. I wanted to get Penny's view.

Look, I'm not a black woman, but we don't demand master's from a black woman and an honour's from a man. But having said that, all the black women I know are unbelievably well educated. So there is something in the DNA that has forced these women to go for it. I get the feeling that there is something that makes black women to be better.

Was this an indication of naivety or denial? I found the responses denialist or rehearsed. I asked her if black women had the same chance as white women.

It's better. Our preferred candidate for employment is a black woman.

She said white men had fewer opportunities, and that the door was less closed for white women.

Class:

- Upper class is an advantage in career progression.

She was in agreement with Thandi that good looks and being upper class, amongst other attributes, made your life easier. In her words:

I don't come from a victim mentality. I was very well educated. I have three law degrees, I'm reasonably articulate, I'm reasonably presentable, reasonably intelligent. The journey that I've walked is much shorter than a journey of someone like you.

Strategies for gender transformation**Women:**

- Develop good listening skills.
- Develop resilience; it is a tough world.
- Be authentic.
- Get the best education.
- Do what you are passionate about.
- Work for someone you respect.

Penny believed in women developing themselves, in both soft and technical skills. This was a common theme throughout. She believed the white male leader who promoted her to an executive position was driven by meritocracy rather than by transformation per se. She acknowledged that companies with women in senior positions sent other women the message that the companies liked women.

Support from husband:

Her husband is a stay-at-home father.

Right from the beginning when we met at varsity we knew that I would work. ... He did BA Physical Education; I was always going to earn more and we wanted our kids to have good education, which is private education. One parent had to look after the kids ... *[It's interesting that it came from your husband?]* ... No, it was a joint discussion; when he proposed to me after going out for ten years, we had a 24-hour discussion of terms ... so remember, I'm working, keeping my surname, kids will have your surname and can go to your passport (because he has a German passport), we will bring them up in SA, no boarding ... it was a full discussion. ... *[What informed your choice to keep your dad's name?]* ... It wasn't a discussion, that was just how it was going to be.

My last question regarding keeping her name, was not answered. Later in the interview she indicated that by the time she got married she had created a name for herself hence the decision to keep her father's name. She also explained that it was a prestigious name with a history.

At our second interview she confirmed that it was difficult for her husband in the beginning. Society was not ready to accept a stay-at-home dad.

I wanted to hear her views on women's forums (which were recommended by Lolitha and Jenny).

I think it can work for some people; I'm very private, like I WOULD NEVER in that setting share any ... EVER, EVER. My best friends know very little about me; it's not about being scared of the consequences, I've never had someone betray my confidence. I don't carry baggage.

She admitted to having males as mentors and mentoring a few women and one male. Jenny seemed to be out of touch with some racial realities of the country, contrary to Penny and Jackie. I tried to understand the reason behind this, was it denial, was it protection of class privilege?

4.3.8 Participant 8 ('Swasthi')

Summary:

Class is not an issue in South Africa, but there is an intersection of culture, race and gender which impacts on achieving leadership roles. Africans and Coloureds are subjected to double prejudice because of the inferior education they received during apartheid. Women accept the paternalistic relationship. Women have to invest in themselves and work hard. Domestic help is critical for women's success, but domestic workers are exploited. Organisations need to formalise mentorship and link it to business strategy and employee development.

Swasthi is a **middle-class Indian woman** in her 50s who is CEO in a media company of which she is a part owner. She is married, with two children in their late teenage years. She comes from one of the prominent Indian families involved in politics; both her parents were political activists. Earlier in her life the mother was the sole breadwinner, working as a secretary. When the father was under house arrest, he started forming business enterprises; this raised their social

class to middle class. Her highest qualification is a master's degree from a university in England. She comes from a family of strong women.

Her journey has been sheltered from racial and class prejudice.

You know I had quite a sheltered life in SA because I was always ... my employment was driven by my need to have political expression. I was therefore with likeminded people. I never felt there was a glass ceiling for women. I never felt that being a woman or my race limited my progression.

She experienced racial prejudice as a student in England. Her experience was very different from Thandi's experience in England.

On Role Experience

Gender:

- Not taken seriously as women
- Women themselves accepting a paternalistic relationship

I do not think the mother company took us seriously, and I think it was because we were two women running the company. There was no agenda to develop us and grow the company; I do think there was a subtext of these two girls on the side. We were undermined because we were women ... I wish I had fought more; we played our part as young women, not really challenging but more accepting of the paternalistic relationship.

She, together with her white woman partner, unsuccessfully tried to negotiate with the mother company to increase their shareholding. She blamed this on gender prejudice.

Race:

I wanted to find out how she found the transition from South Africa to Europe where she attended high school.

But England was terribly racist at that stage. In the school that I went to there were four or five black kids. I remember being called a Paki. From an early age I knew that SA had institutionalised racism but also learnt that whether racism is institutionalised or not it happens across the board.

This account was very different to that of Thandi. Thandi did not experience racism in England when she did her junior degree there. This was a few years later though.

Swasthi admitted that white and Indian women had benefited from apartheid by receiving good education. This had enabled them to do better than African and Coloured women.

I think white women are skilled, actually Indian women are skilled, Indians generally are kinda the new elite because in some ways we got better education than Coloureds and African people; there was an emphasis on getting skills and going to varsity. There is a whole band of Indians in key positions because they've got the skill, partly because they benefited in some weird way from apartheid though they were discriminated against; two sides to the coin ... white women are a bit like that.

Race and Gender:

- Culture as a barrier to women's progress

In my Indian culture it's quite crazy. If you look at medical schools, they are full of Indian girls who do well and qualify. Do you know that when they get married they stop practising as doctors? It is not uncommon; they are held back by their culture. The women accept it!

On Strategies for Success

Women:

- Work hard and do not rely on a sense of entitlement.
- Be assertive.
- Acquire education and skills.

Domestic/Family Support:

- Domestic help

I had a brilliant helper, we had never had domestic help before. She was a mother to my kids actually, and her daughter and her older sons came to live with us. I had some help from my mother but she was older. My domestic help is the reason I am here today.

In SA women who have made it in business have depended on other women who are exploited, so I do think domestic work needs better recognition.

This sentiment was shared at the Brazilian symposium on Women Changing Brazil, which I attended in March 2013. I wanted to do a global comparison. The view in Brazil was that women of higher class made it at the expense of lower-class women who were exploited as domestic workers. Interestingly, this did not come from women on the panel, but from a man in the audience, and the audience applauded him. Panellists included senior politicians, businesswomen and women academics. They painted a beautiful picture of gender harmony/equity. They were mostly upper class, which might explain Penny's 'protectionist' position.

Organisation:

- Formalised mentoring that is linked to business

Swasthi shared the view that formal mentoring by companies should be linked to the business of the company in order to be sustainable. She described the black man who founded their mother company as her mentor in terms of a value system and the culture of giving back. I wanted to find out if she had any woman mentor or a white woman mentor. Her initial response was an emphatic no. But on further questioning she explained as follows:

The person that I started working with here was a white woman; that she was Jewish might be the differentiator, maybe; actually the success of the business was based on our good relationship. Actually I mentored her because I brought a lot of skills, but she also mentored me in a whole lot of things. Maybe Jewish families are very different; they have strong family values, actually they are very similar to the way that I was brought up.

She had mixed feelings about quotas. Her initial reaction was completely opposed to quotas. The stance softened after further discussion.

4.3.9 Participant 9 ('Karen')

Summary:

Class is an issue within race. The closer your looks are to those of white people, the higher your social class. Intersection of race and gender is evident in terms of how you are perceived, but hard work transcends everything. Humility is important. Women should use their positions to drive transformation. Women should be prepared to work hard and invest in themselves; they need to acknowledge their husband's and domestic help. Organisations should link transformation targets to monetary incentives for them to work. Quotas will work. It is important to mentor women CEOs.

Karen is a well-accomplished **working-class Coloured businesswoman** and **former unionist** in her mid-50s, married, with three children. She runs her own IT company. Her father passed away when she was three; her mother, a domestic worker, struggled to raise them. She had to take care of her two younger siblings from a young age. She never obtained a tertiary degree, but got a European graphic design certificate. The union paid for her to do an advanced management programme at Wits where she passed finance with a distinction. After working for the union for many years, she represented the union as an executive director in their investment

companies. She ended up as an executive director in a listed telecoms business before starting her own company. She is one of the wealthy black women in the country. Her husband quit working in a failing family business to take care of their children.

On Role Experience

Class Experience when Growing Up:

- Intragroup class prejudice
- Exposure to oppression breeds militancy among victims.

She found prejudice against the working class among Cape Coloureds disturbing.

If you were not a middle-class family you were discriminated against. Kids from families where the parents were teachers and they lived in big houses, they would look down on people like us. So there was discrimination within the same race between classes. But in Cape Town it goes further; the hair, the eyes and skin colour put you in a different class. Straight hair is higher class, blue eyes even better, add fair complexion, then you are an upper class. [The participant is very light-skinned with kinky hair and brown eyes.] Hair and eyes are the most important. Even if you were a drunkard but had these superior features you were up there.

Experience during Career:

She was not exposed to class in her career and she ascribed this to working with like-minded people. This response was similar to that of Swasthi who also had a political activist background.

I moved from an environment where class mattered; you were fighting apartheid and class within your race. Within the union there was only one enemy – apartheid. Class was not the issue. ... [Business?] ... When we took over, we now had a democratic government, that's where the difference was. Exposure to other countries made me realise that people live in harmony regardless of race.

Gender:

- Women not raising their hand

For eight years we were the only two women. ... [Why?] ... Women did not see it as a core job for them; women were mainly secretaries. We fought for women to become mining engineers.

These words mirrored the thoughts of Jackie who said that women did not raise their hand enough.

Gender and Race:

- Not being taken seriously

Karen experienced being undermined when she joined boards. However, she said that men learnt quite soon not to be dismissive of her. In her words:

They were initially dismissive, but they learnt VERY QUICKLY that they couldn't dismiss me. By the time we got to meetings I would have read and analysed every page. At the meeting I would ask for explanation on things I didn't understand. If I wasn't happy with the explanation I would say, let it be recorded that ... The minute I said that everybody would say, let's go through that issue ... What was the most important thing was that I earned respect because the issues I was raising were for the company's wellbeing. They then wanted me in all the committees because of the value add.

Societal Gender Stereotype:

My mother, though she didn't have a husband most of her life, believes that the husband should work for his wife, so we were setting a newer trend within the family. It didn't matter to me and he [her husband] was supportive from a family perspective. We had someone looking after the children; he would wash the clothes and make sure everything was fine. It's intangible but you have to recognise it.

Lolitha expressed a similar experience at our second (member checking) interview. Her mother expected her to make tea for her husband. Penny, at our second (member checking) interview, also indicated that it had been difficult for her husband earlier on. There was societal prejudice against stay-at-home fathers.

Double Jeopardy for Black Women:

As black women we have to be the best at whatever we do and surround ourselves with good people. We don't have all the skills. If you have a vision of where you want to be you can direct a good team to that vision.

This was similar to Khetshiwe's remark about getting your team to buy into the vision.

Strategies for Success

Women:

- Invest in yourself – both technical and soft skills.
- Recognise support from your spouse.

It's intangible but you have to recognise it.

- Be prepared to work hard, but be humble.

By the time we got to meetings I would have read and analysed every page.

- Trust your intuition.

Thandi and Dudu underscored this point of trusting your intuition. Khetshiwe also mentioned her skill of assessing a fit with employees at the first interview.

Family Support:

- Spouse's support

I was travelling so much, he had to look after the baby; there was an acceptance that he was not going to be the breadwinner ... We have support that allows us some slack.

Organisation policy:

- Link transformation achievements to monetary incentives.

I was actually chairman of the board for two years during that period. I chaired the HR committee. I made sure that 20% of the performance measurement for a bonus was linked to employment equity. I made a direct impact; they missed 20% of their bonus because they didn't take EE seriously, and the company was doing well. They then realised that they had to take this seriously.

This underscores Vuyiswa's point of chairing transformation committees to drive change.

- Mentorship

She counted senior male politicians among her mentors. One of the white women participants was her mentor.

- Stakeholder support to women

When I started in business I had the support that most women do not have (support of the unions over and above support from my husband). It allowed me to push for what's right without being fired because of the backing.

This is the support that Khetshiwe did not get when it mattered in her last job. Lonwabo also spoke about lack of stakeholder support as one of the challenges when she chaired the board of a parastatal organisation.

Business Community:

- (Successful women) should mentor women CEOs.

Government:

- Quotas

I think quotas will go a long way in resolving the gender issues, like empowerment did, but what I think is that we should get to a position where we would start **a group that mentors women CEOs** because once they get there it is very lonely; they get busy and are exposed to many challenges and because they are in such a high position, they are scared to ask. I believe the women in these positions should support each other.

4.3.10 Participant 10 ('Mabel')

Summary:

Race and gender influence how you are perceived. Black women are expected to achieve less and take longer to succeed. For black women the main factor is race followed by gender, while for whites the main factor is gender. Intelligence and hard work overshadow any social prejudice. Societal stereotypes make it difficult for women. Women should be authentic, work hard, support other women and form networks with other women. Spousal support is important. Organisations should invest in formal mentorship programmes that include academic training at reputable institutions and internal mentoring, and these should be linked to the business strategy and practical organisation projects. Minorities should be allowed to form their own network groups that are funded and supported by the leaders.

Mabel is an **upper-class African American** woman in her early 40s, the MD and global head of diversity for a financial institution, married, with no children. Though she is based in New York at their head office, her company has representation in South Africa. She has a master's degree from one of the Ivy League universities in the USA. She was interviewed over two sessions by telephone. In the first session she seemed guarded; this changed in the second session. She comes from a prominent family. Her father was an executive for 40 years, her mother, an engineer by training, retired as an entrepreneur. Her sister has a PhD, while the youngest is a marketing representative. She has worked both in Europe and the USA. Her husband, who was an executive, quit his job to support her when she was transferred to Switzerland. She was there for seven years. He does consulting, owns businesses and is a writer.

On Role Experience

Race and Gender:

- Low expectations from black women

I think there is an expectation that as women and as people of colour we have to take longer to achieve success, but that's someone else's opinion.

- Her take on class, race and gender:

I don't think class is an issue ... I guess if you ask a white woman, gender will be the main issue in terms of prejudice. However, for a woman of colour, race is the main issue.

Gender:

- Societal Stereotyping

I think sometimes as women we are criticised for things unfairly and for things that men are not criticised about. The traditional expectation of what a woman is supposed to be doing versus what she is doing might be part of the reason.

Mabel made an example of the criticism she got for not having children. According to her, the assumption was that she had chosen her career over starting a family. Her view was that men were not criticised concerning similar issues.

Strategies for Success

Women:

- Be authentic.
- Support other women.
- Form women's networks.

Family:

- Support by spouse

Mabel considered herself lucky for having a husband who prioritised her career over his.

He's been supportive from day one of our marriage. I'm really lucky. He's put my career and my success first. I believe that is so selfless. I think such support from a life partner is one of the success factors.

Organisation:

- Formal mentorship programmes that are resourced and involve outside training
- Formal resourced networks amongst minorities, driven by them
- Linking of diversity to business objectives and market segments

Her experience in different sectors had led her to believe that if diversity was linked to business strategy it was easier to sell to leadership than to have diversity for its own sake. This was supported by Thandi at our second interview. The consumer business sector was one example she gave as being receptive to diversity because of the business imperative. According to her, the situation was that in the elitist financial services sector, diversity was not prioritised. This observation on the financial sector confirmed the views of other participants (Jenny, Dudu, Lizelle and Jackie) who come from that sector.

4.3.11 Participant 11 ('Lizelle')

Summary:

There is intersection of class, culture/language, race and gender which impacts on your career progress. Class tends to be industry-specific, based on the class of the market they serve. Black women are subjected to double jeopardy. Society entrenches the undermining of women. Women have to invest in themselves, work hard, be visible and strive for excellence. A culture of meritocracy in organisations overcomes any prejudice. Transformational leadership, support from friends and family and mentorship are some of the strategies for achieving transformation and the success of women.

Lizelle is a **lower middle-class coloured** woman executive who comes from rural Limpopo. She is in her late 30s, a qualified chartered accountant who is engaged, with no children. She has recently been promoted from being a CEO of a small division in a financial institution to heading the biggest division in the group in terms of revenue. The mother company is listed on the JSE. She describes her family as lower middle class. She grew up in an extended family; her grandfather was a principal but also had a shop where they all worked after school and at weekends. Her mother is the only sibling in her family with no tertiary qualification (she worked at the family shop). Lizelle's two siblings are much younger than her. Her mother is a single parent.

On Role Experience

Class:

- Intragroup class prejudice (Cape Coloured)

In Cape Town it starts with, are you Muslim; even within [the] Muslim group there is the proper Muslim and the Malay Muslim. Then within those groups it then goes to the hair, colour, eyes, where you live and which language you speak. Cape Town Coloureds see themselves as a different race.

The class issue amongst Cape Coloureds was also raised by Karen. Lizelle went to Cape Town to attend the University of Cape Town (UCT). It was her first encounter with class prejudice.

- Type of industry and its clients determine whether there will be class prejudice or not.

With my current company there are racial issues, but it's mainly language issues ... [So it's culture?] ... It's a culture thing. I don't think the company has a class issue because it's a middle-class business. The brand serves the man in the street. We are all equal. You can't be uppity like someone working for an institution that serves the elite.

Lizelle's view that class discrimination depended on the type of industry or sector was similar to that of Mabel and Jackie. The financial services sector is class conscious, according to no fewer than three participants. Jenny identified culture as a discriminatory factor.

Race:

- Blacks excluded from training

Blacks were marginalised. After passing the board exams, I wasn't allocated any clients, all the white clerks were allocated. You were sent for menial jobs. I went to the head of trainees, staff partner. I told him I am entitled to proper experience. They begrudgingly assigned me to some woman partner's team. I started a conversation at the bar with one partner who was in charge of German clients audits. He actually spoke to the head of staff and asked me to join his team. That changed my life forever. All of a sudden I was managing big clients. This then exposed our company's excuses that Afrikaner clients demand Afrikaner clerks. Here we were auditing Afrikaner led and managed companies and they were happy with the racial mix.

In my previous teams, when there was an audit lunch, they would only invite the white people. Blacks who were involved in the audit would not be invited. It was blatant racism. They would go to lunch and leave the black person to finish off the loose ends.

Lizelle's experience demonstrates three things; it indicates the importance of transformational leadership even within a discriminatory company; it demonstrates assertiveness and active management of one's career, and lastly it shows blatant racism in 2000, more than ten years after independence.

Gender and Race:

- A culture of meritocracy does not perceive gender or race.

The parastatal liberated my mind. It showed me that women are better in what they do regardless of the field. There was a woman who was head of procurement; she was efficient and hard-working. It taught me that you pigeonhole yourself as a woman. There was another one who was promoted to head a power station – a black woman promoted by a white male. She was so good that there was no discussion. ... I think it was leadership and a culture of meritocracy. You need street-cred to progress. Meritocracy didn't favour anything but excellence.

- It is double jeopardy for black women; they have to manage their expectations.

Lizelle related her experience at a private equity firm where she worked:

They said everyone comes in as an associate, then it takes two to three years to become a partner but sometimes it takes just two years. From principal to partner it takes about five to seven years. So I was, like, okay. As soon as people say two to five years, and you are black and female, you know that you will be on the five-year-plus thing.

In spite of doing very well and working very hard, four years later she had still not been promoted. In my view, her acceptance of the stereotype influenced her lack of initiative to negotiate for a promotion; therefore, she had succumbed to the Tiara syndrome.

I did full reports including everything from the model to recommendations with reasons. Everyone wanted to work with me. By the way, in spite of all this, you are not allowed to interact with the client. When they take you to the client you sit and take notes. Initially I thought it was demeaning. I then thought they can't move without me and my minutes. I reduced the minutes to a report with recommendations and implications and sent it to all the attendees.

She left this organisation after four years. When I enquired if she had submitted a motivation for a promotion, the answer was no. She expected her work to speak for her. At our second interview she explained that in the African culture it is frowned upon to promote yourself. You rely on your work to promote you. I understand the dilemma of the conflicting cultures, Western culture which is the corporate culture and the African culture which is common amongst black ethnic groups.

Class, Gender and Race:

She related her experience at one of the big four audit firms:

You saw gender, class and racial discrimination – full force. It was institutionalised. Only blacks would be left unassigned. The class came about in terms of dress code and owning cars.

Poor clerks could not afford buying suits. This meant they could only wear a skirt or pants and no jacket. If the jacket didn't match, you could not wear it. They didn't have cars which meant waking up at 4 am to be at work at 7 am.

- Culture/Language determines whether you fit in or not.

In the insurance company where she works, language is more of an issue than class. Afrikaans-speaking employees are more easily accepted by seniors because of the dominant culture in the organisation.

Gender:

- Institutionalised gender prejudice at boarding school – girls washing for boys
- Women pigeonholed by themselves
- Women not promoted across colour, in spite of excellence
- Demeaning roles for women
- Women not asking for promotion (Tiara syndrome)

If my work does not speak for itself I won't be part of that company.

- In a male-dominated industry, all genders subconsciously stop noticing the absence of women.

For instance, we are doing trustee training, so I asked the different heads of divisions to send me potential names, both men and women. When the lists come it's all men, including the list from women. So it's three women and five men who are putting the list together, not a single one puts a woman's name. When I ask them about lack of women in the list they only realise then their omission. It's such a male-dominated industry that even women are tuned out, they only see men.

This was confirmed by Thandi who had been exposed to male-dominated sectors from the time she started studying at tertiary level.

Societal Gender Stereotyping:

Lizelle related a story on how at her boarding school, girls had to do the washing and ironing for boys. The girls had to pick up the boys' dirty clothes every Friday and return them washed and ironed on Sunday. I was left wondering what type of leaders boys from that school would make, especially when it came to treating women as equal partners. It was interesting to note how they used this practice as a 'bargaining' chip.

It was a bargaining chip. I'm not sure what it did for the boys. We were 30 in a class, 4 English classes and 4 Afrikaans classes per grade. So if a boy was nasty to one of the girls, whether the girl was in boarding school or not, we would get him back. I would report any boy who was nasty in class (and was also at the boarding school) to the girl who did his washing. She would mess up his clothes as retaliation. The washing would have to be returned to the boys Sunday morning.

This might explain her assertiveness and understanding of how to 'play the game across gender'. She never complained about not understanding the men's game.

Race:

She admitted to racism in her current workplace environment, especially if you were not Afrikaans-speaking. Her saving grace in that environment has been the fact that she is completely bilingual (English and Afrikaans).

There are pockets of racism but I haven't been subjected to it.

I wanted to know if language was the only reason she had not experienced racism.

I am very confrontational; when someone says something silly I confront them immediately, for instance, when someone says we are recruiting and hiring good black people I will retort by saying I didn't know we were in the business of hiring bad black people. Out of interest I have noticed that when we speak about white people, we don't put a prefix! I will tell you in private but I will tell you. So the news spreads.

In respect of militancy and assertiveness, Lizelle is quite like Karen. Karen indicated that she was fearless.

- White women not seen as allies

At our second interview she shared that the lukewarm relationship between white and black women was because white women had a superiority complex. It is a class preservation tactic.

Strategies for Success

Women:

- Get involved in a high-impact division within a business (similar to Thandi).
- Be visible – interact with different stakeholders (similar to Thandi).
- Be assertive.
- Accept that certain industries do not have flexibility and adapt.
- Invest in yourself, read widely (observed by all participants).

- Don't trivialise any assignment.
- Get out of your comfort zone.
- Interact with people who are different from you, across race, gender and age. It trains you in conflict management.

Leadership:

- Supportive and empowering leadership helped Lizelle along the way.

I started in the smaller division but it was the type of business that had a high impact in the business and I interacted with a lot of people, some of them decision-makers. I was really passionate about the business/industry and asset class; it made the division to be in everyone's radar. People from outside the company were giving feedback on my input in the different boards where I represented the company. They initially thought I was sitting on these boards for affirmative action reasons. The feedback on my performance made them realise there was technical competence too. This gave me visibility; they then took a keen interest in me. They sent me to every leadership training [programme] that was available.

Thandi made a similar reference to someone in leadership "shining a torch on you, like Mandela did for so many people".

- Leadership that understands and accommodates diversity

At our second interview, when I did member checking, she indicated that 90% of the people that came to discuss issues with her were men. Women shied away. However, she found a system of spending informal time with women in order to chat. Instead of having someone make tea for her, she went to the common area to have tea. Almost invariably women came to chat to her. This confirms that leadership has to understand and be able to manage diversity in order to get the best out of people.

She agreed with my preliminary findings and suggested that we run focus groups of women to start a conversation on gender transformation.

Organisation:

- Culture of meritocracy transcends discrimination
- Development programs should not be gender specific

Family and Friends:

- Supportive family
- Choose friends that grow with you.

Mentorship:

All her mentors were white men.

Government:

She did not believe in quotas. At our second interview she gave more detail on this position. Her belief was that government should not interfere, however, companies should set their internal quotas and monitor them internally.

4.3.12 Participant 12 ('Dudu')

Summary:

There is an intersection of race, class, nationality, gender and age which influences job allocation, recognition and promotion. If you are too young or too old for the dominant group, age acts against you. Senior black women do not take a risk on other black women. Supportive leadership and husbands enable women's success. Quotas are necessary to break the glass ceiling at junior management level.

Dudu is a 42-year-old **upper-class African woman** who was born in Gauteng (Soweto) and lived there before moving to Sandton in the 80s. She went to a private school. The family was considered elite and was a 'tourist attraction' in the township because they spoke English. Her father was a successful consultant in HR with offices in town, and her mother was a sales assistant in a clothing shop. She obtained her junior degree, majoring in Economics, from the USA. Her MBA was attained locally through distance learning.

I have known her for a while. She has held at least three leadership positions, two in financial institutions (spending one year in New York). Her current position is CEO of a prominent BEE investment company which has a net asset value of R9 billion.

She encountered racial prejudice from an early age. She shared three encounters:

When you're young you don't know that you're different. What I didn't know is that whenever there was a birthday for the other kids a lot of organising had to go on to accommodate the black kids at a white restaurant. When I had a birthday while we still lived in Soweto, I invited all my friends. I was disappointed when only two of my friends came out of twenty in the class. Another incident was when we were going to my mom's work from school; up until then I

didn't know that the bus was only for whites. The driver asked me if I was coloured. No one had asked me for my race before. I said no, I'm black. He denied me access to the bus. I looked at my white friends expecting them to come off with me. They looked at me and said we've already clicked! I was so heartbroken – I thought there must be something wrong with me. Another time a friend of mine had a party at some place that had swimming pools. I got into the pool and everyone got out. I thought there was something wrong in the pool so I got out. It was years before I got it.

On Role Experience

Gender and Race:

- Token appointment

I joined Company A as a brand PR manager. I was 23 and was the only black woman manager; had a huge apartment in Bantry Bay with a huge BMW. I was living the life but the job had no content, no budget of substance. Every day I would go to work and think, what shall I do today! I knew I had to get out of there.

In the early 90s this was not uncommon. Blacks were employed as window-dressing tokens. However, none of the other participants in this study shared a similar experience. After doing her MBA part-time, she took up a job in New York with a boutique financial services company.

Race, Gender, Nationality, Age and Class:

She was the oldest of the new recruits. All other recruits had not worked before. You would think that would be an advantage.

Okay, in New York people are quite cliquey! You have a clique of people that went to Yale and another group of people that went to Harvard, etc. If you did not go to an Ivy League university, forget it, you didn't go to school! First of all I was from Africa, I am black and I'm a woman and I 'didn't go to school!' How did you even get here! The partners and associates would choose who they would work with. I wasn't chosen. I had to go and market myself to the partners and show that I could do the work.

All the senior partners were white males apart from one black and one white woman. She was on probation for six months, so she had to prove herself. When she did not get allocated to jobs she approached the black woman senior partner.

- Failure to take a risk on another black woman or fear of being labelled being a token yourself?

The first person I went to was the only black woman who was a partner. BIG MISTAKE. I was a little bit naive. She was on the phone and I came with this big smile, she waved me away in a very hostile manner. I remember her name was 'Joanne'. I waited at the door till she finished. I walked in when she was done; I could see that she was ice cold. I walked out of there disappointed. I knew my support wasn't going to come from there.

It was the second time that mention was made of another white senior woman in an organisation dominated by men. However, this woman had not been seen as an ally or mentor. Lolitha mentioned the mentoring role played by white men in her job in government. Though the other DDG was a white woman, she was not mentioned as having played any role. Dudu went to the black woman, and when she did not succeed, she did not go to the white woman, the only other woman in the organisation. It reinforces the sentiment of most black participants in the study about white women not being seen as allies. Her help eventually came from white men, which could be described as a common trend. When you are a minority you become very visible in an organisation. This might lead to cautious behaviour in everything you do, you don't want to be labelled a feminist. Your own position is not secure. However, the dominant group doesn't feel threatened. They are not subjects of scrutiny.

- The journey for a 'lower-class' black woman is longer and harder.

For me the support came from white males. They started giving me work. I was so hungry for it that I would get to the office at 7 am and only leave at midnight. I loved it. I wanted to make sure everything was right. I was telling one of my protégés yesterday how I would look at a fax cover to make sure everything was right. I wanted to make sure I would get the next job.

This encounter brings to the fore the fluidity of the notion of class. While Dudu was upper class in the South African black townships, she was lower class in the white suburbs because of the colour of her skin, and she was lower class in the USA because of her country of origin and the school she did not attend, namely an Ivy League university. Dudu's personal experience was very different from Paula's experience, a white upper-class pharmacist (see discussion below). Could it be race?

- Immersing yourself in the culture in order to belong

The people in my team were much younger than me, Ivy League products, etc. This made me apply myself 24/7. I would either be working with my colleagues or I would go out with them. It was a certain culture.

- Emulating the wrong behaviours in order to survive

I was looking up to the two women in the firm. They were very hard women, very poor people skills, very disrespectful. I picked up those traits. When I came back I thought that's how you do it when you reach vice-president level ... the first time I realised it was a problem was when I left the company.

- A black woman is perceived as a tea girl within her own race.

One of the experiences I had in New York: The first time the black male partner saw me, he asked me to make him a cup of coffee. The white man who hired me intervened and said, X, let

me introduce you to this woman, she is so and so, she has the following degrees and is working on the following transactions. If you need coffee go and make it yourself. And never do that 'rubbish' again. He stood up for me! It was an interesting dynamic that the white partner stood up for me against a black partner.

She was in the USA for one year and was transferred to the Johannesburg office where she worked her way up to vice-president level. At the Johannesburg office she was the only black and the only woman.

We had a meeting with Bank A guys when I was at the boutique firm. I was the only one representing my firm and there were three Afrikaner males on the other side. When the meeting started they said, 'When will your people come?' I said no, it's just me. They said, 'No, you don't understand, we are discussing the model today; where is your boss?' I told them I worked on the model; they cancelled the meeting. I always felt race, but over the years, gender. Even the way the black professional males engage with you would be as a potential sex partner.

- When she left, she joined a government-owned development finance entity. For the first time she was one of many blacks and women. The entire management team were blacks. She reported to an African woman (a CA) who was a business unit head. Intra-group dynamics were interesting.

She related her experience as follows:

I joined one company where I headed up project finance, and every week I had people in disciplinary hearings [*laughs*]. I couldn't understand someone coming to work at 08:30 and leaving at 17:00, it was a whole new world for me. I think I came from a very different environment. I realised that it was either I was going to change or leave. I only stayed there for one year. I was a terrible leader. I had no compassion, I was very clinical. My technical ability made me a bit arrogant and I think sometimes you get promoted because of your capability and not because you are emotionally mature for the role.

For the first time the majority of her staff were black. Her blackness in the past was a weakness in the eyes of her superiors. I wondered if this had not influenced the way she perceived other blacks. She left and joined a BEE investment company where she headed a new unit.

Race, Gender, Class and Age:

She worked as a division MD in the current company for six years before she was appointed to be the group CEO. She related the following experience:

- Getting undermined; double jeopardy for black South Africans

[Exco was made up of]... the African American man that I reported to, white men and white woman. It was mostly race. They undermined me to a point where, when they went through exco reports, they would forget mine or they would only attend to your report when there was only five minutes left. There are subtle ways people undermine you; you need to find a mature way of dealing with it. People give up too soon. I put my head down and worked. There was a belief that a black South African can't do it. A black from anywhere else in the world, yes.

In spite of a successful six years, heading a division that she started from nothing, the board still found it hard to appoint her as group CEO. Transformational leadership from the majority shareholder, founder and chairman of the board (black man) prevailed.

I guess the interesting dynamic has been with the board, predominantly white male and old. The chairman (black man and shareholder) tells me it took a lot of convincing for them to appoint me as CEO. It's interesting though that the same thing happened when the chairman recommended the black CFO to his predominantly white board. They rejected him (the chairman still appointed him). We had members of exco who were there from the very beginning who were very wealthy. They would always remind us that you guys are employees, there's a difference between workers and owners. We had to deal with that.

Dudu had many difficult experiences on her journey. This included two divorces along the way. She was undermined because of race, class, age and gender. She was also exposed to subtle sexual suggestions by business acquaintances from other companies. She credited her ease of communication across race to her private school education.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Be flexible and resilient.
- Nurture your spiritual side and be comfortable in your own skin.

I think once I was comfortable with myself I became a better leader. I was more comfortable in my own skin.

- Follow your passion, don't give up too early.
- Develop hard and soft skills.
- Concentrate on hard work, discipline and dedication.

Support from Husband:

With my second ex-husband, I was learning a lot from him. He was a very compassionate type of leader. It was good for that, I went back to understanding who I really am ... I think some of the experiences of losing my mother and all that, I had learnt to detach myself, I'd become functional. He taught me to come back to me.

While Thandi used detachment to cope, this was dehumanising to Dudu. It shows the complexity of human beings and the different contexts that leaders have to grapple with.

When you are told to go on an assignment at short notice, you have to negotiate with your husband and it causes tension. For men they just call the wives to pack for them. You have to have a supportive husband and a support structure.

Leadership:

She credited her success to support from her chairman:

He is very hands-on in anything. He is the salt of the earth. At work he would know every single transaction that we are working on. He always reminded us that because we're a black firm we need to do more. When we complained that banks didn't treat us with respect, he told us of course they won't but you must do even better so that they won't find any fault. He's very disciplined. I admired and respected [him] so much.

Penny's advice to young women was that they should work for someone they respected, and that was also reflected in Dudu's scenario.

Organisation's Role:

There is a cultural barrier to employing blacks.

- BEE companies should demand equitable recruitment that looks for black talent from the companies they own.

...given where this country comes from and the reluctance of private business to bring in black professionals. It's a continuous battle; in companies where we are passive shareholders it's hard. Recently a mining company where we are looking for a CEO, they brought me a short list of three white males with matric. I demanded black cvs. Surprise surprise I got blacks with engineering degrees and masters degrees. On the other hand the problem we have is people thinking you are there because you are a quota. People therefore do not respect black professionals, it's always assumed they are affirmative action

The above was mentioned by Vuyiswa, Thandi and Lizelle.

Government's Role:

Women get stuck at junior manager level.

This supports Vuyiswa's point.

- Quotas for women at leadership level

Quotas for women are necessary.

4.3.13 Participant 13 ('Jackie')

Summary:

Prejudice based on gender and class is global and across sectors. White men have an unconscious prejudice against people who are different to them. A lot of work is needed to transform the financial sector. Women need to work hard, form global networks and raise their hand for promotion. Organisations should set up structures to identify and manage discriminatory evaluation practices. Career development for all staff members, especially the young is important for talent retention. Structures should be flattened.

Jackie is a **working-class white woman** born in Portugal. The family moved to South Africa when she was six. She started school in Vereeniging. She has four siblings, all girls, and she is the eldest. She grew up in an immigrant working-class family. Her father was a bricklayer, so jobs were not certain, and her mother was a housewife. When she finished school, she had to go and work because there was no money for her to go to university. Currently she is a CEO at a big JSE-listed financial house. She has held leadership positions in different sectors; in a government department, a parastatal organisation and a JSE-listed company. She spent a short time as a lecturer.

I tried unsuccessfully for several months to obtain an interview with Jackie. I was assisted by a black woman who facilitated a 30-minute interview. It ended up being 50 minutes. Needless to say, I was quite rushed when I did the interview.

On Role Experience

Gender:

The company that she now heads did not offer bursaries to women. She fought this and succeeded, and used that bursary for her first degree.

Gender, Class and Race:

I think there is still a lot of unconscious bias, in society as a whole, in the world of work in particular, in financial services especially. It's the sense that women ... it's been very male-dominated, you have to work very hard to make sure the next senior person that comes in is not someone who looks and talks like you, same background (class), race and gender. You have to remind people that if someone hasn't performed it's not gender that hasn't performed, it's

just that person that hasn't performed, or you haven't created the right environment, or lack of experience on that job. You don't make the same value judgement of a man who hasn't performed. It's a process, it's hard.

- When you come from a lower class you have to prove to yourself and others that you can do it; you have to work harder.
- The public sector is more committed to transformation than the private sector.

Class:

- People of lower class have to work much harder to prove themselves and overcome their inferiority complex.
- The status-driven culture is responsible for a class-driven sector in financial services. This should be changed to a meritocracy culture.

Gender:

In response to my question about an instance where she encountered gender prejudice, she replied:

Oh! Coming into this job was testing; I wasn't prepared for the avalanche of questions of how can this woman take this financial services job. I would have expected that from the job at the parastatal, which was an engineering environment. This sector was much more in my comfort zone. Till this day there's a bunch of analysts who still question that; they will not acknowledge the amount of clean-up I had to do, which occurred before my time. In my worst moments I get irritated because gender has nothing to do with it. I then go back to my roots and say I'm just not going to let you win. All my life I've been fighting these battles. It's been more of a shock and it is sexist. In the financial services there is a level that seems to be reserved for a particular gender – which is silly. This sector employs a lot of women up to middle management.

- Women's role in the glass ceiling?

It's a very important question, often because women themselves walk away from the challenge. We often do not feel confident enough to put our hands up, it's intense, hours are intense, it takes its toll on women. You make peace with it. If you are a young woman with a young family, it's tough. We hire competent young people and we put a lot of pressure on them. That worries me a lot, how we can make the work load more forgiving.

Jackie did not relate her personal encounters with race and class. I wanted to find out about the transformation experience she had encountered in the four sectors where she had worked, namely academia, government, state-owned enterprises and the private sector. She expressed her view as follows:

That's difficult to answer. Looking at government, when the G20 was formed, I was the only head of government department who is a woman. It's not as though there's been an abundance

of women. But in the public sector there's been a visible commitment to getting the gender equation right in a more determined way. The parastatal was different; you should make organic sustainable changes not just cosmetic ones. Putting a few people at the top is not good enough. At the parastatal we didn't put in enough talent [in the] pipeline, so we had a lot of work to do. The board and shareholder were supportive of the transformation changes. In the private sector we have a lot of commitment and we talk a lot about it but frankly I think we are further behind the curve; it differs between different sectors. We have a lot of work to do in the financial services. You have to make sure that the diverse talent pipeline is there and deep. You should deal with the unconscious bias. Talent in this country exists and it represents the demographics of the country.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Raise your hand for leadership positions, even if you are not ready; ask for help but seize the opportunity. Work hard.
- Get networks globally to get things done.

Organisations' Role:

- Create a culture of meritocracy (similar to Lizelle's point).
- Set up systems to identify and correct unconscious gender and racial bias (supporting Thandi's point).
- Flatten the structure.

Lolitha, at our second interview, did not agree with the assertion that the structure had to be flattened to encourage gender transformation. She gave an example of investment banks where the structures were very flat, but it happened to be one of the most gender-discriminatory sectors. On the other hand, Jackie thought a flat structure would address the arrogance in the sector. The size of the bonuses awarded to bankers is the source of arrogance in my view and Jenny is in support of this view.

- Invest in young people through dedicated programmes.
- Introduce career development for all staff with a view to retaining them.

Government's Role:

- Quotas do not work for anyone.

I did not expect this comment on quotas from someone who was a product of employment equity.

4.3.14 Participant 14 ('Paula')

Summary:

The intersection of class, race and gender influences your work experience and career progression. It is harder for black women. Class is more prominent in South Africa than in the USA. Women should assert themselves without ruffling feathers, get a good education and ask for global assignments. Leadership and government should invest in leadership training for women.

Paula is a 63-year-old **middle-class white** woman born in Pietermaritzburg in KZN. Her father was a corporate accountant at an insurance company; her mother was a teacher at a junior school and worked her way up to become headmistress. She has four siblings (one brother and three sisters), and she is the third eldest. She described her family of origin as middle class. She attended private school and took six months in her gap year to visit Scotland and England, her ancestral homes. She is a qualified pharmacist with an MBA from the University of Edinburgh. She is currently the country head for an International medical devices and consumables company.

On Role Experience

Gender:

In response to a question on gender prejudice, she responded as follows:

You know, you naturally felt it, because all managers were male. I was the only female manager. The company came to SA in 1931; it added a factory in 1955. It had a black union which was not recognised by the nationalist government. The company had a very good culture and ethic. It was headed by a British MD who was very entrepreneurial.

On being undermined as a woman:

... but I am ten years older than you, the way you were socialised, you almost expected to be undermined and had coping mechanisms. I was assertive enough because of how I was brought up. If you were a woman and the secretary wasn't available to make the tea, you made the tea. You did not feel this was prejudicial. Even at home, even though my mother worked, my father was still the boss. It was not demeaning or confrontational. I still felt I could make my point provided I had supporting facts and I had thought it out properly.

She made a request to be seconded to the USA for her career development. Her wish was granted. On her experience in the USA she had the following to say:

It turned out, five months into the job I was promoted to a senior position. I came back to SA, got married and moved back to the USA. I was obviously apprehensive but I never thought I would fail. I got promoted to Vice-President International; I travelled a lot and also started studying for a master's long distance through the [European University]

I wondered what made Paula's experience in the USA so different from Dudu's experience. Was it race or the sector or both? Her promotion was based on a junior degree qualification which was not from an Ivy League university.

On comparing the work environment in the USA to that in South Africa, she remarked:

You were never asked to make tea. Women were quite emancipated. In the US women dressed more conservatively, the dress code is more gender neutral. You know the environment is quite friendly, but people are conscious of potential sexual harassment suits, so you don't hug each other like you do here. People are quite careful. Initially I was quite surprised that I was accepted being from Africa and being a woman. I think South African workers are very hard-working. Health professionals were easily accepted in the USA.

The above statement raised more questions. Women were not asked to make tea! Dudu was asked to make tea in the same country, ten years later.

On class comparison in the two countries:

You know what, I found there was easier mixing in the US than here. You could be friends across class, i.e. a factory worker and a manager could mix at a barbeque. This was very different from South Africa [where someone of a lower class] did not have as much opportunity; if they did, they would have to sacrifice much more than I did.

Paula's American experience was very different to Dudu's experience. This could be explained by the difference in sectors, the financial services sector versus the medical sector. My personal experience, having worked in both sectors, was that the medical sector was more welcoming to women than the financial services sector. The racial difference, however, cannot be ignored.

She had to make sacrifices along the way. When she moved to the US, her new husband had to follow her. He struggled to get board certification in order to run his practice as an advocate, which cost her her marriage. That is what she had to give up, justifying Khetshiwe's point about white women.

On Strategies for Gender Transformation

Women's Role:

- Be independent.
- Believe in yourself.
- Be tenacious.
- Be prepared to work hard (This was mentioned by all the participants).
- Get a good education.
- Network.
- Get good mentors.
- Raise your hand for your own development.

Organisation's Role:

- Aggressive grooming of women for leadership positions
- Women's forums worked in America, they should work in South Africa.
- She did not believe in quotas, instead she suggested that government should pay for women's leadership development.

4.4 CONCLUSION AND COMPARISON OF WOMEN

The life stories method of interviewing allowed me to obtain rich data from the field and a deeper understanding of the individuals who had broken the proverbial glass ceiling. The following section gives a brief summary of the findings related to the two research questions. The impact of intersectionality (intergroup and intragroup), as well as of the intersection of race, class and gender at individual, organisational and societal levels, is assessed.

4.4.1 Does the Intersection of Race, Gender and Class influence Women Leaders' Role Experience and Career Progression?

All the participants answered the above question in the affirmative at all levels; individual, organisational and societal. According to the blacks, race had the biggest influence and gender came a close second. In the case of the whites, gender was first and race second. Class, culture, age, and language had an impact on people's experiences and career progression (Jenny, Lizelle, Vuyiswa, Thandi, Dudu, Karen, Swasthi and Paula). The Afrikaans culture was mentioned by some participants (across race) as a culture that was discriminatory to people of other cultures in the workplace, and the Indian culture was seen as being oppressive to women. Speaking Afrikaans in an Afrikaans-dominant workplace was mentioned as a tool to open a door to the inner circle. Societal gender role stereotyping was regarded by all the race groups as a barrier to women's success. The salient social identity groups in South Africa can be identified as race, gender, ethnicity and language. Based on the responses of the participants in this study, it seems that social class, disability and generation influence people's access to benefits and how they are perceived by the dominant group. All participants were of the view that though there was gender discrimination across colour and class, it was more pronounced for black women, especially African women.

Figure 4.1 Intersection of Race, Gender and Class with Generational Issues overlying all Identities

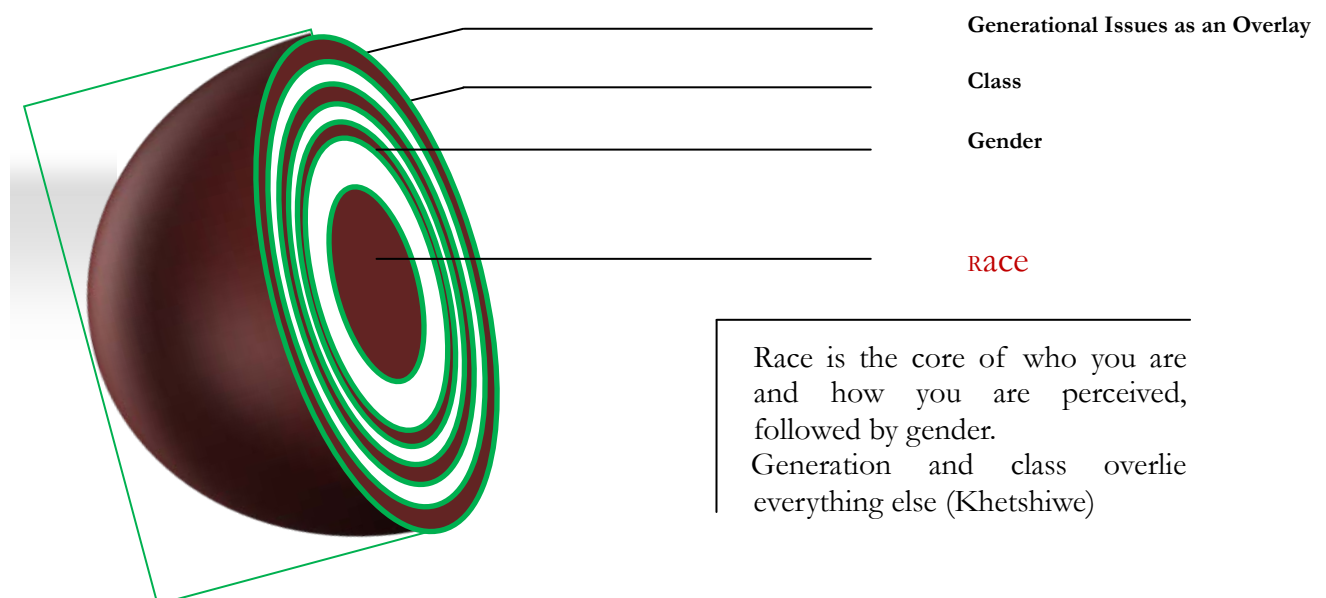


Table 4.4 reflects the role that race and class played in determining the age at which a first leadership position was attained. Based on this study, two out of four of the white women participants got a leadership position before they were 35 years old. (Age 35 was chosen because it signifies the end of youth.) Neither of the two women participants had an MBA at the time of promotion (one had a junior degree only); one was upper class and one was middle class. Compared to that, two out of seven of the African participants in this study got a leadership position before they were 35. They all had MBAs, were upper class and had studied and worked overseas. Of the coloured women, one out of two held a leadership position before age 35, one with a CA qualification. This finding suggests that African women, followed by Coloureds, are held to a higher standard.

Of the white women, three out of four rose to a leadership position relatively quickly, compared to black women. Penny (white upper class) became a partner while in her first job, and an executive within six months and later group CEO while in her second job. Jenny (white middle class) became a senior partner in a global firm while in her second job (before she got married). She became division CEO in her next job. Paula (white middle class) was made vice-president in the first year of moving to the USA. This was in her first job after completing her pharmacy internship and before she enrolled for a master's degree. Two of the three white participants were promoted based on junior degrees against one out of seven African participants and one out of two coloured participants.

Table 4.4 Impact of Race and Class on Career Progression

Participant	Age at First Leadership Position	Age at Second Leadership Position	Highest Qualification
JENNY – White middle class	31 – Senior international partner – consulting firm	42 – executive director, big financial institution	BSc
PENNY – White upper class	29 – partner in big legal firm	34 – executive director, financial institution 37 – deputy CEO	LLM
PAULA – White upper/middle class	37 – director in marketing	43 – vice-president, global marketing and international sales	MBA (at age 52)
JACKIE – White working class	37 – director-general, government department	45 – CEO, parastatal 50 – CEO, financial institution	MSc
LOLITHA – African middle class	35 – deputy director general, government department	38 – CEO, parastatal	PhD
KHETSHIWE – African	35 – regional general	37 – CEO	BA

middle class	manager, sales		
LONWABO – African middle class	36 – programme director	42 – chairman, SOE	PhD
VUYISWA – African middle class	35 – CEO, own company	37 – CFO, parastatal	MBA
THANDI – African upper class	33 – regional manager	38 – CEO, financial services	MSc and MBA
DUDU – African upper class	31 – vice-president, US private equity firm	33 – MD, new division 39 – CEO, group	MBA
MABEL – African American upper class	37 – executive director, global pharmaceutical company	43 – MD, global diversity at financial services company	Master's
KAREN – Coloured working class	36 – executive director, BEE group	38 – executive director, listed entity 46 – founder, shareholder and CEO	Diploma/ Certificate
LIZELLE – Coloured lower middle class	31 – CEO, division in financial institution	37 – CEO, biggest division in listed financial institution	CA
SWASTHI – Indian middle class	39 – CEO, media company	Still with the same company	MA

Lizelle (lower middle class) had a CA qualification when she was appointed to a leadership position. This was in her third job after completing her articles.

Figure 4.2 compares the career progression of the participants in this study according to race representation.

Figure 4.2 Career Progression according to Race

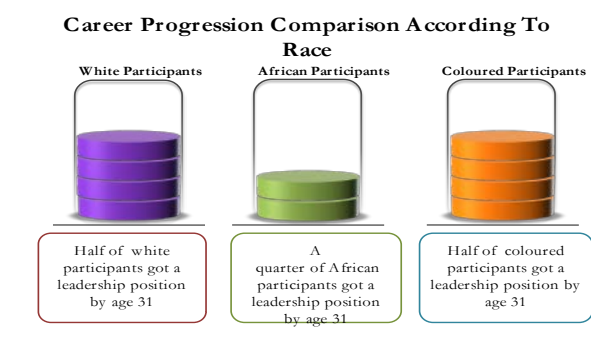


Figure 4.3 gives a breakdown of the characteristics of the two African women who progressed well over a short time.

Figure 4.3 Analysis of Africans in Leadership Roles by Age 31

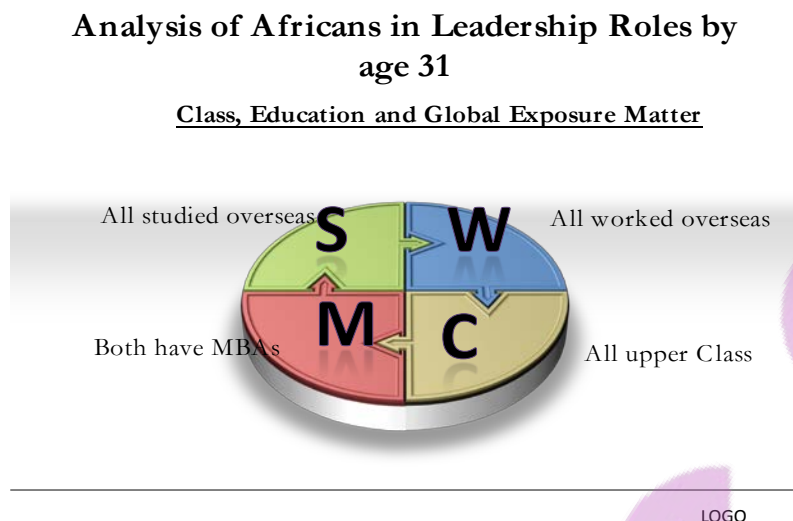
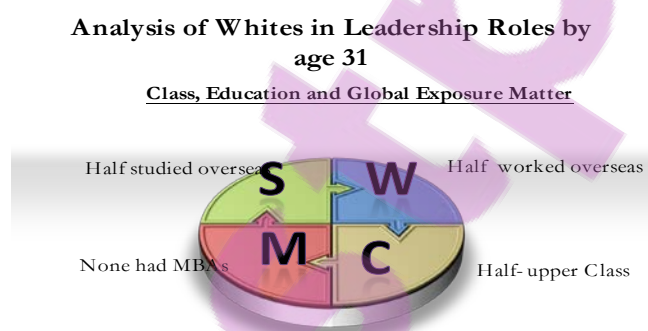


Figure 4.4 below does a similar analysis for white women. The differences suggest that African women have to do more for similar recognition.

Figure 4.4 Analysis of Whites in Leadership Roles by age 31



4.4.2 Comparison of Backgrounds

The study found that it was easier for upper-class women to fit in and progress in their careers across race (Khetshiwe, Thandi, Penny and Paula). Further comparisons of participants' backgrounds are given below:

- a) Of the 14 participants, 12 had one or more qualifications from overseas, while seven had worked overseas. Is this an additional confidence booster? Interestingly, all the African women and the Indian woman had at least one degree from overseas compared to half in the case of whites and none in the case of coloureds (except for a certificate qualification for one coloured participant. All participants across race and class agreed that in order for African women to gain recognition they had to do more.
- b) All the women who had started out as members of the working class or lower middle class moved to upper class in terms of economic and social status.
- c) The majority of participants had at least one master's degree.
- d) Among the participants (all races), five out of fourteen had attended girls-only high schools. I am still not sure how this influenced their success. Two of the African women went to a boys' high school by means of merit scholarship bursaries. Of the seven African women, four got merit bursaries during their school lives. This shows their intellectual ability.
- e) The number of women with no children was significant at five out of fourteen participants. Of these, two were divorced, one was engaged to be married and one got married in her 40s. This suggests prioritising career over family; whilst being within their democratic right, this choice has social implications.
- f) Among the participants, five had either house-husbands or husbands who had sacrificed their career progression to allow their wives' progress. This is in keeping with Thandi's assertion that men have become more domesticated; however, this has yet to translate to society at large. I did not expect this finding that a significant number of husbands stayed at home to allow their wives to progress in their careers. Husbands were quite supportive in general and this was mentioned as one of the success factors.
- g) In total, five women had opted to start their own business or left their employment because of a push from mainstream business. This was true of all four races in the sample. BEE legislation has created these entrepreneurs across race.
- h) Most mothers of the white women were housewives while most mothers of the black women worked, across class.

4.4.3 Intergroup (Race) Relations

Race is still the most important social identity in South Africa. Of the black women participants, the majority did not see white women as mentors or allies.

4.4.4 Husbands' Roles across Race

It was significant that half of white women had stay-at-home husbands who helped with the children while their wives built their careers. One of the two husbands involved was a professional (an engineer/banker). Actually all white women with children had husbands looking after them. All married African women had professional husbands. All married women gave credit to their husbands for their support. Out of the two coloured women participants, one had a stay-at-home husband to help with the kids; he was not a professional person, though. None of the African husbands were stay-at-home husbands. This was a surprise finding. It would be interesting to investigate the cultural perception of a stay at home husband in the African community.

4.4.5 Societal Gender Role Stereotyping

Karen (coloured, working class) shared how her mother had had a problem in accepting that Karen was a breadwinner while her husband looked after the kids. The irony is that Karen's mother was the sole breadwinner herself. At the second interview, Penny shared an initial experience with her stay-at-home husband. It took a while for society to accept this change in role stereotype. Lolitha, at our second interview, also confided that when her mother was around she would serve her husband tea to appease her mother. While ordinarily her husband would make his own tea, this would not be acceptable in front of their parents. This confirms Thandi's assertion that men are getting domesticated; however, peer pressure outside the home is still perpetuating gender role stereotyping. This could be a generational issue.

4.4.6 Mentors

All the women participants agreed that mentorship was important if structured correctly. More than 90% had a formal or informal mentor. White males were the most common mentors followed by black males and then black women. White males were chosen because they were the dominant group in leadership positions and were perceived to be successful and influential.

4.4.7 Impact of Government Legislation

This section compares the role played by government in the leadership roles held at any one time by the participants:

Of all the participants, half worked for government and/or a state-owned enterprise (SOE) at some point in their work lives. In total, a quarter of white participants, half of coloured

women and more than two thirds of African women worked for the government and/or an SOE.

- Lolitha's (African) first and second leadership positions were in government as a DDG and in an SOE as a CEO.
- Khetshiwe's (African) first and second leadership positions were in SOEs where she was a CEO.
- Lonwabo (African) was non-executive chairman of an SOE.
- Vuyiswa (African) was a CFO at an SOE. This was the most senior position she held outside her company. Currently she is CEO of her own BEE company.
- Lizelle (coloured) worked briefly for an SOE where she was encouraged by witnessing a black woman being promoted on merit. She asserted that that particular experience made her realise that women pigeonholed themselves.
- Dudu (African) worked as a unit head in an SOE.
- Jackie (white) occupied leadership positions in government as a DDG, then as DG, and her third leadership position was as a CEO in an SOE.

Government has played a major role as an incubator of women's talent across race. The legislation on black economic empowerment (BEE) has also contributed to the career progression of women, with close to two thirds of women being employed and/or shareholders in BEE companies (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Black Economic Empowerment Contribution to Women's Careers

PARTICIPANT	ROLE	REASON AND TENURE
LOLITHA – African woman	CEO and shareholder	A push because of work-life balance; Been at current BEE company for nine years
LONWABO – African woman	Shareholder	Consultant most of her work life; Seized opportunity to invest in different BEE initiatives
JENNY – White woman	Executive director and shareholder	Push from mainstream business due to misalignment of vision with other directors; Founder of current BEE company; has been director and shareholder for nine years
VUYISWA – African woman	CEO and shareholder	Pull to economic independence; Founder and CEO; company in existence for 19 years
SWASTHI – Indian woman	CEO and shareholder	Opted out of business to raise children; Been at current job for past 17 years

KAREN – Coloured woman	CEO and shareholder	Pull from union to BEE; Has been at executive level of different BEE initiatives for 17 years
DUDU – African woman	CEO	Push from previous company due to ‘work ethic’ mismatch; Has been with company for nine years

The participants are examples of the impact of government’s BEE dispensation on the empowerment of women both in their ascension to leadership positions and economic wealth participation across race.

4.4.8 Culture as a Barrier to Career Progression

Lizelle mentioned how her African culture did not allow her to negotiate for a promotion. This is a challenge in corporate South Africa whose culture is very Western. It requires leaders who are sensitive to the different nuances within dominant local cultures. When I compared Lizelle’s view to white women’s approach to work, it became apparent that the cultural differences do influence their career progress.

Jenny proposed an active personal performance evaluation with your senior as one of the success factors; Jackie proposed that women should raise their hand for promotion; while Paula advised that you have to request a global assignment for your personal development. This assertiveness while quite acceptable in the Western culture, is frowned upon as self promotion in the African context. The way leaders are chosen by the ruling party, the African National Congress, is a good example of this culture of waiting for others to recommend you. It is an area that needs further investigation, namely, do the success factors differ between black led and white led organisations? Are black led organisations sensitive to the cultural differences between the local dominant cultures and western cultures?

4.5 DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIES FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION

As discussed in detail above, five areas emerged from the themes as being key to addressing gender transformation at leadership level. Women themselves were described as the starting point; support from family, domestic help and mentors; organisational leadership; society and government. These aspects are discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Affirmative action works best for people who already have some form of privilege. Affirmative action latches on to the knowable parts of the 'other', and rewards these. In today's South Africa, my class privilege is a significant advantage, and it is one that will allow me to land on my feet even when affirmative action is not at play. In this way I differ significantly from the vast majority of black South African women.

Msimang (2013)

Sisonke Msimang comes from an elite African family that came back from exile after 1994. Both her parents were political activists; her father is an academic scholar who held different leadership positions, and her mother is an accountant who runs her own business. She has lived in different African countries and also in the USA. She is the executive director of OSISA, has two master's degrees, one from the USA and one from UCT. She was not a participant in my study, however, no one articulated the privilege of class as well as she had. In my view there were four participants in my study at her class level: Thandi, Penny, Mabel and Dudu. However, none of them articulated their privilege as well as Sisonke, although Thandi came close. Khetsiwe was more upfront at the second interview about the power of class in career advancement. We have not recovered from the racial classification and prejudice as a people. Class as a topic on its own needs further exploration. None of the women in my study spent time in exile. I believe this would have brought a different dimension to the study, especially to the class dimension and the impact of the colonial past on their lives. After 1994, blacks who had returned from exile and those whose parents were ex-Robben Islanders were perceived as a better class (perhaps they still are). Interestingly, all the presidents since 1994 had returned from exile and/or were ex-Robben Islanders. People who fought apartheid from within South Africa are yet to occupy that position. Class in South Africa is complex.

The findings of the study confirmed that the intersection of race, gender and social class did influence the experience and career progression of women. The findings also showed that the different social identities played different roles at different times for different women (inter-race and intra-race). Dimensions that were added to the initial social identities as sources of discrimination were language, culture, and generation. (See Chapter 6 for the theoretical model that emerged from the theory reviewed, and for a further discussion of the findings.)

In this chapter I presented the participants' profiles and discussed the themes that had emerged from the data, supported by in-depth presentations of participants' views with selected extracts and emergent themes from each. I then did a comparison across race and class.

Chapter 5 examines the enfolding literature relevant to the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

ENFOLDING OF LITERATURE RELEVANT TO THE FINDINGS

An essential feature of theory-building research is the comparison of the emergent concepts, theory, or hypotheses with the extant literature. This involves asking what is this similar to, what does it contradict, and why. A key to this is to consider a broad range of literature.

Eisenhardt (1989, p. 543)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of related literature is an essential part of the research process (Hart 1998). Looking at the way other scholars have investigated the research problem, in this chapter I present enfolding literature on the themes that emerged from the field and were relevant to the research questions. Tying emergent theory to existing literature enhances internal validity and the theoretical level of theory building (Eisenhardt 1989). In Chapter 2 I presented the role of literature review, the preliminary literature review (which assisted in the identification of gaps in existing literature), the theoretical framework used in the study, and my paradigm.

5.2 INTERSECTION OF GENDER, CLASS AND RACE

[G]ender does not exist in isolation from other dimensions of difference, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, religion, age, and nationality. We all inhabit, enact, and respond to many different social identities simultaneously. Similarly, organisations are not only gendered, they reflect and reinforce divisions along other axis of difference as well. These divisions operate simultaneously to create interlocking systems of power; gender is only one relevant strand among many.

Ely and Fletcher (2003, p. 7)

Most of the literature reviewed investigated either one social identity, such as gender, or two, such as gender and race (Mello & Phago 2007). There was a dearth of literature that investigated race, gender and class simultaneously (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Phendla 2004). Anderson (2012) confirms that there is a gap in studies that examine racial and gender stereotypes as overlapping identities even though these stereotypes influence all sectors of public life. Denner (2001) states

that the priority of a feminist culture has its roots in upper middle-class European and academic culture and that it does not, in the main, reflect the priorities of women of all classes, ages and race groups. This might have informed her subsequent work focusing on Latino women and the challenges they faced.

The rest of the chapter is separated into two main sections which present the enfolding literature around the two research questions.

5.2.1 Subjection of Black Women, especially Lower-Class Black Women, to Double Jeopardy

Bell and Nkomo (2001) undertook a study to look specifically at the intersection of race, gender and class as it affected black and white women senior managers in America. Bell and Nkomo (2001, p. 137) define the difference in barriers to advancement between black and white women in America as a two-dimensional structure, namely a concrete wall topped by a glass ceiling. This was the perception created by the black women managers in their study, whereas the white women in their study described a glass ceiling as a structural barrier. Their findings confirmed that white women were more positive than black women, and that they had better pay and promotion prospects than their black counterparts. That is quite similar to the situation in South Africa. The difference in the case of South Africa is that the marginalised group form the majority in the population as opposed to the US. Other issues that were highlighted in Bell and Nkomo's study were that black women experienced racism on a daily basis, being held to higher standards, invisibility, exclusion from information networks, challenges to authority and hollow company commitment to the advancement of minorities (Bell & Nkomo 2001, p. 140). The difference in the current study was that the challenge to women leaders' authority was across race (Jenny, Lolitha and Dudu). Bell and Nkomo's findings are in keeping with the assertion of Holvino (2003) that about 60% of white women compared to 47% of women of colour believed their advancement opportunities had improved in the previous five years. The split amongst those who believed that there had been no change was 38% of women of colour as against 15% of white women.

In South Africa it has become apparent in the past ten years that the Employment Equity Act of 1998, which was introduced to redress the imbalances of the past, has benefited white women much more than black women (BWASA 2005; Department of Labour 2005; Employment Equity Report 2004; Grun 2004; Mathur-Helm 2005; Mello & Phago 2007). Research data

(Karen, Swasthi, Thandi & Vuyiswa) confirms this observation. Most of the participants in the current study, across race, cited lack of real commitment by private business to racial and gender transformation, and they identified the glass ceiling to be at the level of junior to middle management. Relative to white women's proportional population representation, they have enjoyed disproportionate benefits through employment equity laws, and this could be seen as a perpetuation of white dominance over blacks in management (Booyesen 1999 (see tables 2.1 to 2.3). While Naidoo and Kongola (2004) conclude that affirmative action policies have only benefited the black middle class, statistics show a different picture, namely that the biggest beneficiaries are white women, Indian women and black men. However, if you look at black women as a group, the middle class has better access to privileges (Khetshiwe & Thandi). What has emerged from the current study is that race is still the single biggest issue, while other social identities like gender, age, language and social class are secondary issues (Booyesen et al. 2007). Booyesen et al. believe this is due to the lack of a demographic shift in the leadership profile – leadership is still mainly white and male. South Africa needs to reframe the gendered and racialised identities within a postcolonial context for true transformation to occur (Booyesen et al. 2007).

Many of the stories told in the current study showed that postcolonial South Africa was still colonial in behaviour as experienced by blacks. For instance, black South Africans were not taken seriously by blacks from other countries and by whites across gender (Dudu), and black women, especially African and coloured women, were held to a higher standard and thus had to do more in order to be recognised. The African women in the current study were more highly educated than the other races and in some cases had more international qualifications and overseas work experience. None came from a working class background, supporting the assertion of Naidoo and Kongola (2004) that black middle-class women were a privileged class. Therefore, working-class black women were subjected to triple jeopardy (Khetshiwe, Thandi, Dudu, Lizelle and Karen).

While all the women in the study acknowledged racism at work, it was not as intense as that described in the Bell and Nkomo study. The differentiator might be the fact that women in the current study were at CEO level, while in Bell and Nkomo's study they were not. However, Thandi's experience that one of her white women subordinates bypassed her to report a grievance to head office in London showed that no level was immune. Interestingly this occurred on the day of our interview. Thandi summed up the experience as just another indication that her company was still in the dark 80s period. It made me wonder whether racism

was less intense in South Africa, or whether this incidence could be ascribed to a cultural difference. Americans tend to be quite vocal about how they feel about issues, while South Africans, and particularly Africans, are not. Not being vocal about issues could reflect the tendency of middle- to upper-class people across race to maintain the status quo in order to preserve their privileges. Hurtado (1989) describes the relationship between white women and white men, as opposed to the relationship between women of colour and white men (controllers of power), as one that gives white women relational power. It is no different in South Africa. While black women suffered oppression on different fronts and continue to be at the bottom of the pile, white women have relational power and have benefited the most from employment equity. However, that does not minimise white women's experience of gender discrimination, whether they acknowledge it or not (Vuyiswa & Thandi). It will take the struggle for the empowerment of women many decades back to focus on divisions among women as a group regardless of colour and class. However, the empowerment of one group of women should not be at the expense of another, and this can only be addressed by policies that are sensitive to the intersection of the different social identities of discrimination.

Mello and Phago (2007) confirmed the persistence of gender and racial discrimination. Their study showed that in spite of interventionist legislation in South Africa, there was a racial bias even in government between 1994 and 1999; African women progressed only up to deputy director-general level while white women were represented at director-general level. Even within government, some departments were less progressive than others in employing women in senior positions. In 1998, only 2% of the Department of Defence's senior management positions were held by women (Mello & Phago 2007). Since the 50% representation drive, Parliament has transformed the situation in government departments; however, progress in the private sector has been much slower in terms of gender and racial equity, and especially gender (BWASA 2012).

The current study confirmed the importance of class for black women's access to privileges. However, class alone is not enough to compensate for being perceived as an 'inferior' race and gender; black women still have to be highly qualified and work harder to be recognised. In spite of that, studies show that they still take longer to progress in their careers relative to their white counterparts (Paula, Jackie & Thandi). Holvino (2003) asserts that racism causes black women to prioritise race when they define themselves and their social positions. This is truer in South Africa because of the country's recent apartheid past. However, post-apartheid dynamics are changing. The small changes seen at top leadership level, brought about by employment equity

legislation, show signs that masculinity and class (white and black middle-class men) are the new social identities of privilege (Marks 2001). It is still early days, and it cannot be denied that the intersection of race, class and gender is complex in South Africa. It is hoped that the Gender Empowerment and Equality Bill, once enacted, will cause all role players to be sensitive to the nuances of intersectionality, failing which it might lead to a new struggle based on class. An increase in the number and intensity of union strikes and service delivery riots might be early indicators of a class 'struggle'.

5.2.2 **Men are not the Enemy and Family is not necessarily the Problem**

The study of Rindfleish and Sheridan (2003) of 34 senior women managers and 152 women board directors in Australia showed what were perceived to be the major barriers to these women, namely the dual mother/executive role played by women (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Booysen 2007; Dreyer & Blass 2007; Myakayaka-Manzini 2002; Stuart, cited in April, Dreyer & Blass 2007; Lolitha,) and the 'old boys' network (Weyer, cited in April, Dreyer & Blass 2007; Penny).

In contrast, the women in the current study seemed to manage the dual mother/executive role better. The support of husbands, mothers and/or domestic workers came out strongly as one of the critical success factors for business women. However, access to 'cheap' domestic workers might be assisting upper class women at the expense of lower class women (Swasthi,). There was an interesting racial dynamic though. All white participants who had children were assisted by a stay-at-home husband; none mentioned any help or input from the extended family. Of the white women, half did not have children. The picture was quite different in the case of the black women. The view of most of the black women was that though balance was a myth, you could have it all, but maybe not at the same time. The view was expressed that white women's success came at the expense of family and/or children (Khetshiwe & Thandi). Black women see family as a haven from the hostile environment of work and society (Higginbotham & Weber 1992; Holvino 2003; Romero 1997). This observation confirms the reference of Sandoval (2000, p. 46) to 'the signs of a lived experience of difference'.

Husbands who stayed at home to support their wives were reported by all the races, except by local African women. I did not expect that close to one third of married women would have this arrangement. However, seven of the 18 women who are currently CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies have or at some point had stay-at-home husbands (Morris 2013), and this includes the only African American woman on the current list of women CEOs of the Fortune 500

companies. This proportion is even higher than in the current study. It underscores Thandi's view that men were becoming domesticated, but that this change still had to spill over to the general society. Penny, who also has a stay-at-home husband, shared her experience about the initial resistance of society to accept their arrangement, but she remarked that society's views had changed somewhat over time. The absence of local African stay-at-home husbands was as intriguing to me as the number of stay-at-home husbands in the case of the other racial groups. Could this situation be ascribed to cultural stereotyping or to the bigger role extended families played in the African group? Even the African American's husband did not stop work completely, he resigned from an executive position but started doing consulting jobs and writing books. This area requires further interrogation.

5.2.3 Sources of Discrimination – mainly Race, Gender as a close Second, Class and Age as an Overlay

The majority of the participants counted race as the main source of discrimination. This has also been found by different scholars (Holvino 2003; Hurtado 1996; Reynolds 1997). The colonial past is a main contributor, leading to another finding that white women are not seen as allies by the majority of black participants. While racial solidarity developed during decades of oppression, there is no gender solidarity. Feminism is seen as a white 'movement' that suppressed theoretical and practical research about women of colour (Holvino 2003; Phendla 2004). Vuyiswa, who studied and worked in the US in the 1980s, stated that she rejected feminism in whatever way it was described. In her opinion, fighting with men unarmed was counterproductive. The tactical approach she proposed for when women wanted to win men over was supported by two other black women in the study (Lonwabo & Khetshiwe).

The signs of a lived experience of difference (Sandoval 2000) were observed in the current study. While most mothers of the black participants worked outside the home, most mothers of the white participants were housewives (Potamites 2007). Interestingly, the only black participant whose mother was a stay-at-home mother was also the only participant who harboured a sense of guilt and never asked her husband to help with the children. She also left her CEO position because she felt it was compromising her marriage. Other women viewed raising their children as a privilege and had no qualms about getting help from their husbands (Khetshiwe, Lonwabo, Thandi & Vuyiswa). This shows that we are the products of our upbringing and confirms the need to look at people holistically to understand them. Interestingly, the two white women who had children and had stay-at-home mothers, and

incidentally had stay-at-home husbands, did not express any type of guilt. They were both first-generation women breadwinners. Penny (white) asserted, on the issue of gender discrimination, that she did not suffer from a victim mentality. She argued that she did not see gender as an obstacle, in spite of the fact that she had left her first job because of a 'boys' club' that had not included women. The 'lived experience of difference' might refer to a different cultural approach to life?

As discussed in Chapter 2, class in South Africa is a tricky subject because it was based on race for a long time. Nevertheless, you could still get class differentiation within race. Karen and Lizelle were quite vocal about the class discrimination within the coloured community, especially the Cape coloureds. This was not as prevalent in the African areas; the common enemy was apartheid and, therefore, race. Different scholars have identified a positive correlation between high social class and career aspirations (Mau & Bikos 2000; Signer & Saldana 2001). Whilst this was true of most participants, there were two exceptions across race who came from very poor families (working class) but career-wise still reached the top (Karen & Jackie).

There is enough evidence from the current study to support the assertion that class gives people access to opportunities.

5.2.4 Organisation Culture, Structure, Policies and Gendered Expectations

Women with similar social characteristics, but working in two contrasting environments, different in their systems of values, will develop radical opposing aspirations towards their career, and hence power.

Belle (2002, p. 155)

Much has been written about the different leadership attributes based on gender (Cummings 2005; Niederle & Vesterlund 2005; Wachs 2000). However, at a Wharton Executive Development Program session, Cummings made the assertion that culture, rather than an inherent female or male trait which could be explained by biological factors, had a major influence on how women developed as leaders. She added that based on culture certain kinds of behaviour were appropriate for one gender but frowned upon if displayed by a different gender, even in the same situation and in the same organisation. This makes the challenge faced by women leaders that much harder. At a different session of the Wharton Executive Development Program, Barsade cited in Aaltio-Marjosola 1994 stated that one of the organisations that might have succeeded in achieving a fit between the organisation's value system and the employees'

needs and values was Mary Kay. She went on to state that strong corporate cultures viewed people as a critical resource and valued them as individuals. While I agree that a culture that views people as a critical resource is important and beneficial to the organisation, I do not agree that strong corporate culture necessarily equates with recognising all people as valuable. Some strong corporate cultures are extremely exclusive and do not embrace all their people. One participant in this study, Jenny, described how one of the incentive awards in a financial institution was called 'the big-swinging-dick award'. It is difficult to see how that 'strong culture' of delivery and employee motivation could embrace and motivate anyone who was not a man. I agree with Barsade in her assertion that the culture (Barsade, cited in Aaltio-Marjosola 1994), strategy and structure (April, Dreyer & Blass 2007; Kanter, cited in Billing & Alvesson 1989) in an organisation have to function together. All three elements are driven and mainly influenced by the organisation's leadership. A culture of meritocracy was mentioned in the current study as gender and racially blind (Karen, Lizelle, Mabel, Penny).

Mathur-Helm (2002) cites a study done by Human et al. which investigated 103 white male managers' views on women's barriers to advancement. Some of the reasons they gave for women's failure to advance in the corporate world were: one-third believed women were less aggressive, less objective, and less capable of contributing towards organisational goals; one-third further believed that it was completely due to the women's internal disposition (April, Dreyer & Blass 2007). Lolitha and Lonwabo confirmed their lack of confidence early in their careers. Their confidence was built through hard work and investing in themselves. One had two master's degrees and both had PhDs. However, I do not agree that all the other attributes are gender specific, nor do I believe that leaders of whatever gender have to be aggressive in order to succeed.

There was consensus amongst the participants in the current study that women tended to work in support departments, which did not expose them to leadership positions. Thandi and Lizelle emphasised the importance of being in a revenue-generating position within the organisation as a success strategy, while Khetshiwe emphasised the need for women to understand the business of their company as a whole rather than only the small division where they worked. The insight from data confirmed that if more women occupied line positions there would be mitigation of the stereotype that they could not contribute to organisational goals. The question is, what stops women from entering line management positions? McKinsey & Company did a study in 2011 (Barsh & Yee 2011) that reviewed 100 existing research papers, surveyed 2 500 men and women and interviewed 30 chief diversity officers and experts in order to understand the following: how

women's work in the US benefited individual companies; what the barriers were to women reaching leadership positions; and what approaches could help companies to unlock the full potential of women. The women in their study mentioned various factors that limited their success:

5.2.4.1 Structural barriers – Women did not have access to informal networks, they did not have women role models higher up in the organisation and did not have sponsors with influence. Thandi related her experience with a sponsor within her organisation when she was younger and how that had built her confidence. She argued that women needed to find a sponsor with influence within their organisation in order to progress. Vuyiswa had CEOs in two of her companies who looked out for black managers and supported them. They were both white males. In line with the finding of the McKinsey study most women in the current study did not have a sponsor in the organisation. A few had mentors outside the organisation.

5.2.4.2 Lifestyle issues – The McKinsey study raised an interesting point. Contrary to conventional thinking, there was no material difference between fathers with one child and women without children when it came to prioritising a work/life balance. This finding confirmed that it was not only women who wanted balance in life. Though Khetshiwe had to travel a lot in her previous job, she did not leave the job because of that; instead she worked out a support structure with her husband and extended family to ensure her children were never without at least one parent. Thandi did not leave her job when she was raising children nor did she leave a line position; instead she moved to a smaller country where life was less hectic. This confirms that women are willing and able to juggle work with family successfully.

5.2.4.3 Prejudice from organisation leaders – Both men and women leaders were mentioned as one of the reasons why women did not get promoted to leadership positions. Different reasons had been cited by leadership for not promoting women, including the requirement of flexitime by women. Lizelle was quite firm on the issue that some jobs could not accommodate flexi-time. This is difficult to accept in an electronic age where work can be done from almost anywhere outside the office. I believe understanding each employee's situation is important for the organisation's best use of talent. More often than not, women are deselected based on assumptions and/or prejudice.

5.2.4.4 Women's mindset – According to the McKinsey study, women wanted less responsibility as they aged. I do not agree with this assertion. As children grow up their mothers have less reason to scale down on their responsibilities. However, women get tired of being overlooked for promotion and give up (Lizelle); or they leave because of being undermined (Jenny, Khetshiwe & Penny); or because of a pull to greener pastures (Vuyiswa). In a few instances there might be a work/life balance mismatch (Lolitha). However, women's mindsets can be limiting; some wait to be offered a promotion and do not take the initiative by submitting a motivation (Lizelle), and others have a lack of confidence in their skills (Jackie).

Barsh, who took part in the McKinsey study, advises corporate America to focus on removing the barrier between middle management level and senior management level (Barsh & Yee 2011). According to the current study, the glass ceiling for women in South Africa is similarly positioned (Vuyiswa & Karen). There are no quick fixes for this problem; a comprehensive and holistic approach to understanding the obstacles at all levels is important for lasting solutions. Transformation that is led from the top with a comprehensive plan to change mindsets and behaviours is more likely to succeed (Barsh & Yee 2011). Thandi, at our second interview, argued that organisations should measure the change in the company's economic performance as they increased the number of women in senior positions. In her view, business understood the bottom line imperative better than transforming for the sake of it. Catalyst (Carter 2011) found a 26% difference in return on invested capital between the top quartile companies that had 19% to 44% women board representation and the bottom quartile companies that had no women directors. This situation was ascribed to better governance on diverse boards.

Women's experience in companies is influenced by different factors – the women themselves, the leadership, and different levels and structures within the organisation. In an effort to achieve gender and racial equity, a multilevel approach should be adopted, starting with the attitudes of all stakeholders. Kolb et al. (1998, p. 12) assert that in the absence of cultural change in an organisation, structures and policies cannot on their own create an equitable organisation. Acker (2006b, p.443) asserts that 'all organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations'.

5.2.5 Racialised and Gendered Recruitment, Promotion and Performance Evaluation

Stereotyping precludes the accurate assessment of people's capabilities to lead, selection bias, placement and performance evaluation (April, Dreyer & Blass 2007; Heilman & Welle 2006; Martell, Parker, Emrich & Crawford 1998). This theory was confirmed in this study: Lizelle called it a blind spot to promotion for black women; Thandi called it a cultural barrier to identifying black talent; while Jackie called it subconscious bias in selection and promotion of people who were different from you. In the current study the financial services sector was identified as an environment that was quite macho and very discriminatory towards women (Jackie, Jenny, Lolitha & Vuyiswa; Heilman & Welle 2006).

Research data confirmed the existing theory that an environment that is masculine and where women are a minority leads to changes in women's behaviour as they are trying to fit in. They either give up trying to break through (Jenny) or become harder (Hofmeyr & Mzobe 2012; Nkomo 2011). All the participants in this study admitted that they had become harder as individuals.

Lyness and Heilman (2006) confirm the lack of stereotype fit between women's 'expected' attributes and the required attributes to succeed in a 'male' job. Their study looked at the performance evaluations of both men and women in staff and line jobs, and how the evaluation ratings were used when considering the promotion of both genders. The finding was that women in line jobs were persistently rated lower than men in line jobs. The difference in the ratings between genders in staff jobs was insignificant. It also concluded that women who got promotions had to achieve significantly higher ratings than their male counterparts who got promotions, and that the promotion of women was more strongly linked to performance ratings than was the case for males. Thandi shared her experience of cultural bias in the promotions of white people; these promotions were not based on merit. Thandi's experience when her company did a search for a CEO for one of their mining companies confirms the racial stereotype. Potential candidates identified were all white males with no tertiary education. Racial and gender prejudice are still highly prevalent at recruitment and promotion.

Data that emerged from the current study in mitigation of this gender and racial stereotype indicated that organisations needed to put systems in place that identified outliers according to race and gender. Trends in consistent 'under-performance' by women, especially black women,

could be picked up and addressed with the relevant leaders (Jackie & Lizelle). A racial difference regarding promotions came to the fore in the current study. More white women got their leadership positions at a younger age and with less education than their black counterparts. Since most of the existing literature has not investigated race, it is not possible to make a racial comparison.

An interesting observation in the current study was that not only men but also women displayed prejudice against women. Lizelle related a story about when she had asked for a list of people that could serve as trustees, and a list of only men had been presented to her. The list had been compiled by both men and women independently. Lizelle and Thandi explained that once you were in an environment consisting only of men, you became attuned to seeing only men. I believe it goes further than that; that women do not believe that other women can deliver, and/or that people who are in the minority are conscious of protecting their positions by not 'disturbing' the status quo (Kanter 1977). I have observed this on boards. If a minority is perceived to be militant, even when she or he raises a valid point, other minorities shy away from supporting this person as a way of protecting themselves from being called 'militants' or from being 'pigeon holed' as feminists (Rhode 2003). This could explain Thandi's failure to get support from the only African American woman senior partner at the New York private equity company. As a minority she would have been cautious of not attracting further attention by supporting a minority that no one else wanted to support (Kanter 1977).

Eagly and Karau (2002) discuss the Role Congruity Theory which describes expectations of gender roles as communal attributes and subordinate status associated with female status and agentic attributes associated with male and higher status. Several studies have shown that even when women possessed dominant traits, leadership was not assured (Carbonell 1984; Wentworth & Andersen 1984). Some studies have shown a decrease in overt gender stereotyping, but subtle tendencies persist (Benokraitis 1997; Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner 2002; Gaertner & Dovidio 1986; Glick & Fiske 2001; Swim & Cohen 1997). Jenny supported this assertion that gender stereotyping and sexual harassment have become more subtle which makes it that much more difficult to identify and therefore address.

Different studies have shown a significant bias against blacks of both genders, but especially against black women (Biernat et al. 1991; Dovidio & Gaertner 2000). The findings in the current study confirmed this bias. Black women are held to a higher standard by all races and by both genders. This gender/race bias leads to class being used as a differentiator, especially for black

women. The preference for middle- to upper-class black women creates its own self-fulfilling prophecy to the detriment of most black women (Kanter 1977). This tendency extends to society, creating an ever widening gap between the haves and the have nots, with dire consequences for social stability.

Belle (2002) looked at the way organisations contributed, through culture, to the exclusion of women from top positions. Two organisations in the same industry that had very different cultures featured in the study. The traditional company characterised by a strong economic strategy and a hierarchical and paternal exercise of power had no women at the top level of management and women made up only 6% of management. Its pool of engineers consisted of 14% women and 35% of its technicians were women. The second company had few hierarchical levels; it put emphasis on economic and social strategy with responsibilities decentralised to all levels. Women formed 40% of total staff and 16% of managers. Belle concluded that the only differentiator in the women's career prospects was the firm which they worked for rather than the women's marital status or age. Insights that emerged from the current study were mixed on this issue. Jackie's response supported Belle's conclusion. She described the financial services sector as status driven and macho, and she believed flattening the structure would address the status-driven culture and thus reduce discriminatory practices. However, Lolitha had a different view. Her view was informed by chairing a board transformation committee of an investment bank. Though the structure in Lolitha's company was flat, the culture was as discriminatory as in any other financial institution. Jenny had a point when she identified a transparent reward system as one way of addressing discrimination.

I believe transformational leadership transcends all other organisation attributes. It informs a diversity embracing culture and the appropriate policies and structures. This was confirmed in the case of a few participants in the current study; Thandi, Vuyiswa, Dudu (her current board chairman), Penny (her predecessor) and Lizelle. They credited transformational leaders as responsible for their positive work experience and career progression.

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) assert that discrimination against women is subtle in work practices and that cultural norms appear to be unbiased at face value. In order to illustrate this they discuss one organisation that rewarded their sales force based on the number of calls made to clients, irrespective of the success rate. On this basis men had the highest ratings though women brought in the most business. Further investigation revealed that the women's approach was different; they spent more time with fewer clients to build a relationship. Their method was

achieving better results, but they were not rewarded. This discriminatory reward system might be unintentional and a sign of inefficient measurement of people's performance. If it is intentional, it does not encourage results-oriented behaviour. Jackie's approach of analysing team performance against performance evaluation of its members would have identified this anomaly.

People doing the recruiting for organisations influence who gets employed. In the same study Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) identified various unintentional discriminatory tendencies based on a male-dominated culture in the organisation. They mentioned, for example, that middle-aged men who conducted recruitment were more likely to bond easily with other male interviewees. This insight was confirmed by the current research data. Khetshiwe related her own experience at recruitment with a patronising elderly white male. Having two people at that interview saved the situation and she got the job.

In one organisation, though teamwork was promoted, only individual achievement was rewarded. It was common for women to assist with the support of the winning individuals, but this was not acknowledged (Meyerson & Fletcher 2000). Identifying this problem and addressing it helped not only the women whose support had not been recognised but everyone else including the company's bottom line. Scully (2002) undertook a study that looked at virtual work as a way of addressing gender equity. Of the 675 women who participated in the study, two-thirds believed electronic communication gave their work more visibility and recognition, specifically when using online communication. Online communication removed the gender, racial and age bias. The contributor was invisible. More ideas were generated, group think was eliminated and a better work-life balance was attained. Interestingly, none of the participants in the current study discussed this as an option. Actually Karen would not even entertain flexitime in a financial services company. Jackie was concerned about the gruelling hours that their young women with families are exposed to. She did not have a solution for this. The virtual work concept would be worth exploring in mitigation of off-ramps for young mothers.

Fagenson (cited in Rindfleish & Sheridan 2003) conducted a study that looked at the gender-organisation-system (GOS). This system is based on two approaches; a GOS approach, which asserts that individual behaviour is influenced by gender, the organisation and its systems and the culture in the society; and the gender/person-centred approach, which attributes women barriers to factors internal to women. The latter approach is supported by different scholars (Schein 1973; Schein, cited in Rindfleish & Sheridan 2003). The structural approach has been

demonstrated in numerous studies (Acker 1990, 1998; Calas & Smircich 1992; Collinson & Hearn, cited in Rindfleish & Sheridan 2003; Martin 1996). These writers show how relative inequality of income and status between the genders is reinforced through organisational practices which perpetuate unequal division of labour, work design and evaluation. These are some of the practices that impact on who gets promoted. The current research data supported this assertion; for instance, the discriminatory allocation of jobs was prejudicial to black clerks in an audit firm (Karen) while Dudu was a victim of job allocation that was based on class, gender and race, when she worked for a private equity company in New York.

What is confirmed by the scholars discussed in this section is that an organisation's culture, practices, policies and structure can be enablers of or barriers to the empowerment of minority groups. The current study confirmed this assertion and also showed the existence of prejudice based on nationality, race, gender and class. However, there was no agreement on what structure was best suited to a non-discriminatory environment. I believe the main contributory factors are leadership and their cultural influence in the organisation. Those two factors trump structure.

The current study set out to investigate women leaders in a holistic fashion. Their multiple social identities were traced from childhood, including their childhood experiences in apartheid South Africa. The environment and legislation taught people that they were superior or inferior based on the colour of their skin. This translated into access or lack of access to benefits. The only superior class was white males followed by white females. Participants in the study succeeded because they refused to bear a victim mentality, across race; the lower they were in the pecking order, the more they studied and the harder they worked. Since 1994, the South African government has enacted many laws to erase legislated prejudice and discrimination; however, there are still people whose minds remain paralysed by their past oppressive experiences. Addressing inequities created by apartheid should be holistic in approach, sensitivity should be displayed by taking into account the intersection of different social identities, and a multilevel approach should be led from the top. In the next section I present themes related to strategies for gender transformation that emerged from the current study and the enfolding literature by different scholars. It should be noted that organisational culture, structures, policies and leadership, although they have an impact on strategies for transformation, also influence women's experiences, and therefore they have been discussed in this section.

5.3 STRATEGIES FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL

A holistic approach is required in order to have a proper understanding of the magnitude and the depth of a problem. Only then can you come up with solutions that come close to addressing the problem holistically. Listening to women leaders' stories in the current study made me realise what was missed by reducing human beings to numbers and designing policies based on numbers. It made me realise the complexity of human beings across and within race and class. For a problem that has existed for decades, namely, marginalisation based on race and gender, it is not surprising that the solutions proposed by participants involved different levels, starting with women themselves. In the next section I will discuss the five levels that were identified as key in addressing gender transformation at leadership level, namely: women's own role in their development; domestic and family support; organisation's role through mentorship, leadership, culture, structure and policies; society; and government. Furthermore, I will compare first-order constructs from the field to second-order constructs from existing literature as a prelude to the development of a model for gender transformation.

5.3.1 Strategies for Women's Success

There was consensus amongst the participants that women themselves were part of the strategy for the transformation agenda. All the participants emphasised the need for quality education, hard work and networking across gender and race. In the following section I discuss the main areas that women have to work on in order to succeed. This information came from the field as well as existing literature.

5.3.1.1 Know Yourself

Knowing yourself, being comfortable in your own skin and knowing your purpose will allow you to make the right career choice (Dudu; Hadary & Henderson 2013; Sangster 2012). I would add that self-awareness allows you to know when it is the right time to leave and what will not work for you (Jenny). Women who succeed know their strengths and use them to succeed (Browder 2013; Lolitha & Khetshiwe). Ideologically speaking Jenny did not fit in with her organisation but it took her long to realise that things were not going to change. Her advice to other women was that they should know the correct channels in the organisation to address their grievances. If there was no change, they should leave because a hostile environment could

destroy a person's confidence. I would venture to say that people who know themselves and are comfortable with who they are, are more likely to be confident.

5.3.1.2 Manage your Career

Men will act to bring about their promotion, while women expect their work to be recognised without marketing themselves (Jenny & Lizelle; Sangster 2012). Sandberg (2013) calls this the 'Tiara syndrome', which describes the phenomenon when women expect their work to speak for them. In the current study, Lizelle was an example of this. In spite of receiving great reviews during her four years as an associate, she was not promoted, nor did she do anything to set such a process in motion. At our second interview she explained that in the African culture self-promotion was frowned upon. The cultural impact on people's behaviour was a common thread in the current study. Lizelle's understanding of this cultural behaviour informed her way of leading in her organisation. She related how 90% of employees who came to her office were men. To counter this, she had devised a strategy that allowed women access in an informal setting. During teatime she went to the common area to have tea, which almost invariably invited women employees to join her and share their concerns on various issues. Understanding your employees empowers you as a leader to bring out their best.

Jenny, a white participant, advocated a six-monthly self-initiated evaluation process to give women the opportunity to get to understand where they were falling short in their performance. Paula (white) managed her career from day one; she requested an overseas assignment and within a year was promoted to vice-president. The price for this initiative was her marriage, confirming Khetshiwe's observation about white women's sacrifice and prioritisation of work. However, it also signified the role played by culture in how women from different cultures behaved (Makombe & Geroy 2008). While it is generally not regarded in a positive light for women to sing their own praises (Sandberg 2013), to do this is severely frowned upon in the African culture. While managing their careers, Vuyiswa and Penny emphasised the importance of women following their passion, even if it meant paying a price. Vuyiswa related her story about how she negotiated with her husband to take a salary cut and give up other benefits to allow her to follow her passion of being an investment banker.

5.3.1.3 Work hard, have Confidence and support other Women

Lucy P Marcus, CEO and a Professor at the IE Business School, has asserted that all successful women work hard and are determined (Sangster 2012). All of the participants in the current

study confirmed this assertion. Women who have succeeded in their careers work hard and with determination (Walter 2013). Khetshiwe reaffirmed the importance of having a reputation among one's peers of working hard and delivering.

Confidence seems to be elusive to most women and yet talent with no confidence can rob a woman of success (Walter 2013; Thandi). A few participants raised this as an issue they had to work on. Whilst this is a challenge for women in general, it tends to be greater in the case of black women because of South Africa's past of treating blacks as third-class citizens. Khetshiwe told the story of how her siblings who grew up in South Africa were still scared of white people and were not confident enough to take a stand on issues.

Support for other women is critical for women's success (Walter 2013). Mabel quoted Madeleine Albright's saying that 'there is a place in hell for a woman who does not support another woman'. This support will be achieved once there is critical mass in terms of the number of women in leadership positions (Kanter 1977; Lonwabo & Khetshiwe). Lizelle stressed the importance of having a strong support network of friends and colleagues.

5.3.1.4 Ensure Knowledge and Visibility

Being visible and displaying competence in jobs that are visible is an important career progression move (Grove 2012; Sangster 2012; Walter 2013; Thandi). Lizelle ran a small division prior to her current job. The revenues that her division generated and the positive reviews she received from clients, earned her a promotion to her current more senior position.

The view of Kanter (1977) on visibility is that it can lead to positive attention in a system where success is tied to being known; however, sometimes being the only woman or only black can be lonely and can lead to a high failure and/or turnover rate. Tokens, as Kanter refers to minorities, are not permitted the individuality of their unique non-stereotypical characteristics, forcing them to assimilation into the dominant culture. While being visible might work when things go well, it can cause performance pressure, especially when things are not going well. Many CEOs in big mining companies have resigned or have been pushed out of their positions; however, if they were part of the dominant group their 'failure' was not regarded as the general failure of their group. However, when Cynthia Carroll left Anglo American, her perceived failure was a reflection on all women. Pinky Moholi was the third CEO in seven years to 'leave' Telkom; however, as the first woman CEO in the company, her perceived failure was a reflection on all women. Jackie was quite vocal about society's stereotyping of one woman's failure. According to

her, while a white man's failure was perceived as the failure of an individual, the failure of a woman and/or a black person was regarded as proving the incompetence of all the members of their group.

Being one of very few girls who studied engineering, being in line management positions most of her life and now heading a mining company, Thandi's experience with visibility had been positive most of her life. She asserted that life was a stage, and that you needed to perform with confidence, be competent and chase excellence. She acknowledged that being upper class, good looking, intelligent and highly educated helped her to be successful.

5.3.1.5 Have flexible Plans

Stay open to opportunities, stay nimble, and have flexible expectations (Sangster 2012). Dudu regretted having planned her life rigidly and not using her intuition. She only started listening to her gut on the advice of her second husband. It is interesting that most of the participants had not planned their careers. Very few even knew beforehand what career they wanted to pursue. This was a surprise to me. I knew I would be a doctor at the age of four; I thought it was the same for everyone else. Two women stated that they allowed destiny to guide them (Lolitha & Karen), while others knew what they wanted to achieve, namely autonomy and power in the case of Thandi and making a difference in the case of Khetshiwe.

I believe it is important to have ambition and to be prepared to invest in yourself. While I was clear on my first career choice, when I lost interest in that career, I allowed destiny to guide me; however, I have remained ambitious and continue to invest in myself. I believe these two elements are important success factors and that success involves more than just having flexible plans.

5.3.1.6 Learn to Negotiate

Susan Fleming Cabrera, a researcher at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell, has found that women do not negotiate as often or as effectively as men (cited in Sangster 2012). She has cited research indicating that only 7% of women with MBAs versus 57% of men with MBAs asked for more money during salary negotiations. Penny and Lonwabo identified this as a positive factor because their perspective was that women did not prioritise money. The end result, however, would be that in that way unequal pay for equal work would be perpetuated and women's contribution devalued.

5.3.1.7 Get an MBA

Many successful executives regard an MBA qualification as a game changer (Sangster 2012). What was interesting about the participants in the current study was that less than a quarter had MBAs, and the majority were African. Of them, more than a third were running successful empowerment groups, and one ran a JSE-listed company. What most participants advocated was to invest in professional and personal growth: body, mind and spirit (Browder 2013; Growe 2012). Only Dudu alluded to spiritual growth. None of the participants mentioned an MBA qualification as one of their success factors though. Vuyiswa's only regret was doing her MBA too early. She did it before starting her work life and she believed she would have gained more value out of business school had she been exposed to the work environment first. Most participants cited global work exposure as one of their success factors.

5.3.1.8 Build formal and informal Networks

Most executives emphasise the importance of relationships with colleagues with whom you have something in common (Sangster 2012). Most of the participants in the current study spoke about people they called on and who called on them for advice. These people featured in their lives over and above their mentors. Interestingly, the network tended to be women whom they perceived as friends or peers, whereas mentors tended to be men across race. Forming networks is critical for career development. Jackie was of the view that the networks had to be global and across gender. This has been mentioned by Browder (2013) who advocates partnerships and collaboration with like-minded and professionally viable people. Lizelle added a different dimension to forming networks by asserting that you needed to socialise with people who had different views to yours as it would assist with conflict management skills development.

Browder (2013) asserts that women in leadership face challenges head-on. All the participants in the current study shared how they had become tougher. This had allowed them to deal with challenges without getting emotional. Thandi shared how she detached herself when things got hard and focused on coming up with solutions and implementing them. She believed that once you started implementing solutions, half the battle was won. Becoming detached did not imply not listening to your intuition though. Thandi believed it was important to listen to one's gut feel. Dudu's detachment included disregarding her intuition. However, she believed she had become a better leader after learning to listen to her intuition.

5.3.2 Domestic Support/Family Support/Prioritising Family

South Africa's upper class is privileged to be able to afford domestic help, at the expense of the black lower class (Swasthi). The position is similar in Brazil, where most successful women rely

on domestic workers for their success. Sangster (2012) counts this as one of the critical factors in women's success. All the participants in the study benefited from domestic help, even those with stay-at-home husbands. What was significant in the current study was the number of women whose husbands sacrificed their careers to support their wives (Jenny, Penny, Mabel, Karen & Paula). Lolitha's husband encouraged her to complete her PhD when she wanted to give up. Vuyiswa underscored the importance of extended family support. She was close to her mother-in-law who was part of her support system.

Women make different sacrifices in order to reach the top. Dudu described it as juggling rubber and glass balls and knowing which ones could not be dropped. In her view, glass balls symbolised your relationship with your husband. She had gone through two divorces by the time she was aged 42. She believed this was due to a lack of prioritising her relationship with her husband. Sangster (2012) describes this as knowing your priorities and fitting them around work. She asserts that women should not be afraid to take their career off ramp, but they should also know where the on ramp is. This was supported by Mabel who mentioned that there was a high level of burnout. Women just wore too many hats to cope. She had seen women opt in and opt out of their careers in order to raise children. She cautioned that women had to maintain contact with their companies during the off-ramp period. Thandi took a low-profile job in a small country while she was raising children.

Most women in the study did not believe they had made any sacrifices, though they acknowledged that maintaining a balance was a myth. Khetshiwe did not believe she had sacrificed anything; however, she believed white women sacrificed family for career. While this might be true for half of white women in the current study, I do not believe it applies to all white women.

Kargwell (2008) did a study on Sudanese women, and Khetshiwe's assertion supported his finding, namely that Sudanese female managers gave priority to their families and regarded their work as of secondary importance. South African female managers experience work and home as complementary, which is contrary to the situation in Western cultures where work and family are perceived to be in conflict (Pitt-Catsoupes, Kossek & Sweet 2005).

Different participants made different sacrifices along the way, Lolitha stated that personal time was the main sacrifice for her. For others it was a good and close relationship with their

husbands (Thandi, Dudu, Vuyiswa & Paula). There was consensus that you never found a balance; you just had to prioritise (Sangster 2012); you could have it all, just not at the same time (Mabel).

Fathers' Role in their Daughters' Success/Careers

If admiration, respect and affection are present and reciprocated in the father-daughter relationship, they are the recipe for a successful woman.

Meeker (cited in Forbes 14 June 2010)

Lizelle spoke about fathers not discussing engineering, for instance, as a career option for girls as one of the reasons women did not consider certain professions. Interestingly, of all the participants, she was the only participant born to a single mother. It was interesting that, in a country with a high prevalence of single parent households, almost all the participants in this study had both parents (Karen's father was killed when she was a little girl) and all of them were raising their children in a dual parent household. This might suggest that 'stable' families promoted other stable families and success. In support of Lizelle's point, fathers seemed to have played a role in some of the women's career choices. When Lolitha discovered she could not become a doctor, she contemplated becoming a social worker. Her father advised her against this; he argued that her lack of empathy would not be suitable for a career as a social worker. Instead he advised her to do geography, a field which, in those days, was mostly entered by men. Lonwabo's father applied for her to study for a master's at an Ivy League university in Europe, even though she was already married. Penny followed in her father's footsteps and studied law – even her choice of universities and law firms was similar to her dad's. Dudu did not know what course to follow at university, and her father advised her to study Economics and later an MBA. Paula chose the pharmacy profession because her godfather had been a pharmacist.

According to a 2009 study done at the University of Maryland (cited in Forbes, 14 June, 2010), women are three times as likely to follow in their father's career footsteps these days than they were a hundred years ago: Only 6% of women born between 1909 and 1916 went into their father's line of business, compared with roughly 20% of generations X and Y. The study investigated the influence of fathers and fathers-in-law of 63 000 married women born between 1909 and 1977. Another study done by Schmader (2013), a University of British Columbia psychologist, showed that daughters of fathers who tended not to do gender stereotyping were

more likely to choose working outside the home as an adult. The daughters of egalitarian men were also more likely to have broader, less gendered attitudes. Schmader did a quantitative study of 196 boys and 167 girls in elementary school and included at least one parent of each child.

Though the participants in the current study did not mention the role of their fathers as a success factor, I believe it played a role. More importantly, I think their background of stable families influenced how they perceived themselves and their choice of life partners. Even Lizelle, born of a single mother, had a father figure in her maternal grandfather who was the breadwinner. Working in his shop over weekends and balancing the books influenced her to choose a career as a CA. Males that figure in women's lives are important.

5.3.3 Organisational Culture and Progressive Leadership

Finding the right fit with an organisation is more important than initial perks and titles (Sangster 2012). The organisation has to match your values and your passions. Jenny's experience as related in the current study was a case in point; in her last formal employment there was no fit regarding values. She regretted waiting and hoping that things would improve. They never did. On the other hand, Dudu chose to work for a smaller organisation. Her motivation for her decision was that she respected the leader of the organisation and his value system. This was supported by Jenny who advocated that you should work for someone you respected. Dudu was heading the organisation six years after joining. Thandi joined her current company because she respected the founder and owner of the company. Penny shared this view; she became CEO of only the second organisation she worked for. Vuyiswa worked for two companies that had transformational leaders who supported and promoted women. The culture of the organisation was positively influenced by leaders who embraced diversity.

The most complex strategy yet the most likely one to succeed in the long run, is changing the overall organisational culture (Genat, Wood & Sojo 2012, p. 3). (For a discussion about the influence of an organisation see section 5.2.4)

5.3.3.1 Mentorship and Women Development Programmes

Mentorship was mentioned by all the participants. Most of them had mentors, formal or informal, and believed that mentorship had made a positive difference to their careers. Walter (2013) confirms the valuable contribution made by mentorship to women's confidence and career progression. Mabel discussed the mentorship programme that she had established in her organisation. This is an international programme used at their global financial institution and offers a unique learning and development opportunity for women at the levels of vice-president, director and managing director. It has three components: mentorship and sponsorship by a senior executive; in-classroom sessions with world-class professors from top-tier academic institutions; and a team project aimed at solving an organisational challenge. The programme receives positive reviews from its participants and is viewed as best practice by external sources. The organisation also has employee network groups for different minority groups, for instance, racial minorities, women and people with disabilities. Each network group has an executive sponsorship and receives funding to create programmes that are chosen and run by the group. The rest of the organisation also supports them. The organisation's objective is to ensure that all employees (regardless of race, gender, etc.) feel they belong, have a voice and a progressive future in the organisation. The organisation celebrates their individuality as opposed to enforcing assimilation (Kanter 1977).

Swasthi also mentioned a formal mentorship programme that she had started in her organisation with positive results. Jenny started a women's forum when she was divisional CEO. She reported how this built the confidence and sense of belonging of the members. Karen proposed that a forum of women CEOs should be established where they would feel free to ask 'stupid' questions and also learn in a safe environment among peers.

In view of the participants' references to women's forums I interviewed the CFO of PPC, Tryphosa Ramano, who started a women's forum at PPC. Her approach was different to most. All the women in the organisation, from the cleaner to the CFO, could become members. This was intended to cut across class and race and instil aspiration and self-worth amongst members. In two years' time no fewer than three women were promoted to senior levels within the company. There was overall support for well-structured and resourced mentorship programmes.

5.3.4 Societal Influence

Men as Advocates for Gender Equality

Building a gender-just world will bring benefits to both women and men, and the reconstruction of gender relations will require their shared commitment and involvement.

Flood (2007)

Progressive men across race and cultural groups featured strongly as a support structure or sponsors to women's careers in the current study. Some participants advocated the recognition of these men (Vuyiswa, Lonwabo, Karen, Lizelle, Swasthi, Thandi & Dudu). Catalyst (2012) asserts that men who champion women's rights exist in all regions of the world and this has to be encouraged. Flood (2007) argues that excluding men from involvement in gender relations work can provoke male hostility and retaliation. It can intensify gender inequalities and thus leave women with yet more work to do among unsympathetic men and with regard to patriarchal power relations. This underscores Vuyiswa's point that fighting men did not help the 'fight' for gender equality, and actually set the process back. Khetshiwe's view was that having women forums was a waste of time because men had the power and women could not achieve gender equality without engaging people who held the power and authority. This is also the view expressed by Morris (2007) who contends that while it may be possible to enhance women's opportunities for social, economic and political participation without engaging men, it is unlikely that gender equality can be achieved without partnership between women and men. Acker (2006b) explains why top white male executives are more likely to support the reduction of gender and racial inequality. She asserts that their multiple advantages and privileges give them security, whereas someone with less advantage or privilege, a woman for instance, might have proportionately more to lose with the attainment of equality. This might explain Thandi's experience at the New York office where she did not get support from other women.

5.3.5 Governments' Intervention through Quotas

While many countries and/or political parties have used gender quotas for gender transformation at different levels of government, the use of corporate gender quotas is relatively new. Norway was a trailblazer in this area. South Africa has had relative success in gender transformation in Parliament based on gender quotas for the ruling party, the African National Congress. The South African government is currently studying a Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill that proposes that government departments and public and private

companies should fill a minimum of 50% of all senior and top management positions with women. The bill still has to be presented to Parliament.

A study conducted by Pande and Ford (2011) looked at countries that had introduced gender quotas and assessed results related to the increase of women in leadership, both in the private sector and government. They concluded that quotas did increase female leadership in government and the private sector; lack of women leaders was not due to women's lack of interest or capacity to lead; women leaders influenced policy outcomes; and quotas did not create a backlash in the community as far as women were concerned.

Norway introduced a 40% gender quota for public-limited, inter-municipality and state-owned companies in December 2003 (Pande & Ford 2011). A grace period was given till 2008. This led to an increase in women directors on company boards from 15,9% in 2004 to 40% in 2008. In addition, the Norwegian Confederation of Enterprises made the effort to train women and link potential female board members to companies to facilitate gender transformation. Similar suggestions were made in the current study. Most participants in the study accepted quotas as one of the strategies for transformation. Some voiced their support on condition that the environment was prepared to mitigate women's failure (Lolitha & Khethsiwe). Two of the participants rejected quotas outright, saying that quotas would create a backlash against women and would perpetuate the stereotype that women were tokens (Jackie & Lizelle). Countries that have followed Norway's example are: Spain in 2007 with a target date of 2015; France with a quota system in 2010 with a 40% target by 2016; and Iceland and the Netherlands with quota systems in 2010 (Pande & Ford 2011). Belgium, Canada and Italy are still in discussion on the introduction of quotas. Lizelle indicated that quotas that were decided at company level with no influence or regulation by government would be acceptable to her.

The introduction of the Employment Equity Act (1998) in South Africa has enabled black people and women to access senior positions in the corporate sector, which in turn has led to these people becoming role models for the younger generation, especially for those black and women leaders that are in the public eye. The majority of the women leaders who participated in the current study were beneficiaries of the Employment Equity Act and most of them were mentors to younger women. These women do well and they minimise the stereotype that women are unable to perform and to help young women to have aspirations (Pande & Ford 2011). Gender quotas at board level also lead to more women executives in companies (Matsa & Miller 2011). Rudman and Fairchild (2004) assert that women quotas will lead to the

stereotyping of women as less qualified. I agree that initially the trailblazers of the quota-driven appointments might be stigmatised, but most women will be encouraged by this to work hard and prove themselves. It is my belief that the potential 'stigma' will be short-lived; more importantly, it is a small price to pay for generations of women that will be empowered. The backlash for quotas in Norway has been that some companies have changed their registration status from public to private and some have moved their country registration from Norway to the UK. The other possible backlash, which was not mentioned in this study, is that of a glass cliff (Haslam & Ryan 2008). Haslam and Ryan argue that women are given risky and precarious positions when they are appointed in leadership positions. They discuss a study that examined the performance of FTSE 100 companies before and after the appointment of a female or a male board member. The study revealed that during a period of overall stock market decline those companies who had appointed women to their boards were more likely to have experienced consistently bad performance in the preceding five months than those who had appointed men. This calls to question the timing of the appointments of Cynthia Carroll, Pinky Moholi and Siza Mzimela, mentioned earlier in this report. Cynthia Carroll took over from Tony Trahar who was criticised for many lost opportunities and not growing the company. Siza Mzimela took over from a man who was criticised for corruption and huge financial losses; staff morale was at its lowest and she had to turn the company around. Pinky Moholi took over at Telkom after the company had done a big deal in Nigeria that led to a huge write-off of billions of rands. The question is, are women set up to fail and/or are they desperate enough to take whatever leadership position that presents itself regardless of risk? This area needs further investigation.

Overall quotas seem to work, and employment equity is one such quota. As far as employment equity in South Africa is concerned, race has received priority in the first 19 years of democracy; hopefully gender and class will join the race on the priority list. This, I believe, will benefit the whole economy and not just women (Thandi).

5.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER TRANSFORMATION AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL

Various contributions were made to the World Bank report presented to mark International Women's Day in 2001. Mason, one of the contributors, noted that societies that discriminated on the basis of gender paid a high price in higher levels of poverty, slower economic growth,

weaker governance and a lower quality of life. An extensive study done by the World Bank, involving 63 countries, analysed the link between gender and economic progress, and the conclusion was that gains made in women's education made the single largest contribution to a decrease in malnutrition between 1970 and 1995 (Mason & King, 2000).

Schwartz (1992), in her memo to a fictional CEO, identifies the cost organisations incur through the underutilisation of their talented women. This varies, for instance, from recruitment and training costs, compromised quality, settling for mediocrity by ignoring part of the workforce with potential, and failure to create role models for up-and-coming women. She offers some solutions to address the problem: accepting the differences between men and women (mainly maternity needs), providing flexibility for those who need it, mentoring and providing skills to women with potential and removing barriers in the corporate culture which affect only women. Like Friedman et al. (1998), she emphasises the need for a balance between work life and family life (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Booysen 2007; Myakayaka-Manzini 2002; Stuart 2006). Lizelle indicated that certain industries, like financial services, could not accommodate flexitime. However, I do not agree with this assertion. I think women are so used to assimilation into men's environment that they minimise the importance of women's needs.

There is a positive correlation between women executives in the company and the company's financial performance (Carter, Simkins & Simpson 2003; Catalyst 2004; Eagly 2007; Erhardt, Werbel & Shrader 2003; Krishnan & Park 2005) and a better attendance record on boards (Adams & Ferreira 2009).

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter looked at enfolding literature on the themes that emerged from the research data in the current study. In Chapter 6 I present the model that was built from data that emerged from the field.

CHAPTER 6

CONSTRUCTING A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Constructing the Strategies for Gender Transformation Model

What is the purpose of good theory other than to describe and explain how things actually work and, in so doing, to help us improve our actions in this world?

Lynham (2002, p. 221)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of this thesis was to provide guidelines for achieving gender transformation in democratic South Africa, and to develop a model that could be used by business leaders, government and academic scholars to achieve this transformation. Lynham (2002) describes four phases of theory building in applied disciplines: conceptual development, operationalisation, confirmation or disconfirmation, and application. The first phase is to develop an informed conceptual framework that provides an initial understanding and explanation of the nature and dynamics of the phenomenon that is the focus of the theory (Lynham 2002, p. 231). The result of this phase is a model which is the core explanatory container of any theory. The last three phases in the process of theory building, which are set out above, are outside the scope of this study.

Chapter 6 presents the theoretical model I developed based on the constructs from the field and the constructs from literature, first-order and second-order constructs respectively (Schutz 1962). Aspers (2009, p. 3) writes:

In conducting empirical studies, the researcher aims at understanding the meaning levels of the actors, i.e. their first-order constructs. Only on the basis of these first-order constructs is it possible to develop second-order constructs which may then, in turn, become part of a theory. Accordingly, a researcher's second-order constructs are based on the constructions of the actors in the field and it is this way that the researcher connects the 'common-sense world' with the scientific world of theories.

In addition, Schutz (1962, p. 59) asserts:

The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men, living their daily life within their social world. Thus, the constructs of the social sciences are, so-to-speak, constructs of the second degree, that is, constructs of the constructs (first-order) made by the actors on the social scene.

In constructing the model I sought to represent the dynamic aspects of gender transformation strategies by illustrating the relationship between the major concepts in a simplified form (Mouton & Marais 1990). The draft of the first-order and second-order constructs was sent to each of the participants by email. This was followed by either a telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting. The final model incorporates their input (Aspers 2009, p. 5).

In the next section I give a brief outline of the analytical tools that social scholars use to make sense of a social phenomenon.

6.2 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

The three basic elements of grounded theory are concepts, categories and propositions. Concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from conceptualisation of data, not the actual data per se, that theory is developed.

Pandit (1996)

6.2.1 Concepts

According to Pandit (1996), concepts are the product of labelling and categorising – they are the basic building blocks in GT construction. The process of grouping concepts at a higher and more abstract level is termed categorising.

Mouton and Marais (1990) describe concepts as the most elementary symbolic constructions by means of which people classify or categorise reality. They define three types of conceptual frameworks: typologies that basically have a classifying or categorising function; models that, apart from classification, also suggest new relationships heuristically; and theories that, apart from the preceding functions (classification and heuristics), also fulfil an explanatory and interpretive function (Mouton & Marais 1990, p. 137).

By investigating a specific phenomenon, the researcher reveals certain similarities or relationships, and systematises these as a model of that phenomenon (Mouton & Marais 1990, p. 137).

6.2.1.1 Typologies

Typologies are conceptual frameworks under which phenomena are classified in terms of characteristics that they have in common with other phenomena (Mouton & Marais 1990). The criteria of good typologies are exhaustiveness and mutual exclusiveness.

Doty and Glick (1994) describe typologies as a unique form of theory building in that they are complex theories that describe the causal relationships of contextual, structural and strategic factors, thus offering configurations that can be used to predict variance in an outcome of interest. Typologies at their best result in integrative theories that account for multiple causal relationships linking structure, strategy and environment (Child 1972; McPhee & Scott Poole 2001). Fiss (2011) argues that typologies, owing to their holistic nature, fail to define the core and peripheral elements. He goes on to define the core elements as those causal conditions under which the evidence indicates a strong causal relationship with the outcome of interest, while peripheral elements are those for which the evidence of a causal relationship with the outcome is weaker. The core-periphery model of typologies offers both a different and a more fine-grained understanding of the causal relationships among the elements of typologies – a key issue for both strategy and organisational design (Fiss 2009, p. 6).

6.2.1.2 Precursive Theoretical Model

Gorrell (cited in Marais & Mouton 1988, p.141) uses the term precursive theoretical models in order to indicate that most models in social science (unlike in physical science) are characteristically precursors to subsequent theories. The term ‘theoretical’ serves to distinguish the model from physical or scale model.

A model attempts to represent the dynamic aspects of the phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between the major elements of that phenomenon in a simplified form (Mouton & Marais 1990). Gorrell (1981) emphasises four characteristics of precursive theoretical models:

- i) Models identify central problems or questions concerning the phenomenon that ought to be investigated.

- ii) Models limit, isolate, simplify and systematise the domain that is investigated.
- iii) Models provide a new language game or universe of discourse within which the phenomenon may be discussed.
- iv) Models provide explanation sketches and the means for making predictions.

A model seeks to represent the dynamic features of a social phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between its elements in a simplified form.

6.2.1.3 Theories

Kerlinger (1973, p. 9) defines theory as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations between variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.

De Vos and Strydom (2011, p. 39) add that the difference between a model and a theory is that the relationship between the theory and the phenomenon that the theory tries to explain is far more specific than the relationship between the model and the phenomenon which the model relates to. I believe the relationship between my model and the phenomenon it attempts to explain is not specific enough for me to call it theory.

I have adopted the definition of a model given by Burden (2005), which states that a model attempts to represent the dynamic aspects of a social phenomenon by illustrating the relationships between its elements in a simplified form. The next section presents the model, its components and relationships between its elements. I have used diagrams to explain the different elements and the relationships amongst them.

6.3 CONSTRUCTING THE WOMEN'S HOLISTIC EMBRACE FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP MODEL (WHEEL Theoretical Model)

The process of selective coding allowed for an intensive process of representing all main categories in one storyline. It became apparent to me, based on emerging theory from the data and relevant literature, that strategies for gender transformation at leadership level would require a joint effort. In spite of progress made in the public sector, this is not reflected in the private sector. What was an interesting finding was the role government had played in the

empowerment of some of the participants. Eight out of the thirteen women (I have excluded one participant who is an African American national from this specific comparison) either got their first leadership position in government or an SOE or were heading a black empowerment company. I then went through the relevant literature that reinforced the important elements required for gender transformation. The WHEEL Model was born out of this interaction with data using GT (first-order constructs) and literature (second-order constructs).

The WHEEL Model combines the intentional intersection of gender transformation efforts made by different role players, starting with women themselves, across race and class. These efforts should occur concurrently and in coordination with the different role players.

Table 6.1 presents the first-order constructs derived from the coding process and the second-order constructs derived from the literature, together with the relevant extracts from the interviews. Under each of the five role players, the table highlights views from the participants and the literature on what needs to be done in order to achieve transformation.

Table 6.1 Main Themes of Strategies for Gender Transformation derived from Research Data and Literature

First-order Constructs	Supporting (Modified) Extracts	Second-order Constructs
1. Role of Women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop your technical, personal and people skills. <p>(All participants; Kaye & Scheele 1975)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be authentic and resilient (Mabel & Dudu). Invest in yourself – both soft and technical skills (All). Be confident but humble (Karen & Lolitha). Be prepared to work hard (All). Support other women (Mabel & Karen). Do not trivialise your assignments (Lizelle). Manage your expectations (Lolitha, Mabel & Lizelle). Monitor your performance and have it appraised (Jenny); proactive self management (Khetshiwe) Strive for excellence (Karen, Thandi, Lizelle & Paula). Present yourself well – it matters (Lolitha, Khetshiwe, Thandi & Penny). Raise your hand for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a place at the table (Sandberg 2013; Sangster 2012 Know yourself and what you want (Browder 2013; Hadary & Henderson 2013; Sangster 2012). Have flexible expectations/plans (Sangster 2012 [insert in ref list]). Face challenges head-on (Browser 2013). Confidence and hard work are key attributes (Walter 2013 [insert in ref list]).

First-order Constructs	Supporting (Modified) Extracts	Second-order Constructs
	<p>leadership position even if you need help (Jackie; Sandberg 2013) Learn to detach from challenges to remove emotion and focus on implementing the strategy (Thandi).</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support other women (Mabel, Karen & Dudu). Get a line management job, be visible (Thandi, Lizelle; Cross 2009; Eagly & Carli 2007; Sheridan & Milgate 2003). Be flexible with your plans (Dudu); my life is my destiny, I've never planned my journey (Lolitha & Karen). Socialise across the board (Thandi, Mabel & Dudu). Take a global assignment (Vuyiswa, Jenny & Paula). Work in different industries (Mabel & Lizelle). Sacrifice for your passion (Vuyiswa & Penny). Trust your intuition (Khetshiwe, Thandi & Dudu). Get a sponsor with influence (Thandi; Cross 2009; Eagly & Carli 2007). When you take an off ramp, keep contact with the company (Mabel; Eagly & Carli 2007). Network informally/Network globally with people of influence (Lizelle, Dudu & Jackie; Cross et al 2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create networks with colleagues (Sangster 2012) Take off ramps but know where the on ramps are (Sangster 2012). Stay open to opportunities, stay nimble, have flexible expectations (Sangster 2012 [insert in ref list]). Support other women (Walter 2013). Display competence in jobs that are visible (Grove 2009). Women tend to be excluded from line jobs, and lack of that experience blocks their promotion (Catalyst 2002; Lyness & Heilman 2006; Wellington, Kropf & Gerkovich 2003).
<p>2. Role of Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive husband is key (all except Lizelle, who is engaged) Domestic support and support of extended family (all except Lizelle, Jackie & Paula) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get domestic help to pursue your career (Sangster 2012).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male mentors across race and peers (Tharenou 2001; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentorship and formal networks are important for

First-order Constructs	Supporting (Modified) Extracts	Second-order Constructs
	<p>all participants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring of boys and girls (boys seem to need it more) (Vuyiswa; Ross-Smith & Chesterman 2009) 	<p>success Kilian, Hukai & McCarty 2005; Sangster 2012; Walter 2013).</p>
<p>3. Organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformational and progressive leadership (Khetshiwe, Vuyiswa, Thandi, Penny, Karen, Lizelle, Dudu, Jackie & Paula) • Having a woman CEO shows that the organisation is women-friendly (Penny). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having women on boards inspires women employees to attain senior management positions (Bilimoria & Wheeler 2000).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation structure, policies and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal mentorship programme (Mabel, Swasthi & Karen) • Women's forums supported with resources and a link to business operations (Mabel, Swasthi & Jackie) • Transparent performance management to mitigate bias (Jenny; Eagly & Carli 2007) • HR that is diverse that will be able to identify talent across gender and race (Thandi); systems to identify and monitor discriminatory appraisal patterns (Jackie, Lizelle & Thandi) • Leadership development strategies for talented women (Mabel, Lizelle & Paula; Priola & Brannan 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance-based feedback is important (Oakley 2000) Culture trumps strategy. Organisation/individual fit is important (Sangster 2012). • Unconscious bias is one of many factors that contribute to continued discrimination against qualified and capable women and minority groups in organisations (Genat, Wood & Sojo 2012).
<p>4. Role of Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husbands are becoming more domesticated, but it now has to translate to the broader society (Thandi). • We need to mentor both girls and boys. Boys seem to be in trouble which makes them abusive (Vuyiswa). • We need to acknowledge those men that have supported women (Lonwabo, Vuyiswa & Thandi). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal gender stereotyping precludes selection of women and accurate assessment of each gender's capabilities (Lyness & Heilman 2006). • No policy can force someone to be gender sensitive. Change in attitude at individual and community levels is critical to ensure that both women and men are champions of gender justice (Khumalo in Marks 2001).

First-order Constructs	Supporting (Modified) Extracts	Second-order Constructs
5. Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need a Head of State who promotes gender equality and champions gender transformation (Vuyiswa). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandela's support for gender equity was a positive booster for women empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quota system (supported by most; Lolitha; Khetshiwe gave conditional support; Lizelle & Jackie did not support it) • Prepare the environment and support women who are brought in. Do not set women up for failure (Lolitha). • Government should invest in leadership training for women (Paula). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's career progress is expedited in countries with interventionist approach (April, Dreyer & Blass 2007; Gunderson 1994; Webb 1997).

6.4 INTEGRATING ABSTRACT CONCEPTS INTO THE WHEEL MODEL

In this section I describe each element of the WHEEL Model. Though there were differences in the women's work experiences based on race and class, there were no racial or class differences in terms of what women identified as strategies for success. What was notable was the high levels of education amongst African participants. This was across class. Only Africans had PhDs, more than one master's degree (except for Penny) and MBAs (except for Paula). Literature has confirmed that the intersection of race, gender and class leads to lack of equitable representation of black women at leadership level, especially African and Coloured women. Black working class women were subjected to triple jeopardy. The WHEEL model is relevant to women across race and gender. However, based on the findings, black women will have to do more to get recognition.

6.4.1 Role of Women

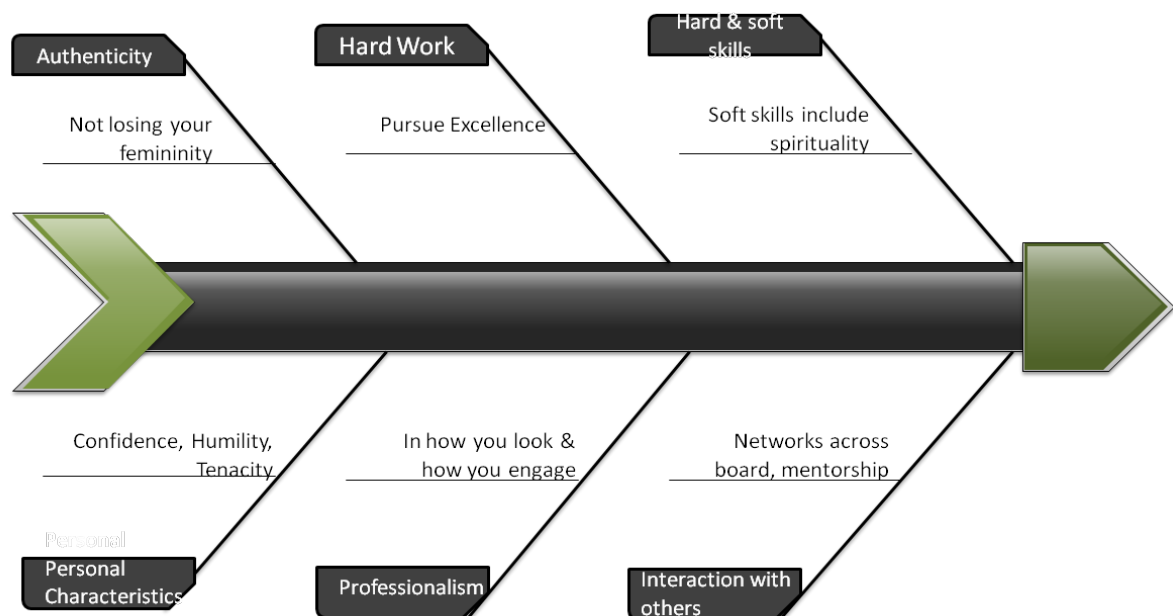
My initial diagram depicting women's role was a pie chart with equal segments forming the pie. When I did member checking with Khetshiwe she disagreed with my approach. Her view was that the success strategies listed by women did not have the same level of importance. Her top three success strategies were; excellence and hard work, authenticity, and proactive self-management (in that order). These strategies were incorporated into the study and represented

in a diagram (see Figure 6.1). The diagram is in the form of an arrow that is made up of different elements. Each element pulls in a forward direction. At any one point different elements are at play and at a different velocity and strength, depending on the context and the woman's state of development.

The core of the WHEEL is women of different classes, races and generations, depicting the simultaneous intersection of all those social identities. It also signifies the relevance of the model, regardless of race, class, and generation. These social identities are depicted as the layers of an onion: the core of the onion is race; the next layer is gender; and the outer layers are class and generation (Lizelle). As the country evolves after democracy, these layers might change. It is still too early to know what will become the core element.

The next section discusses the other role players in the strategy for gender transformation, namely support from family and mentors; the organisation through transformational leadership, culture, policies and structure; the community and government. Figure 6.1 presents the main elements of the role of women in the strategy, how they need to invest in themselves and interact with others.

Figure 6.1 Women's Role in the Transformation Agenda



6.4.2 Role of Family and domestic support

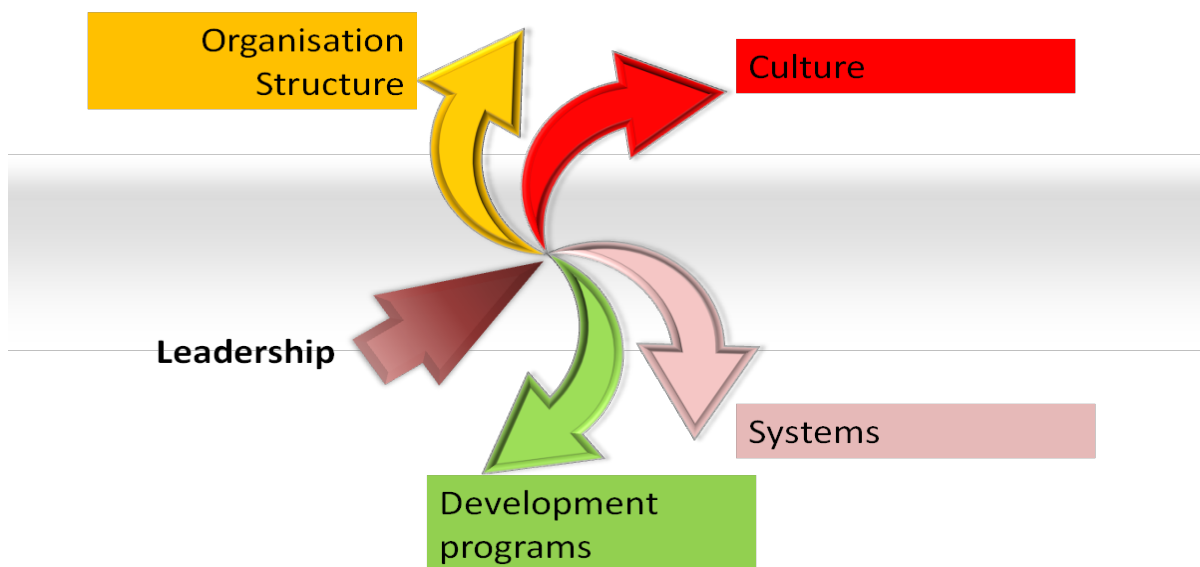
The role played by husbands, extended family and domestic helpers was mentioned by many participants as one of their success strategies. The availability of domestic helpers is another critical factor (Sangster 2012), see section 5.3.2.

6.4.3 Role of the Organisation

Leadership is the driver of policies, culture, organisational structures, systems and development programmes. It is for that reason that this study sees leadership as the core element that drives all the other elements, giving different amounts of attention depending on where an organisation stands in each area at any one point in time. See Figure 6.2 for the main themes relating to the role of an organisation in gender transformation. In this Figure arrows are used to represent dynamism in the interaction and the push that will be required from all the elements to attain racial and gender equity.

The views of different scholars on the role of the organisation are discussed in Table 6.1.

Figure 6.2 The Role of the Organisation



The development programmes mentioned in the study include firstly mentorship and sponsorship with a senior executive (Mabel, Thandi, Swasthi; Kilian, Hukai & McCarty 2005; Ross-Smith & Chesterman 2009; Sangster 2012; Walter 2013); second, in-classroom sessions with world-class professors from top-tier academic institutions (Mabel; Priola & Brannan 2009); and, third, a team project that is aimed at solving an organizational challenge (Swasthi, Mabel). Systems that were mentioned included; monitoring systems to ensure equity in performance evaluation (Jackie; Genat, Wood & Sojo 2012), promotion (Thandi; Eagly & Carli 2007); rewards and incentives (Karen, Jenny).

6.4.4 Role of Society

Different participants experienced gender, age, race and class stereotyping. This stereotyping has varied from girls doing washing for boys at boarding school as part of the boarding school's policy (Lizelle); being asked to make tea by superiors (Dudu & Paula); to Indian female doctors being expected to quit their careers after bearing children or being judged for delaying to start a family (Swasthi & Mabel). What was remarkable was the support that the women received from their husbands and male mentors. It was also important to note that most women were married and had been for more than twenty years. Only two had divorced. An area for further study could be the role played by husbands in the success of women in leadership positions.

It is my belief that the way to beat societal stereotyping will be not only to shout for gender equality (Catalyst 2009; Vuyiswa) but also to embrace those men who promote gender equality (Vuyiswa, Khetshiwe & Lonwabo; Catalyst 2012). We have awards for women achievers but I have not yet come across an award for men who empower women. Quite a few men, across race and class, were mentioned in the study as having gone out of their way to identify and develop women. A study that looks at the experiences of these men and their motivation for promoting gender equality is an area worth investigation, and such a study could include a comparison with companies that have no women at executive level and/or at board level.

In August 2013, the men of the South African Society of Men Sector united in a march against violence against women and children. It is the same sector that could mobilise a drive for gender empowerment to curb woman abuse. Ordinary men's support is required for society's acceptance of women's role in leadership and for the removal of gender stereotyping that is prejudicial to women (Catalyst 2012; Khumalo in Marks 2001). Many participants spoke about the importance of understanding men's perspectives in order to win them over, changing societal stereotypes and adopting a tactical approach to address gender inequality (Lolitha, Khetshiwe, Lonwabo, Vuyiswa & Penny). In the model, men are represented within the society element.

Greene and Levack (2010) discuss elements of societal power, which exist on different levels, namely, women's self-empowerment, political agency (political champion for transformation), empowering policies, and social capital and support. It is the synchronisation of these elements and efforts that will assist in the achievement of transformation. The WHEEL Model sought to synchronise all the elements in a simplified form.

6.4.5 Role of Government

No fewer than 50 countries have introduced gender quotas for women representation in government, and no fewer than 20 have introduced quotas for minorities. In South Africa the public sector has gone a long way toward addressing gender representation in public office. Chapter 5 discussed the progress that has been made in countries that introduced quotas in government and in the private sector. However, not many countries introduced quotas in the private sector. The South African government is reviewing the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill which seeks to enforce gender transformation compliance in private and

public companies. This could be implemented by 2015 if government is successful in its intentions. Companies will have to comply with a 50% (minimum) women quota in all senior and top management positions (Government 2012). Therefore, the timing of my chosen study is opportune. The role played by government in the empowerment of women in this study was discussed in chapter 4.

6.4.6 The WHEEL Model of Strategies for Gender Transformation at Leadership Level

My initial thoughts were to use the layers of an onion to represent the different stakeholders in racial transformation at leadership level. However, I decided against this since an onion is static. I decided to use a wheel because it gives the idea of motion, its components are found at different levels at different times, and the speed of the wheel's motion is influenced by these different components. I then had to work out the acronym that fitted the wheel symbol. I describe each letter and what it stands for below. Figure 6.3 depicts the model that emerged from the first-order and second-order constructs.

The Wheel Acronym

- W:** Women – It starts with women themselves; they are the core of the model and transformation. The core shows the different social identities described by the participants. The triangle in the model depicts the foundation that women stand on in order to succeed (acquired skills and attributes and the interaction with others).
- H:** Holistic – A holistic approach is defined as a process of looking at the whole picture. The totality of something is much greater than the sum of its component parts, and these parts cannot be understood by an examination of the parts in isolation. In this study holistic means taking into account all the aspects of a woman's characteristics to ensure authenticity, because a woman consists of multiple identities. A holistic approach also means accepting, empowering and embracing women across class and race.
- E:** Embrace – To embrace means to include a part of a broader whole. In the context of this study the role players that need to embrace women are the society, government and organisational leaders.

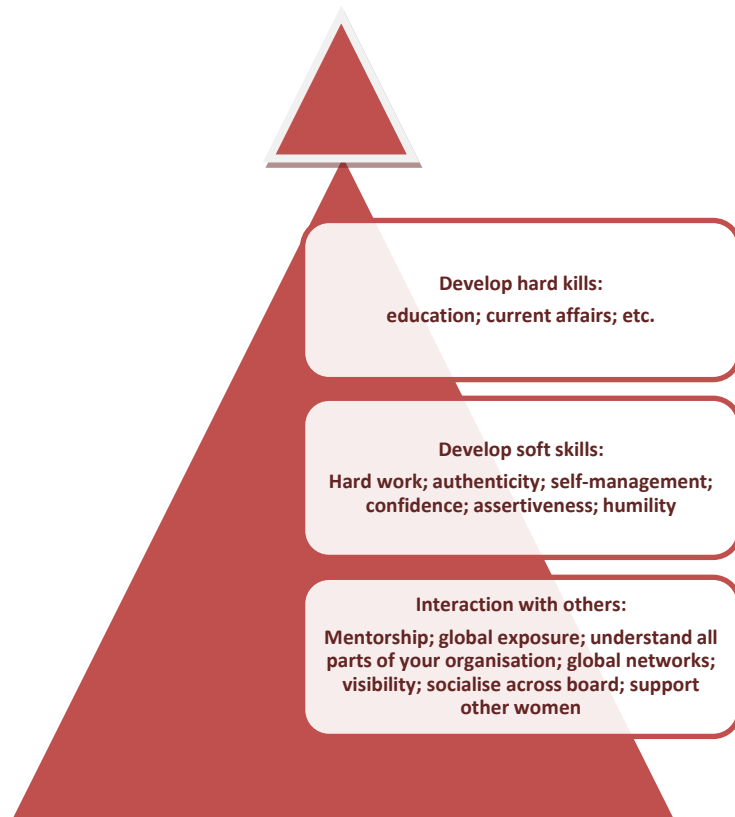
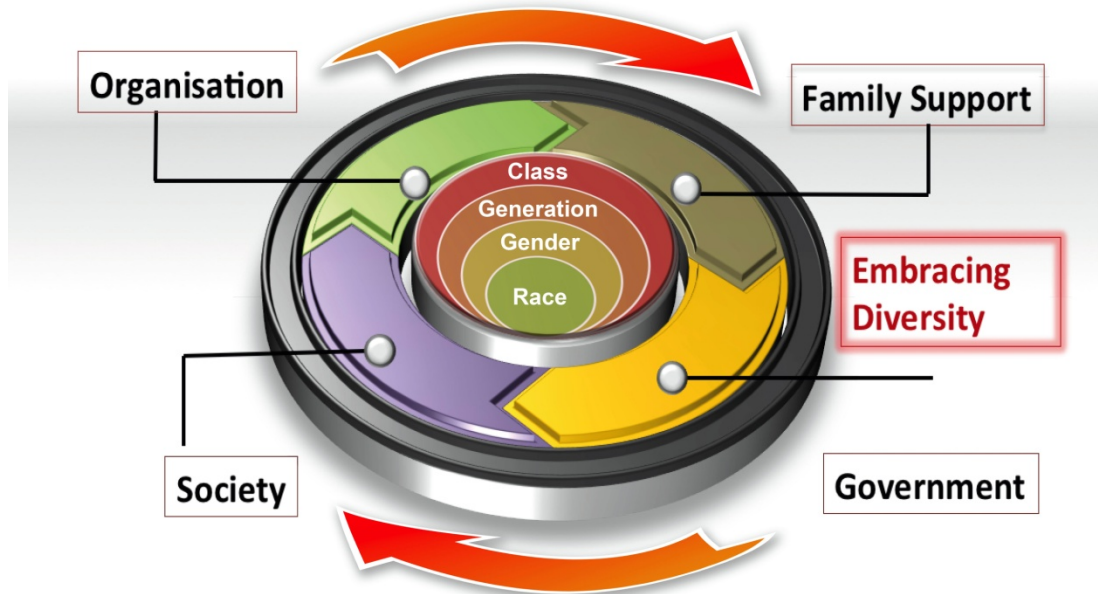
E: Effective – Something is effective when it is adequate to accomplish a purpose and to produce the intended or expected result. True diversity at leadership level leads to effective leadership.

L: Leadership – Leadership is the act of leading a group of people or an organisation.

A **holistic** acceptance of **women** (by society, government and organisational leaders) and their way of doing things will enable women, irrespective of their class or race, to bring their multiple dimensions into play without trying to be like men. Men and women, leaders and associates need to **embrace** this multiplicity for **effective leadership** in South Africa.

Figure 6.3 The WHEEL Model

The WHEEL Model



6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented and described the analytical tools used in this study. I then presented the first-order and second-order constructs, relevant extracts from the participants' life stories, as well as the process leading to the formation of the model. In the presentation of the WHEEL Model I justified my choice of a wheel by explaining the symbolism behind the image and by explaining the acronym. Each construct was explained and the link to the model justified.

It is my hope that the current study and the theoretical model produced will assist Human Resources practitioners in addressing the gender transformation strategy holistically by isolating and interpreting the important elements that the strategy requires; guiding and informing future academic research in this area; and promoting the transformation process in the private and public sectors (Torraco 1997).

The next and final chapter, Chapter 7, discusses the main findings of the study, its contribution and limitations as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study I set out to answer two questions: to what extent does the intersection of race, social class and gender affect women CEOs' experiences in their work roles and their career progression, and how might an understanding of senior women's experiences in their leadership roles assist with strategies to transform gender in senior leadership positions in South Africa? The interest in this topic was informed by the slow progress in the transformation of leadership in corporate South Africa in terms of both race and gender despite legislative interventions and government mandates. In August 2012, Cabinet approved the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill for public consultation. The Bill aims to enforce compliance with the stipulated minimum representation of women at senior levels in the private and public sectors. This study is timely for an understanding of the impact of the intersection of race, gender and social class on women's career progression. The perspective of women CEOs on how to transform gender at leadership level will add an important voice to transformation to the benefit of decision-makers in business and in government, and the methodology used enabled the development of a model which can be used to guide and inform future academic research in the field.

The study of Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) identified gaps in existing literature on research about and by women on the African continent. One of these was the methodology used; the quantitative method was used in the majority of the studies. Based on the objectives of the current study and my research paradigm, it was important to use a constructivist qualitative methodology. GT was chosen for its rigour and I believed it was best positioned to produce theory that could be informative to decision-makers. Thirteen women CEOs and one woman chairman, selected through purposeful, snowball and theoretical sampling, participated in the study. The chosen participants provided diversity in race, class, professional qualification, sector of work and background (e.g. rural and urban). Data was gathered through in-depth interviews using life stories. There have been concerns in gender studies about lack of research in developing economies and by women from those economies, especially Africa (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009). Most of the studies in this field have come from Western countries and have investigated the experiences of white middle-class women, which then become generalised to

women of all races and classes. The current study sought to give a voice to women across class and race, using their life stories to understand the intersection of different social identities.

7.2 MAIN FINDINGS

More social identities than identified originally, emerged from the data. These identities had an impact on women's work lives and/or life in general. Participants would more often than not isolate one social identity as the reason for the prejudicial behaviour experienced. Gender and race were mentioned most often, depending on the race of the participant. Whites experienced gender and blacks race as the predominant prejudicial factor (this could be ascribed to South Africa's colonial past). This finding was in line with a study done by Bell and Nkomo (2001) done in the USA. The additional social identities mentioned in the current study were generation, culture and language. Disability was mentioned by one participant in the context of racial inequity in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. These identities are discussed in detail in chapter 2.

In the following section, to conclude this research study, I describe the significant contribution and the limitations of the study, and make recommendations for future studies.

7.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

This study makes both a theoretical and practical contribution as discussed below.

7.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

The research in this study makes a number of significant contributions to the body of knowledge on gender transformation at the executive level of organisations. First, it fills a gap in knowledge about the life and career journeys of women in South Africa who hold jobs at the highest level in their organisations. It is one of the first studies to holistically study this group of women. It extends intersectionality theory by demonstrating the importance of taking into consideration the socio-historical context that may shape social identities. Apartheid was an encapsulating and divisive system of power and control that divided society deeply by race. The imprint and material effects of this division permeated the women's life stories. Thus, any study looking through an intersectional lens must explicitly incorporate the socio-historical context or, what Holvino has called, the macro-structural environment. The changing social context that is

underway as a result of the end of apartheid has in fact made it possible for these women to move beyond the racialised and patriarchal constraints that subjected all women, particularly black women, to a subordinated status to assume positions of leadership. The overwhelming dominance of race tended to overshadow the effects of other social identities but, as I argued, race intersected with class in South Africa in such a way that one's position in the racial hierarchy largely translated into a particular class position.

The theoretical contribution of this study can be summarised as follows:

- The WHEEL Model can be used as a theoretical tool by scholars in the field of leadership in general and of gender transformation in particular.
- The study will give insights into women leaders' social construction of the intersection of race, gender, class, generation, culture and language.
- Applying GT in a study that investigated intersectionality and gender issues will provide valuable guidelines on how these could be used in further studies.

7.3.2 Practical Implications

The findings of the study provide valuable information to guide the development of suitable strategies for gender transformation at leadership level in South Africa. They also confirm that there is an intersection of race, gender and class in women's career progression. The findings should enable leaders to set up systems that identify and eliminate discriminatory practices based on any one or all of the identified social identities. More importantly, it should enable them to come up with policies that are both receptive and empowering to women across race, class and generation.

- The WHEEL Model has policy implications for companies in the public and private sectors at a critical time, that is, when government is likely to implement quotas for gender transformation at leadership level within the next two years. The model can be used by HR practitioners in assisting organisations in implementing a multi-level transformation strategy. It also has practical implications for mentorship practitioners by offering guidelines for women's success in their careers.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Various possible studies came to mind as I was doing my fieldwork, and most of these centred around men across race and gender. However, I had to narrow these possibilities down. The South African landscape has changed after 1994. Many Africans who had left because of apartheid came back, and Robben Island prisoners were released. All these groupings have very different perspectives of South Africa and the world in general. An understanding of their perspectives will be important; so will an understanding of the perspectives of the different white and black communities who remained in South Africa throughout the apartheid era. I believe these groups have different expectations and world views. Understanding and bringing together these perspectives will be a good foundation for rebuilding a proud South African nation. This is one study I would love to do. However, for the purposes of the current study, I have the following four suggestions:

- 7.4.1 A qualitative study investigating how class, language and generation across gender and race at CEO level have affected both men's and women's career progression (The sample should include people who grew up in exile and those who are offspring of ex-Robben Islanders.)
- 7.4.2 A study of men across race who have been credited with the empowerment of women (Men's advice on strategies for gender transformation should be included.)
- 7.4.3 A study that investigates the role of men who have empowered women in their organisations and the role played by husbands of successful women (The study should include both men and women as participants with an intersection of culture, race, class and generation.) This will be as a follow up to one of the themes that came out of the study regarding the role played by men, both as mentors and as husbands.

- 7.4.4 A study of the differential impact of globalisation and colonisation on women and men in developing and developed countries (The study could include the addition of nationality, ethnicity and sexuality to social class).

7.5 LIMITATIONS

I believe my biggest limitation was my social identity. Having researchers of different races conducting the interviews with participants of their own race would have mitigated this limitation. For a country that is still divided by race, investigating racial issues requires someone that looks and talks like you.

7.5.1 Experience in the Field

It is my belief that my race and class influenced my access to white participants and my experience with those that I could access in the field (Datta 2008; Kobayashi, cited in Schurr & Segebart 2012). Because of my social identity, I found it easy to access black participants, even during fieldwork. They talked freely about a sensitive topic for a racialised and gendered country. The experience was very different with white participants. I was turned down by no fewer than ten white women, while I received the support of all the black participants I had approached except one. During the interviews, black participants were so keen to tell their stories that it was difficult to interrupt the flow of the storytelling. It seemed like a moment of reflection for them. My white participants were quite guarded in their responses; I had to engage actively with them to obtain responses. Sometimes I felt the responses would have been different had I been a white woman of similar class. Just as an example, I relate the field note of my experience with one of the white participants:

Jenny is a business partner of an acquaintance of mine. We were invited to a dinner of eight at my acquaintance's home for dinner, early November 2012. I saw this as an opportunity to approach her since she was on my target list. I gave her a brief overview of my study. She said she would be keen to participate and gave me her PA's email address. What followed was two cancellations on two different dates. I felt like giving up. But that's not in my nature. After the December holidays, we agreed on a date in January 2013 with no venue confirmed yet, in spite of calls and emails to her PA. Up to the day before the interview, the venue was not confirmed, actually I was expecting anything. To my pleasant surprise they confirmed the venue on the morning of the interview. I arrived ten minutes before time and waited in a meeting room. I was offered tea. Ten minutes later I was getting concerned that my participant would not make it. It was a relief when she walked in. (Field notes January 2013).

There is something that has to be said about investigating a sensitive topic in a country that has not dealt well with the healing process after being subjected to a traumatic and brutal system. I believe that if I had a white co-researcher, we could have got different perspectives from white and even Indian participants.

7.5.2 Researcher's Experience

GT methodology was a long, hard journey, but fulfilling at the end. As stated earlier, this was my first experience with the application of qualitative methodology and grounded theory. I learnt as I went along. It was tedious and frustrating at first. I chose to transcribe and code manually to ensure that I immersed myself in the data. It did pay off in the end and I am happy with the result. As stated in section 1.3 I handled potential bias through reflexivity and bracketing and peer debriefing, which have been discussed in sections 3.10.1 and 3.10.2. .

Deciding when theoretical saturation had been reached was a challenge, and I erred by going for more participants. The GT methodology requires high levels of experience, time and patience. I mitigated these demands by taking time off from work and allocating no less than ten months to the field. High volumes of data were intimidating. However, at the end of the fieldwork, the emergence of themes was a fulfilling experience.

7.6 CONCLUSION

Doing this study was a fulfilling personal and academic journey for me. It allowed me to reflect on my own journey and also to think about my daughter's future in the world of business. I learnt more about myself and became less judgemental of people.

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APPENDIX 1: OPEN CODES

OPEN CODES: ROLE EXPERIENCE – DATA SET 1

PARTICIPANT 1

I tapped on the table. When I introduced myself, I could see the disappointment and disgust on people's faces. I was confident and technically astute. I had fun.

The way I handled myself was different; I was more confident.

The first impression is very important. **Though I'm small in stature, I have a strong voice; I use this to assert myself.**

Guys will expose you intentionally and otherwise.

When you demand work and governance (from other black people), there is an attitude of 'who do you think you are?'

What I learnt over time is that the black and **white issue is easier to address** because it's in your face. Within six to twelve months people know how to get on with it.

However, the **issue amongst blacks is more complex** and heavy.

When I discovered that the report wasn't ready, I overreacted. I probably **subconsciously expect more from black women**; black woman you are on your own, you can do it!

I was pushed as a black woman; all of us can be there.

Only eight years earlier I was battling to cope at University of Natal, and now I was the best master's student in an Ivy League university! My intellectual capacity had not changed.

How much of this was the environment, how much of it is me? I still grapple with that question.

I was, like, if I go any further **my marriage will collapse**. I took a year off.

I had to deal with **gender and generational issues**. We were all black but the department was mainly men, older men. The Dept HOD called me 'makoti'.

There was a sense that I could not do the work in spite of my technical skills.

The guilt is a big thing for women, you can't have it all; something gives, mainly yourself first, then your relationship and your social life.

Looking back, I think I harboured the feeling that people are out to catch me out; I set barriers for myself.

The room itself was intimidating; there was a row of big busts of previous presidents, a huge board table and huge chairs. I tried to get everyone's attention unsuccessfully.

What I've learnt is that you have to be very formal and do everything right. If you are black and female, you have to know your story.

Know what you are bringing to the table; you can't be an expert at everything, but you should know your value add.

I was struggling to find a balance. The guys in my team had wives to keep the home fires burning. My kids had to spend the whole day at play school.

What I still don't understand is why I chose not to share the work load with my partner who held a similar position in government. I decided kids were my problem.

PARTICIPANT 2

Though there will be head-locking at times, you need to use a combination of persuasion and convincing to get things done.

... at a job interview, an old white guy who was very patronising. He would ask you the same question over and over again.

I said, 'Listen, you cannot keep on asking me the same question over and over again unless you are the one who doesn't understand what an overhead is'.

I left the interview thinking, I want the job just to shake up the attitudes. Three years later I was the old guy's boss.

It's very unlikely for a woman who is grounded to be vindictive because of past disagreement; that is also our downfall, we don't see it coming.

There are one or two or three people who meet you and decide they will watch you [your progress].

An old black man never understood when I got angry with whites and expressed my anger, how I could talk to white people that way.

I wasn't raised to fear anyone because of their race or to think people are more capable because of race.

When I left the bank I was frustrated with the bank; I would always be reminded that I came in at a supervisory level, a level reserved for white graduates.

Studying in Swaziland meant that I wasn't alive to race issues; this helped me to be able to progress as quickly as I did because I didn't know any better.

When I look at South Africans, even my siblings, you find that there is that level of fear when someone is supposed to take a stand.

[A]t the meetings when they introduced me, they would then add, 'but she grew up in Swaziland'.

As women we never think there is a game to be played, we just do the job.

When it comes to governance I do not compromise.

What I would change ... I wouldn't have been sensitive. I believe if it was a man in my position, he would not have been sensitive. That's their strength.

With white women, it's either they would not have children or if they do have children they are far away. I don't see them as role models.

The same dress tardiness for a man is interpreted positively; 'oh he's such a nerd'.

But people tend to judge people who are different to them no matter how good they are.

People tend to be more lenient to men though.

PARTICIPANT 3

Patriarchy is entrenched and systemic.

We have an integrated approach to things/outcomes as women. So, not demanding high salaries is not because we devalue our input.

The challenge is getting men to see the bigger picture. It takes a lot out of you because you have to read to understand their perspective.

For instance, men's input might deal with efficiencies whereas you also want to deal with issues of redress and structural issues.

As a consultant in occupational therapy, it struck me that it was more whites with disability that got back to work; I could not place blacks – there was also a problem with wheelchairs. Whites got wheelchairs from government,

Indians and coloureds had a House of Representatives that catered for their wheelchair needs; for blacks there was no such.

Jakobus Smit, for instance, when I had issues as chairman of a parastatal, he came to me and advised me on how to tackle it.

A Jewish woman who helped with the fundraising for disabled people was my mentor on life. She was amazing.

She taught me transcendence in terms of race and age; she was old.

We are so used to dual/multiple lives, rural life, urban life; we leave it in silos, when you are in a business meeting.

What I have learnt is that you have to get governance right because it can frustrate the process.

When I chaired a parastatal board, it was two women who worked hard [CEO and chairman, both black women].

... alignment of vision between chairman and CEO; we spent a lot of time in the beginning of the year understanding what each one is doing.

Blacks in general, because of our baggage from apartheid, try hard to seem confident to prove to their white counterparts.

We are disadvantaged as women because we can't just be ourselves; we have to represent the transformation agenda.

... as mentors ... black men, I had lots.

PARTICIPANT 4

Balance? It was quite tricky. I used to travel overnight, spend a day working and travel back the following night.

I employed a midwife at home to ensure the kids were taken care of medically; I also employed a nursery school teacher to stimulate them.

He was okay with the travelling, but when I got very busy, he said one of us has to be less crazy;
he said he would stay at home; the kids were little. It worked out fantastically.

Part of leaving consulting was because of the travel load, with the kids so small,

no mentors, formal or informal, at work.

Was still not married at 31, when I became a partner.

I was still the only voice, in terms of maternity policy, because the other three women partners were not married.

When I got pregnant, there was no maternity policy, no partner had fallen pregnant before;
no special dispensation for women during maternity leave; had to book the same hours.

The harassment that used to take place was mind blowing; sexual advances.

There were threats, blatant threats.

Getting maternity policy needed critical mass.

At the financial institution I found the non-transparency of remuneration and performance measurement a challenge.

In an environment where people were getting enormous bonuses, lack of transparency complicated matters.

Even the awards are called big-swinging-dick award, that's what they were called.

... the dealing room culture, migrating to the pub; the toxicity that results is unhealthy, conducive to treating women as trophies, things.

What I did, which is what I have done in all areas, is to say, given my set of skills, where can I add value, and ignored the noise.

Women were all experiencing quite a significant amount of harassment.

Now harassment and undermining is very subtle. Environments are very tough for women.

The reception that I got [laughing in disbelief] when I pushed the harassment cases forward was quite an education, from the top.

Discussing with the top three, they looked at my note and said 'what a boytjie'; I was completely stunned.

They moved him but did not discipline him.

The more different you were to that culture, the tougher it was for you. That culture was problematic for anyone who was different.

The black women who managed are those who came in with a track record somewhere else, and came from a position of authority.

Fighting the battles on your own is exhausting.

In my current investment company with three other women, there is no power struggle, no hidden agendas, you say it like it is; we have healthy robust debates; if we are out there I know I have three people watching my back.

If I look back I think I should have read earlier on that some things were not going to change.

There were many red flags which I did not read correctly; I still thought I could make the organisation the best that it could be.

A lot wiser, I now understand that there are certain agendas you need to understand over and above doing your job.

Transparency of performance measurement mitigated against class playing a role.

In an investment bank, there was an entrenched culture which is class dependent;

it is very difficult for someone of a different class to penetrate;

those environments have social events structured to suit the same ethos/culture.

PARTICIPANT 5

I don't think a balance can be kept, some things fall apart. I am not as available as a wife as other wives.

We have domestic help, mother/mothers-in-law as support system.

In the US I had an old white man who was my mentor; he even taught me how to drive. I got my driver's licence in the US.

There's always good men who believe in transformation and are prepared to give you the break you need.

Jeff Snalger from Hollard gave us a break.

The competition is tough (in the US); everyone is an MBA; it's highly competitive.

In the financial institution in SA women were more junior than men, but I never felt less than equal because of Jaco's leadership.

It's a man's world, the rudeness was there; you had to survive it. If you rebuff that they don't know what to do.

Collision with men unarmed does not make sense to me. You lose it all. I hate feminists.

I have a view on gender issues in the US; there is a lot of noise and aggression about it which has not yielded results.

I want men to recognise and accept that we co-exist; I do not have the energy to fight them.

In the US I didn't feel left behind; coming from SA it's difficult to see race issues.

When we started our women investment company we were shunned by men across race. White business did deals with connected black men.

We would do an analysis of a mining company; when we presented to them, they would ignore everything we said and point us to a rose farm.

They didn't take us seriously in spite of our technical skills.

The issue of gender is a very serious thing, because you are going against the wave of people who have a lot of resources,

so to deal with gender you have to be tactical in approach.

We didn't have political brand. We knew more than men did, we had structured deals but were still not taken seriously as women.

The CEO was a German guy; he'd been in the country since 1978. He did drastic things for transformation.

One of the clients snubbed a black guy; our CEO told them to take their business.

He made a decision that all black staff's kids will go to private schools at the company's cost.

TWICE a year we would be sent to Germany; we had real responsibility and work.

Jacob, a young white CEO, gave us real jobs; he oversaw that we were not affected by racism. He made time for us and respected our opinions.

I am thinking which white woman could have mentored me, I can't think of one. White women are struggling to accept that they were marginalised.

PARTICIPANT 6

I think it's a black thing rather than gender thing though gender is a close second.

In order to appeal to people that make decisions of promotion, black people have to do more.

There's a cultural barrier that whites have to overcome, that is why a black person has to be that much more qualified, for women it's just worse.

In my engineering class, there were three women, one dropped out and two remained. In an environment like that, whatever part of your brain that sees gender, dies.

I think if you are surrounded by men from an early age, it's easy to lose yourself and start 'thinking' like them.

If you look at women who have made it to the SNP, even the men look more handsome at CEO level than your average guy.

Women get stuck at middle management position, that's where the glass ceiling is today.

A white woman (subordinate) raised a grievance against a shop steward, assumed I would be biased, bypassed me straight to head office; racism is still quite there.

Recently, one senior black guy was introducing me when we had a function. He introduces me by my first name and later introduces one of my white subordinates as Mr.

Women want flexibility, they gravitate towards things that they believe are socially responsible.

Family balance is a myth, it doesn't exist. The thing that takes the brunt is your relationship with your husband. I deal badly with that.

When you come from upper class, you are pretty, you have a personality that draws people towards you, those things matter MUCH MUCH MORE than competence.

Competence eventually gets you through, but it won't get you to the top on its own.

The packaging is important for men too, but to a lesser extent.

When I came back he made sure that I had a mentor who was part of the line function.

I had a mentor [elderly white man], which was confidence building.

I think mentoring does have a sell-by date.

I think it's a bit awkward to mentor internal people when you are a CEO of a company.

I've never had a woman mentor, nor have I reported to one, black or white.

I have changed, mainly from age though, I've become harder.

When I fired one service provider, his response taught me that you have to accept people's best because that's all they have to offer.

There is definitely something I lost in the relationship with my husband because of my job.

I'm surprised white women have not done as well as I would have expected them, in all spheres. They got their major lift from employment equity.

In the corporate world the man is a default and we are seen as a variant of that, which is not true, we are completely different.

PARTICIPANT 7

I've never experienced gender issues in my life.

I don't see the glass ceilings; I'm not saying they don't exist but I don't see them.

I accepted a job offer at the current company because I felt they were going to struggle to deal with me at the law firm. ... *Why?* ... There were very few women partners.

I think it sounds very naive, but I didn't analyse it in terms of gender terms; actually throughout my career I don't analyse anything in terms of gender terms.

Actually it was a big shock for me when I got my current CEO position. The headlines were, company A appoints its first female CEO. I didn't see it that way.

Why should I go to work and spend time figuring out what I should do to belong here ... I want to use my brain and get the work done and serve the client.

I do believe there are battles in certain organisations.

No, they were young. I think it was more that maybe I would upset their career path. I don't know, I never challenged it with them [raising her voice].

It turned out to be a club of guys, but I didn't analyse it in gender terms, if that makes sense?

Because I never felt I had to prove myself. You know a lot of women will come to work and say, I have to work twice as hard to prove myself. I don't relate to that;

I accept that it's other people's reality. I don't come from a victim mentality.

I was very well educated, [three law degrees], I'm articulate, I'm presentable, intelligent, the journey that I've walked is much shorter than a journey of someone like you.

In this country we don't have class like you have in England and India ... I think what matters in this country as we become more diverse, is education and experience.

Finally we are getting to a stage of it's not about who you know as it is how well you perform. The networks will become less important.

I had a much easier path of it than some people.

Right from the beginning when my husband and I met at varsity, we knew that I would work.

One parent had to look after the kids, it was a joint discussion.

Mentors? I've got grey-haired men who have helped me see things, people who have helped me;

women, not as mentors but as friends; there are two women in town who are great sounding boards.

When the new CEO joined, the first two appointments he made were of two young women – one was head of the key portfolio and I was more a strategist/general council.

But as soon as you have women holding senior important positions, it tells you that this is an organisation that loves women.

Work/life balance is in the eyes of the beholder; I am quite hard on the difference between work and family.

It's personal time, work time and family time.

I've never been harassed sexually. That said, we've had occasions where we had to take action against people, and as women you have to be very hard on sexual harassment.

I have zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

My husband thinks I have changed; [laughs] ... my school friends will tell you I haven't.

I'm much more conscious of how I conduct myself in public because of my position.

My husband thinks I have changed; he'll complain and say you don't wear the trousers here, I make decisions here, I don't work for you, don't talk to me in that kind of voice.

I'm not a black woman, but we don't demand master's from a black woman and honours from men. But having said that, all the black women I know are unbelievably well educated.

I get the feeling that there is something that makes black women to be better; something in the DNA.

The black men were looking for a salary that said to me they would move only for money, which wasn't inspiring; it was different for black women.

They really put their soul to work.

PARTICIPANT 8

You know I had quite a sheltered life in South Africa. My employment was driven by my need to have political expression. I was therefore with likeminded people.

I never felt there was a glass ceiling for women. I never felt that being a woman limited my progression.

No one reinvested in our company; the mother company did quite well.

We had to fight very hard to increase our shareholding. I do not think the mother company took us seriously, and I think it was because we were two women running the company.

There was no agenda to develop us and grow the company. I do think there was a subtext of these two girls on the side. I began to pick up that there was a lot of pushing.

I delayed having kids till I was 35, because I wasn't ready at 23.

My husband could not help me when the kids were young and I had just started working at the current company. Because he was in Pretoria, I had to do everything.

Actually after getting my first child I was quite ill. I had a brilliant helper.

I had some help from my mother but she was older. My domestic help is the reason I am here today.

Errol (BM) played a major role in my business life; the ethos of true transformation funding, good development initiatives in the community, had a very big impact on me.

I didn't have someone who was a woman who mentored me.

I think there is a role for mentorship but it has to be taken seriously; it can't be a 'take-a-girl-child' story; it needs to be integrated into the business.

Mentorship should be linked to independent skills development outside the company.

Balance is never achieved; in SA women who have made it in business have depended on other women who are exploited, so I do think domestic work needs better recognition.

Biggest regret – our mother company could have opened more doors and allowed more development. They didn't take us seriously,

I BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE WE WERE TWO WOMEN.

In business there is a ceiling for women. White and Indian women benefited more from affirmative action because they got better education than Africans and Coloureds.

I started the company with a Jewish white woman; that she was Jewish might be the differentiator maybe, actually the success of the business was based on our good relationship;

actually I mentored her because I brought a lot of skills, but she also mentored me in a whole lot of things.

I regret that I wasn't more assertive with our shareholder; we were young and Errol's blue-eyed girls. That became a reciprocal relationship, we played our part as young women, not really challenging but more accepting of the paternalistic relationship.

I'm maybe tougher and harder. It's made me realise that people are not indispensable and I am not indispensable. I think I have become a more focused, harder business person; what has not changed is my commitment to make a difference and I believe you can do that and be successful in business.

Do you know that when Indian women get married they stop practising as doctors? It is not uncommon, they are held back by their culture. Maybe it's happening in African cultures?

PARTICIPANT 9

Themba, the boss at the time, threw us in the deep end. I didn't know how to drive, I had to learn quickly.

I had nothing and therefore nothing to lose. I learnt humility from the union. For eight years we were the only two women.

Women did not see it as a core job for them, women were mainly secretaries. We fought for women to become mining engineers.

They don't take you seriously; you have to have empathy, humility and be very professional; people will respect you regardless of sector or country.

There was a gender acceptance that my husband was not going to be the breadwinner.

So, we were setting a newer trend within the family. It didn't matter to me and he was supportive from a family perspective.

I then got on to boards; most of them I was the first woman and black. They were initially dismissive, but they learnt VERY QUICKLY that they couldn't dismiss me.

At the meeting if I wasn't happy with the explanation I would say, 'Let it be recorded that ...'; the minute I said that everybody would say, 'Let's go through that issue'.

The CEO just left me to drive the strategy and I grabbed that opportunity.

I convinced the board, partly because of the union powerbase that I had and the respect I had earned ... we changed the strategy.

I moved from an environment where class mattered; you were fighting apartheid and class within your race,

within the union there was only one enemy, apartheid, class was not the issue.

The first year it was difficult because people didn't take me seriously.

Being a woman and a black woman did not overshadow what I could deliver; that has been my experience throughout.

I have had two black men as mentors at different times, and a white woman.

We should make time to mentor women.

When I started in business I had the support that most women do not have (support of the unions over and above support from my husband).

PARTICIPANT 10

In the workplace it's all about your capabilities and education that you bring to the table.

As a black American woman I do not think that social class plays a role.

It depends on who you talk to; a black woman might say that race is far more prevalent than gender whereas for a white woman it might be gender.

You can have a more strategic discussion where it is more a link of diversity to the business objectives and market segments than just representation.

I'll always support another woman in the room; as women we tend not to help each other enough. It is our obligation (as women) to support each other.

I think it was Margaret Thatcher who said there is a place in hell for a woman who does not support another woman.

Because I've been very deliberate in my career in terms of the things that I decided to get involved in.

My goal from the beginning was to become the chief diversity officer of a company, going back 20 plus years.

I feel that my career has been more of an extension of the person I am as an individual.

I was a global vice-president in my early thirties, several years ago; that's very young in the eyes of some people.

I say it's not about age but it's about wisdom and your contribution to the organisation and impact.

But when I look to my left and to my right, the same comment was not made to my Caucasian male counterpart who may be even younger than me.

I think there is an expectation that as women and as people of colour we have to take longer to achieve success.

I think sometimes as women we are criticised for things unfairly and for things that men are not criticised about.

It is shameful that 80% of the people who've played this [mentorship] role are men, and that tends to be the pattern.

Sometimes as women are our worst enemies, we need to lift each other more.

I'm one of the lucky ones, my husband who was also an executive, has been extremely supportive. He retired when I got the position in Switzerland to support me.

He's put my career and my success first. I believe that is so selfless.

I think such support from a life partner is one of the success factors.

Women just wear too many hats to cope. People are having to make tough choices, especially women.

I've seen women opt in and opt out.

You can have it all, but not at one time/not at the same time.

As black people we try to 'manage' our expectation; the success that I've had is not the norm.

PARTICIPANT 11

The auditing firm was a catalyst for me. You saw gender, class and race discrimination full force. It was institutionalised.

You could see with the allocation of assignment, only blacks would be left unassigned.

Blacks were marginalised. After passing the board exams, I wasn't allocated any clients; all the white clerks were allocated clients.

I went to the head of trainees and told him I am entitled to proper experience. They begrudgingly assigned me to some woman partner's team.

I started a conversation at the bar with one partner in charge of German clients' audits. He got head of staff's permission for me to join his team. That changed my life forever.

All of a sudden I was managing big clients.

Going back to the German team; the client liked the mixed racial group clerks, which then exposed our company's excuses that Afrikaner clients demand Afrikaner clerks.

In my previous teams, when there was an audit lunch, they would only invite the white people. Blacks who were involved in the audit would not be invited. It was blatant racism.

In my new team led by the German partner, the race, gender and class issues didn't feature at all, though there were a lot of Afrikaners.

I wanted diversity; I wanted to be exposed to different businesses. I went to work for a parastatal.

The parastatal liberated my mind. It showed me that women are better in what they do regardless of the field; it taught me that you pigeonhole yourself as a woman.

I think it was leadership and a culture of meritocracy. You need street-cred to progress. Meritocracy didn't favour anything but excellence.

In Cape Town the class thing is deep and diverse; it starts with, are you Muslim, even within Muslim group there is the proper Muslim and the Malay Muslim, then within those groups ... it then goes to the hair, colour, eyes, where you live and which language you speak. Cape Town Coloureds see themselves as a different race.

Then I moved to a private equity company. You had 12 partners, all white males, three or four principals, all white males. Everyone else was an associate.

Some of the guys were very racist but it was also about meritocracy.

They used me because they needed my skill; I decided that I was going to be a kick-ass associate, because that's the only way you will get into deals.

When they take you to the client you sit and take notes. Initially I thought it was demeaning. I then thought they can't move without me and my minutes.

I reduced the minutes to a report with recommendations and implications and sent it to all the attendees.

When we were looking at acquisitions, the managing partner and the lead partner would call me and ask for my opinion on management.

What did that do for you in terms of promotion? NOTHING, I just stayed as an associate [laughs].

As soon as people say promotion takes two to five years, and you are black and female, you know that you will be on the five- year-plus thing.

There was also another lady, white German lady. She was also good at what she did, somehow they were just blocking her.

When I resigned to join my current company he asked me to stay because they were thinking of making me a principal.

I told him we had quarterly reviews at the company where this decision was never made; this ship had sailed.

I told him I've observed them managing the company and making strategic decisions but they seemed to have a blind spot which I will not define.

If my work does not speak for itself, I won't be part of that company.

With my current company there are racial issues, but it's mainly language issues.

I don't think the company has a class issue because it's a middle-class business. The brand serves the man in the street. We are all equal.

You can't be uppity like someone working for an institution that serves the elite.

I am very confrontational; when someone says something silly I confront them immediately; will retort by saying I didn't know we were in the business of hiring bad black people,

for instance when someone says we are recruiting and hiring good black people I would challenge that, do we hire bad black people?

Out of interest I have noticed that when we speak about white people, we don't put a prefix! I will tell you in private but I will tell you.

Gender? Women struggle in this business. I don't think guys intend to exclude women but they just don't see that women are not there.

For instance, we are doing trustee training, so I asked the heads of divisions to send me potential names. When the lists come it's all men, including the list from women.

It's such a male-dominated industry that even women are tuned out, they only see men.

My mentors have all been white males, either Afrikaner or German.

The women that I use as a sounding board are not my mentors, they are my friends. It's a peer mentoring thing, but I use them more than they use me. It's all black females.

The feedback on my performance from outside companies made them realise there was technical competence too. This gave me visibility; they then took a keen interest in me.

They sent me to every leadership training that was available. Part of my success is due to leadership.

Certain careers/industries don't lend themselves to women's need for flexibility; some of the industries are very paradoxical.

PARTICIPANT 12

I was 23, and was the only black woman manager, had a huge apartment in Bantry Bay with a huge BMW.

I was living the life but the job had no content, no budget of substance.

I started to doubt myself; at 23 you're hungry for work, you want to feel that you are growing.

In New York people are quite cliquey! You have a clique of people that went to Yale and another one of people that went to Harvard, etc.

If you did not go to an Ivy League university, forget it, you didn't go to school! First of all I was from Africa, I am black and I'm a woman and I 'didn't go to school!'

The first person I went to was the only black woman who was a partner. BIG MISTAKE.

For me the support came from white males. They started giving me work.

I was so hungry for it that I would get to the office at 7 am and only leave at midnight. I loved it. I wanted to make sure everything was right.

The people in my team were much younger than me, Ivy League products, etc. This made me apply myself 24/7.

I would either be working with my colleagues or I would go out with them. It was a certain culture.

I was looking up to the two women in the firm. They were very hard women, very poor people skills, very disrespectful. I picked up those traits.

Every week I had people in disciplinary hearings. I couldn't understand someone coming to work at 8:30 and leaving at 17:00, it was a whole new world for me.

I had no compassion, I was very clinical. My technical ability made me a bit arrogant.

Going to this company was good for me because I realised that there are some things that I needed to unlearn.

I think once I was comfortable with myself I became a better leader.

My ex-husband was always very supportive; he would always say, this is what you want to do. He's the one that taught me to listen to my internal compass.

I think some of the experiences of losing my mother and all that, I had learnt to detach myself. I'd become functional.

That humility struck a chord with me, apart from that he was just very generous, very open to allow access to anybody.

He always reminded us that because we're a black firm we need to do more.

Mentors at work, all men – black and white.

I was the only senior female staff, only black.

Yes, that was a cultural shock, all management was black ... and ... *There were other women?* Yes.

It was interesting because I was quite assertive (and that's putting it lightly); she was and is a very balanced person. She could manage me.

The CEO would work on certain things directly with me. For someone else this would be irritating, but she was very mature.

The first time the black partner saw me, he asked me to make him a cup of coffee.

The white man who hired me, intervened and said, X, let me introduce you to this woman, she is so and so, she has the following degrees

and is working on the following transactions. If you need coffee go and make it yourself. And never do that 'rubbish' again. He stood up for me.

The black woman partner who wanted nothing to do with me in the US was assisting us with some transaction that we were working on.

All of a sudden she was nice to me. I guess she didn't want to take a risk on me .

I guess the interesting dynamic has been with the board, predominantly white male and old. The chairman tells me it took a lot of convincing for them to appoint me as CEO.

It's interesting though that the same thing happened when the chairman recommended the black CFO to his predominantly white board. They rejected him.

We had members of exco who were there from the very beginning who were very wealthy.

They would always remind us that you guys are employees; there's a difference between workers and owners.

There was a belief that a black South African can't do it. A black from anywhere else in the world, yes.

PARTICIPANT 13

Fighting for women to be offered bursaries too ...

I think there is still a lot of unconscious bias, in society as a whole, in the world of work in particular, in financial services especially; it's been very male dominated; you have to work very hard to make sure the next senior person that comes in is not someone who looks and talks like you, same background, race and gender.

You have to remind people that if someone hasn't performed it's not gender that hasn't performed.

In many ways I have always had a great sense of having to work for where I am, having to prove to yourself and others that you are better than their judgement.

But in the public sector there's been a visible commitment to getting the gender equation right, in a more determined way.

In the private sector we have a lot of commitment and we talk a lot about it but frankly I think we are further behind the curve; it differs between different sectors.

Very status-driven culture excludes women and people of lower class.

In the financial services there is a level that seems to be reserved for a particular gender.

This sector employs a lot of women up to middle management;

often because women themselves walk away from the challenge. We often do not feel confident enough to put our hands up; it's intense, hours are intense, it takes its toll on women.

If you are a young woman with a young family it's tough. We hire competent young people and we put a lot of pressure on them.

We've been given the benefit of being trail blazers; people after us will be required to have walked the path within the organisation.

PARTICIPANT 14

You know, you naturally felt it, because all managers were male. I was the only female manager.

The way you were socialised, you almost expected to be undermined and had coping mechanisms.

If you were a woman and the secretary wasn't available to make the tea, you made the tea. You did not feel this was prejudicial.

You were never asked to make tea. Women were quite emancipated. In the US women dressed more conservatively, the dress code is more gender neutral.

You know the environment is quite friendly, but people are conscious of potential sexual harassment suits, so you don't hug each other like you do here.

Initially I was quite surprised that I was accepted being from Africa and being a woman.

SA Health professionals were easily accepted in the US.

You could be friends across class in the US, quite different from SA.

I would have thought it would be a lot worse for black women in SA then.

White women did benefit from affirmative action.

In my early days, you did experience sexual harassment but from outside people. Nothing bad ever happened, but it was difficult because while you want to be assertive you also don't want to cause a scene.

OPEN CODES: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS – DATA SET 2

What are strategies for success

P1 Men seek support, they are good at that, be it a formal coach or informal. As women we keep our issues to ourselves, we don't reach out for help.

Though there will be head-locking at times, you need to use a combination of persuasion and convincing to get things done.

Invest in yourself, not just technically, obviously that's critical, but invest on your softer side too to boost your confidence. I decided to do a second master's degree.

P2 It's having the right people and getting their buy-in to your vision. And I did have a good support base.

Invest in yourself.

As women we are not fluffy. When we say something, we support it with fact.

Employees are human beings and different things make them tick; find that thing in order to motivate them.

My initial challenge was getting good people to come and work with me. I targeted people that I used to work with. They came because they trusted me.

To achieve success, people have to understand what their role is; as a leader you need to walk the talk.

I've never had a formal mentor; I have to admit I've always had people who I could call on; they would call on me too.

To be honest, it was more men than women who tended to assist with the learning.

In the earlier times people that supported me were black males and white males, later black females, in fact I've never had that with white women.

How you carry yourself, how we talk does matter. First impressions matter. Being highly professional does matter.

Before I elevate people with potential I always have a one-on-one with them defining my expectations on their delivery and commitment.

P3 You should not be emotional; you need to accommodate men's perspective to win them over.

Alignment of vision amongst stakeholders

As mentors ... black men, I had lots.

I believe in Africans defining themselves, knowing who they are. I see a lot of Africans who have achieved starting to focus on self-identity.

P4 You must be well read, be up to date with current affairs, be up to date with your core subject/discipline.

People will be interested in you if you are interesting.

The consulting firm had a very transparent mechanism of performance appraisal.

I also created a space for women to speak; I created forums that allowed women to talk.

Be absolutely prepared, you are going to work hard.

Keep yourself up to date in your academic space; you have to be clear what does performance mean.

Look at your job description and together with the person you report to, unpack what will be expected from you in a year.

Every six months check with your evaluator how you are doing in terms of deliverables.

Drive your own understanding on how you are being perceived.

I employed a midwife at home to ensure the kids were taken care of medically. I also employed a nursery school teacher to stimulate them.

Be proactive in terms of how you are performing, and adjust things.

Understand what is lacking in your performance to attain great performer evaluation.

Know the channels in the organisation and use them. If it does not improve, get out.

P5 There's always good men who believe in transformation and are prepared to give you the break you need.

We have domestic help, mother/mothers-in-law as support system.

Mentorship has to be defined.

We are not mentoring boys, who seem to be in more trouble than girls. Maybe we should focus on mentoring both genders.

With Nkuhlu's influence (our first- and third-year lecturer), I could only think of CA as a career.

In the US I had an old white man who was my mentor; he even taught me how to drive. I got my driver's licence in the US.

There's always good men who believe in transformation and are prepared to give you the break you need.

In the financial institution in SA women were more junior than men. But I never felt less than equal because of Jaco's leadership.

It helps to have a head of state pushing the gender issue.

The women themselves, what conversation are we having with them? How committed are they?

So, to deal with gender you have to be tactical in approach.

The CEO was a German guy; he'd been in the country since 1978. He did drastic things for transformation.

I fully back the quota system; the quota system should have a champion.

I had to negotiate with my husband. So I sacrificed the car and big salary to follow my passion of being a merchant banker.

P6

I have systematised the elevation of blacks to positions; I sign off on the top four positions.

You need a black HR person to identify black talent. There is a certain cultural barrier that whites have to overcome.

I left a senior position to go to a financial services company because I would be a CEO. It also offered me the opportunity to be entrepreneurial since it was a newly set up company.

I left that company to go to Company V which allowed me to go to the African continent outside SA. It allowed me to set up a new business.

It was a small company within a big company.

Knowing what I know now, if my gut feel said something was wrong I would not do it. However, if it said it was right I would not do it if the analysis did not stack up.

Young women of today need to understand that you are on a stage; you have to act the part; being comfortable on that stage is important for you to get ahead.

My attitude: I do not think there is anything we cannot do, maybe not now but next year or the other year.

I learnt very early on (in my family) that not all subjects are solved by talking. As a woman you get undermined, do you agree, I think that happens when you are younger.

Going abroad helped me; when you socialise with people you look at them differently which is what happened to me when I was overseas. I don't treat white people differently.

That experience taught me what it is to shine a spotlight on someone and believe in them unconditionally. That's what Mandela can do too.

If you can't find women, then blacks, then foreigners. Design the systems so that they produce the results that you are looking for.

You make many mistakes and you have to get over the mistakes; correct and move on. I detach from situations.

Make sure that the packaging does not overshadow the content. Strengthen the content too.

People should focus on a line function; you have to be part of the frontline that generates revenue for the company.

I was clear that I wanted a leadership role; I believe in excellence.

I want a huge amount of autonomy, make decisions at the highest possible level, I want complexity, I want to shape and influence what people do.

At the core I'm quite autocratic and controlling. I'm quite good at making a decision, integrating information from various sources.

Have a sponsor who has influence.

You need to be visible.

I left a senior position to go to a financial services company because I would be a CEO. It also offered me the opportunity to be entrepreneurial since it was a newly set up company.

You need to find a safe place to ask your stupid questions, even that should be sorted soon.

One parent had to look after the kids; it was a joint discussion.

- P7 I wasn't born with any guilt; I have no guilt about that my kids are looked after by a full-time house-husband while I work full time; it's not part of my make-up.
- You have to excel, you have to make a difference to the bottom line? It's all of it, I'm hard on numbers, culture, the way people interact with each other and clients.
- Mentors? I've got grey-haired men who have helped me see things, people who have helped me.
- I think the biggest skill you need to develop is to listen, especially if you're an A type.
- If you listen you learn that there are multiple perspectives to a story.
- The other thing is that it's tough out there; you've got to steel yourself.
- Advice to the women; get the best education you can get, do something that you are absolutely passionate about even if it means changing careers midstream.
- Work for someone you respect, you've got one shot in life, put the most in.
- White boys in this country have to get around how to be entrepreneurial; employment opportunity has decreased for them.
- I tell my sons that they have to create the next Anglo American; you've got to find the opportunity.
- There is nothing that a woman cannot do, or should not be able to do with the right backing, right education and opportunities.

There is too much sense of entitlement and that I can get somewhere quickly ... you can't; do the work, success will come eventually, learn the job.

Women should push, we have a lot of excellent women, women of colour across the board.

I think we must rise to the occasion. ... education is important, and skill.

When the new CEO joined, the first two appointments he made were of two young women; one was head of the key portfolio and I was more a strategist/general council.

Though I don't see gender I appreciate that having a woman in my position has a positive significance in terms of showing that it's possible.

P8 I should have been more assertive with my boss and shareholder.

Actually after getting my first child I was quite ill. I had a brilliant helper.

I had some help from my mother but she was older. My domestic help is the reason I am here today.

Mentorship should be linked to independent skills development outside the company.

Government should give women an opportunity through legislation.

P9 What I learnt is that, never assume that people know. I learnt that I have to understand something fully so that I can use my own language to explain.

When people slept, I used to read. I learnt to speak my mind and ask questions without worrying about looking stupid.

I believe that if you give of yourself for the bigger, good money follows.

Mentor women CEOs.

I trust my intuition a lot, and I believe that is something that women have more of than men. Men have it too but don't trust their intuition most of the time.

Lessons learnt; hard work, knowing your subject, becoming an expert, people will have no other option but to respect.

If you have a vision of where you want to be you can direct a good team to that vision.

We have support that allows us some slack.

I think quotas will go a long way in resolving the gender issues.

You need to have knowledge, then people will see beyond colour. In SA we always experience racism up to this day.

- P10 I say, do a lot of different things so as not to limit yourself and your options.
- Be authentic.
- I say, experiment; take a global assignment; you never know what the world holds out for you.
- [When you opt out] you have to maintain contact, stay abreast of what's happening, sustain the relationships [to be able to come back]
- Formal resourced mentorship with technical training
- You can have a more strategic discussion where it is more a link of diversity to the business objectives and market segments than just representation.
- Because I've been very deliberate in my career in terms of the things that I decided to get involved in
- I'm one of the lucky ones; my husband who was also an executive has been extremely supportive; he retired when I got the position in Switzerland to support me.
- [When you opt out] you have to maintain contact, stay abreast of what's happening, sustain the relationships [to be able to come back]
-
- P11 Read widely, immerse yourself into the clients' business. Read your clients' financials before you go to them. Understand the context of their business.
- DO NOT TRIVIALISE THE ASSIGNMENTS THAT YOU ARE GIVEN.
- Move out of your comfort zone as much as possible. Take it as a learning experience.
- Try and interact and socialise with people that are different from you.
- People that are like you will give you a one-dimensional view; different races, different ages and genders, it will help you deal with conflict resolution.
- Have friends that are growing with you, friends that steer you.
- I wanted diversity, I wanted to be exposed to different businesses.**
- I think it was leadership and a culture of meritocracy. You need street-cred to progress. Meritocracy didn't favour anything but excellence.
- They used me because they needed my skill; I decided that I was going to be a kick-ass associate, because that's the only way you will get into deals.
- I reduced the minutes to a report with recommendations and implications and sent it to all the attendees.
- I am very confrontational, when someone says something silly I confront them immediately; will retort by saying I didn't know we were in the business of hiring bad black people.

The feedback on my performance made them realise there was technical competence too. This gave me visibility; they then took a keen interest in me.

They sent me to every leadership training that was available.

P12 With my second ex-husband, I was learning a lot from him. He was a very compassionate type of leader. It was good for that, I went back to understanding who I really am.

I think once I was comfortable with myself I became a better leader.

That humility struck a chord with me, apart from that he was just very generous, very open to allow access to anybody.

I was hired as MD of a new division that I was going to build from scratch. I loved it, it was entrepreneurial, I was executing deals.

There was a meeting that night that I didn't want to miss. It was so important for me as a woman to prove that I was committed, and not to fall into the stereotype that ... aggh

... there they go.

I try to be very consistent with my messaging, the things that I do. I'm very open to debate. I think I'm fair. I'll admit when I'm wrong. But I'm quite firm.

I can be quite playful, we laugh a lot, we pray together too.

So when I became CEO, I wanted everything to be very corporate (board packs two weeks before, not three days), quality reports.

You need to be able to engage and relate with people over and above having skills.

Don't close yourself off from growing in all aspects, including spiritually.

You should be open to things not happening exactly the way you planned them. To have the humility to know there's God out there.

Don't give up, keep moving, pursue your dreams.

P13 I grew up in an immigrant family in a working class family, father was a bricklayer where jobs were not certain, mother housewife

When I finished school I had to go and work because there was no money for me to go to varsity.

I think there is still a lot of unconscious bias, in society as a whole in the world of work in particular, in financial services especially. It's the sense that women,

it's been very male dominated, you have to work very hard to make sure the next senior person that comes in is not someone who looks and talks like you,

same background, race and gender.

You don't make the same value judgement on a man who hasn't performed. It's a process, it's hard.

I grew up with a sense of a lot of inferiority complex, growing up as an immigrant child you don't feel you belong anywhere, that's pretty rough.

Also a great sense that you can do things but you have to prove to yourself and others that you're better than the judgements that they make about you

Looking at government, when the G20 was formed, I was the only head of government department who is a woman. It's not as though there's been an abundance of women.

But in the public sector there's been a visible commitment to getting the gender equation right, in a more determined way.

the private sector we have a lot of commitment and we talk a lot about it but frankly I think we are further behind the curve, it differs between different sectors

You should deal with the unconscious bias. Talent in this country exists and it represents the demographics of the country

For us it's investing in young people, our graduate program, what we do with young people.

career development is an important part of talent retention.

Across the organisation we are dealing with unconscious bias through different programs.

You can see patterns on how in a particular part of business women are consistently rated below men, especially in a division where we know the division is performing better

We encourage mentorship and coaching. I believe none of us were born innate abilities

[Quotas] It's not good for the people concerned, it's not good for the organisation, it's not good for society

You should flatten the structure. Titles are not important to me, you need to work hard, take on more responsibility

All my life I've been fighting these battles. It's been more of a shock and it is sexist. In the financial services there is a level that seems to be reserved for a particular gender.

Which is silly. This sector employs a lot of women up to middle management.

often because women themselves walk away from the challenge. We often do not feel confident enough to put our hands up, it's intense, hours are intense,

it takes its toll on women

We hire competent young people and we put a lot of pressure on them. That worries me a lot, how we can make the work load more forgiving.

I think I made a decision in my early thirties that I wasn't going to have a family, it's not a decision you make lightly, it's a tough decision to make

You need networks, not just women networks, but networks across the world to help get things done. Independence, belief in yourself, tenacity, accepting that you have to work very hard.

You've got to be well educated; you have to be well networked. Men get better networks

p14

My father was a corporate accountant for an insurance company, my mother was a teacher and worked her rank up to be headmistress of the school but always at junior school

I went to private school, my Godfather was a pharmacist. Because of that, I wanted to have a career where I would be independent

At the time I was very bright, I was dux of the school. It was quite a protective nurturing environment. My Godfather was quite a role model for me

I asked for a job opportunity overseas, particularly in the US where I wanted to work. They found me a job and I took it

The company had a very good culture and ethic. It was headed by a British MD who was very entrepreneurial

I am ten years older than you, the way you were socialised, you almost expected to be undermined and had coping mechanisms.

I was assertive enough because of how I was brought up

If you were a woman and the secretary wasn't available to make the tea, you made the tea.

You did not feel this was prejudicial. Even at home even though my mother worked, my father was still the boss

It was not demeaning or confrontational. I still felt I could make my point provided I has supporting facts and I had thought it out properly

I was engaged to be married, I went six months ahead of my fiancé, who joined later [in the US].

It turned out, five months into the job I was promoted to a senior position. I came back to SA got married and moved back to the US

He had to do the bar examination again, which we did not research. He spent 2 years not working. How did this affect your relationship

No we divorced in 2000... What caused the strain was that I got promoted to Vice President International; I travelled a lot

You were never asked to make tea. Women were quite emancipated. In the US women dressed more conservatively, the dress code is more gender neutral

You know the environment is quite friendly, but people are conscious of potential sexual harassment suits

Initially I was quite surprised that I was accepted being from Africa and being a woman. I think South African workers are very hard working.

Health professionals were easily accepted in the US.

You know, what I found there was easier mixing in the US than here. You could be friends across class, i.e. a factory worker and a manager could mix at a barbeque

CODES: STRATEGIES FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION – DATA SET 3

What are strategies for gender transformation at leadership level?

P1

You need quotas to level the playing field. However, they are very difficult to implement both for the environment and the beneficiaries.

You need to work on the environment to be conducive to women. Don't set up women for failure, it will reinforce the prejudice against women.

Without support you will kill any potential. It has worked very well in the Scandinavian countries. The women there are confident without losing their femininity.

Even the environment in the Scandinavian countries is women friendly.

P2	<p>I believe as women we are wasting a lot of time discussing (amongst ourselves) how we want to change things, while authority lies with men.</p> <p>You need to win men over.</p> <p>We need to have enough women to have an impact.</p>
P3	<p>I believe strongly in quotas; I would go throughout the world promoting quotas. If you look at corporate diversity, it is one of the slow areas.</p> <p>Quotas are not just about numbers; the culture environment at work also has to change, that is significant.</p> <p>We need to empower each other in terms of the work we do to influence change.</p> <p>The alignment of our reproductive issues and patriarchy is something that society has to deal with and accommodate.</p>
P4	<p>I also created a space for women to speak; I created forums that allowed women to talk.</p> <p>Women forums provided a safe space for women to share their experiences and to gain a sense of confidence.</p> <p>Women in the women forums could draw from other women's experiences as to how to handle certain situations.</p> <p>So, it's confidence building and provides a safety net. It's about becoming more resilient themselves.</p> <p>We do need to create stronger networks at work.</p> <p>I think quotas work, employment equity is working.</p> <p>I believe in mentorship; my business partners and I have young women as protégées.</p>
P5	<p>It helps to have a head of state pushing the gender issue.</p> <p>I fully back the quota system; the quota system should have a champion.</p> <p>Mentorship has to be defined.</p> <p>We are not mentoring boys, who seem to be in more trouble than girls. Maybe we should focus on mentoring both genders.</p>
P6	<p>I support quotas 120%; the problem is that once you get to the position you need to deliver.</p> <p>You need a black HR person to identify black talent. There is a certain cultural barrier that whites have to overcome.</p>
P7	<p>Though I don't see gender I appreciate that having a woman in my position has a positive significance in terms of showing that it's possible.</p>
P8	<p>I DON'T BELIEVE IN QUOTAS [Voice raised]. I mean I do, in so far as I don't think business would have shifted if government didn't put in some kind of requirements.</p> <p>Government should give women an opportunity through legislation.</p>
P9	<p>I made sure that 20% of the performance measurement for a bonus was linked to employment equity.</p> <p>We should start a group that mentors women CEOs because once they get there it is very lonely, they get busy and are exposed to many challenges.</p> <p>Women CEOs, because they are in such a high position, they are scared to ask.</p>
P10	<p>We offer a unique learning and development opportunity for our most talented women at senior level through this mentorship programme.</p> <p>We also offer employee network groups for minorities in all forms and fund them.</p>

	The objective is to ensure that they feel they belong, have a voice and a progressive future in the organisation.
P11	I believe in quotas.
p12	Leadership should insist on getting black people with talent. Quotas will help the glass ceiling at junior management level. Support from husband General support structure
P13	You should make organic sustainable changes, not just cosmetic ones. You have to make sure that the diverse talent pipeline is there and deep. You should deal with the unconscious bias. For us it's investing in young people, our graduate programme, what we do with young people. Making sure that we are taking the organisation through focused and deep worker/talent retention; career development is an important part of talent retention. We have focus groups across the group with senior people, how we communicate, how we deal with performance management. We take it all the way down to grade people, on gender and/or race, per employee category. We encourage mentorship and coaching. We do role playing to highlight bias. Create an environment that allows people to grow and progress within the organisation based on merit. Flatten the structure. Younger women are much more confident and they should be; they need to put up their hand and say I can do it, I need help but I can do it. You need networks, not just women networks, but networks across the world to help get things done.
P14	I then felt I needed a global stage, I asked for a job opportunity overseas, particularly in the US where I wanted to work. Aggressive grooming of women for positions, leadership courses Sponsor women to attend good business development courses. You need both academic development and work opportunity. I once attended female executive meetings in the US, once a month, they gave time to network.

APPENDIX 2: AXIAL CODING:

It's tougher for Black women

They are prejudiced against by both men and women for race and gender

I probably subconsciously expect more from black women
(another black woman making the statement).
However, the issue amongst blacks is more complex and heavy
(black woman's authority undermined by black men).

	<p>I was overlooked for promotion in spite of being praised for good work. I believe management had a 'blind spot' when it came to black women.</p> <p>I was pushed as a black woman; all of us can be there.</p>
Gender and generational issues	<p>I had to deal with gender and generational issues.</p> <p>You get undermined as a woman, especially when you are younger.</p>
Race and gender prejudice from other blacks	<p>There was a sense that I could not do the work in spite of my technical skills.</p> <p>If you are black and female, you have to know your story. It was tougher for black women; they had to have a track record or come from a senior position in their previous company. Gender, women struggle in this business; I don't think guys intend to exclude women but they just don't see that women are not there.</p>
It's tough for women across colour	<p>It's such a male-dominated industry that even women are tuned out, they only see men. Women wear just too many hats to cope; I've seen women opt in and opt out; it's tough choices that have to be made.</p> <p>Guys will expose you intentionally or otherwise.</p>
Perception of black South Africans	<p>I'm disappointed with black South Africans, I feel they are not serious about their lives, not disciplined enough to go for what is difficult,</p> <p>Looking for easy scraps on the BEE</p>
Off ramp to save a marriage	<p>I was struggling to find a balance. The guys in my team had wives to keep the home fires burning.</p>
Balance is a myth	<p>My kids had to spend the whole day at play school.</p> <p>Balance? It was quite tricky. I used to travel overnight, spend a day working and travel back the following night.</p> <p>I don't think a balance can be kept; some things fall apart. I am not as available as a wife as other wives.</p> <p>You can have it all but not at the same time.</p> <p>Family balance is a myth, it doesn't exist. The thing that takes the brunt is your relationship with your husband. I deal badly with that.</p> <p>Part of leaving consulting was because of the travel load, with the kids so small.</p>
Lack of self-confidence	<p>I knew more on the issue than my [male] counterparts, but I didn't have the guts to challenge.</p>
Assimilation into dominant culture	<p>You don't bring the experiences from your other lives, thus compromising transformation in the way of thinking.</p>
Reluctance to seek support/societal gender stereotype	<p>What I still don't understand is why I chose not to share the workload with my partner who held a similar position in government.</p>

Women's nurturing quality is a weakness in business

It's a men's game that women don't understand

Anti-feminist

Women are part of the solution

Denial of race and gender issues

Denial of race and gender issues

You have to look good, professional and know your story, it matters

(looks and class matter more than competence)

Racial and gender prejudice at recruitment

Intragroup prejudice is worse

There are one or two people who meet you and decide they will watch you (your progress)

I decided kids were my problem.

Men seek support, they are good at that, be it a formal coach or informal. As women we keep our issues to ourselves, we don't reach out for help

What I would change ... I wouldn't have been sensitive. I believe if it was a man in my position, he would not have been sensitive. That's their strength.

There were many red flags which I did not read correctly. I still thought I could make the organisation the best that it could be.

Collision with men unarmed does not make sense to me. You lose it all. I hate feminists. I have a view on gender issues in the US; there is a lot of noise and aggression about it, which has not yielded results.

I am a traditionalist, I don't like feminists however they are described; they make things worse for women.

The women themselves, what conversation are we having with them? How committed are they? I am not a black woman, but we don't demand master's from black women and an honours from men. Having said that, all black women I know are highly educated.

No, they were young [a boys club]. I think it was more that maybe I would upset their career path. I don't know. I never challenged it with them (raising her voice).

How you carry yourself, how we talk does matter. First impressions matter.

Being highly professional does matter.

I was very well educated, [three law degrees], I'm articulate, I'm presentable, intelligent.

The journey that I've walked is much shorter than a journey of someone like you.

If you look at women who have made it to the SNP, even the men look more handsome at CEO level than your average guy.

... at a job interview, an old white guy who was very patronising. He would ask you the same question over and over again.

I said, 'listen you cannot keep on asking me the same question over and over again unless you are the one who doesn't understand what an overhead is'.

I left the interview thinking, I want the job just to shake up the attitudes. Three years later I was the old guy's boss.

When you demand work and governance [from other black people], there is an attitude of, 'who do you think you are?'

What I have learnt is that you have to get governance right because it can frustrate the process.

Johan, for instance, when I had issues as chairman of a parastatal, he came to me and advised me on how to tackle it.

Acknowledge them

There's always good men who believe in transformation and are prepared to give you the break you need.
Jacob, a young white CEO, gave us real jobs; he oversaw that we were not affected by racism. He made time for us and respected our opinions.

I started a conversation at a bar with one partner in charge of German clients. He motivated for me to join his team; that changed my life forever.

Someone believing in you builds your confidence

My grandpa's desperation for us to be educated was the main influence. He would magnify our success.
I wasn't raised to fear anyone because of their race or to think people are more capable because of race.
My father never had a son and treated me as his son. He expected more from me than anyone else.
So the confidence I have is from that love (from my family), knowing that there is someone who cares for me.

A guy used to say I'm a bumblebee; it is not supposed to fly and people wonder why it flies. The conclusion is that it flies because no one told it it can't fly.

As women we never think there is a game to be played, we just do the job

In order to appeal to people that make decisions of promotion

Black people have to do more

It's race first, gender is a close second

I think it's a black thing rather than gender thing, though gender is a close second.

If you are black and female you have to know your story.

As black people we try to 'manage' our expectation; the success that I've had is not the norm. They said, for you to get a promotion from associate to principal it takes three to five years. I assumed because I'm black, it will be closer to the five years.

Even the media gave negative reporting against black leadership; people chose to forget the poor leadership prior to black leadership taking over.

But people tend to judge people who are different to them no matter how good they are.

White women not seen as allies

With white women, it's either they would not have children or,

if they do have children they are far away.

I don't see them as role models.

I'm trying to think which white woman could have mentored me?

Women's authority undermined; hostile culture
(hostile environment to women)

Black women being undermined by business

Leadership and a culture of meritocracy as enablers; finding a sponsor

This begs the question, as women do we set the ceiling for ourselves?

Queen BEE syndrome

The reception I got when I pushed the harassment case; the top executives read my note and said 'what a boytjie!' I was completely stunned.

Even the awards are called big-swinging-dick awards!

We would do an analysis of a mining company; when we presented to them, they would ignore everything we said and point us to a rose farm.

I started a conversation at the bar with one partner in charge of German clients' audits. He got head of staff's permission for me to join his team. That changed my life forever. All of a sudden I was managing big clients.

I think it was leadership and a culture of meritocracy; meritocracy didn't favour anything but excellence.

What I still don't understand is why I chose not to share the workload with my partner who held a similar position in government. I decided kids were my problem.

The way I handled being undermined was by becoming aggressive instead of being assertive.

Part of the reasons for queen BEE is **lack of confidence in ourselves** as women.

You protect your space to avoid being 'discovered' and being displaced by other black women.

There is a lot of power and information that we have which we are not using.

I knew more of the issue than my [male] counterparts, but I didn't have the guts to challenge.

Collision with men unarmed does not make sense to me. You lose it all. I hate feminists.

The women themselves; what conversation are we having with them? How committed are they? I think if you are surrounded by men from an early age, it's easy to lose yourself and start 'thinking' like them.

As women we tend not to help each other enough.

I think it was Margaret Thatcher who said there is a place in hell for a woman who does not support another woman.

It is shameful that 80% of the people who've played this [mentorship] role are men, and that tends to be the pattern.

It's such a male-dominated industry that even women are tuned out, they only see men.

Invest in your softer side and technical side

You need to use a combination of persuasion and convincing to get things done.

Our nurturing character as women is a weakness in business, that's my only regret.

Read widely, understand your client's business.

Move out of your comfort zone, take a global assignment.

When you opt out, don't lose contact with people that matter in business.

Learn from mistakes and move on. Be visible.

Be proactive in understanding what is expected of you and how you are performing.

Be absolutely prepared, you are going to work hard.

Steel yourself; it's a tough environment.

Get the best education, do something you're passionate about, work for someone you respect.

Get a mentor who is influential.

Work in line management/ a division that contributes to the bottom line.

Join women forums to network and build self-confidence.

Mentorship

I didn't have formal or informal mentors.

It's a shame that 80% of my mentors were men.

I had a lot of black men as mentors.

I don't see white women as role models; they don't have a balanced life, it's either they don't have children and if they do, they are distant to their kids.

I had a mentor, a white old man, which was confidence building. I do think mentoring has a sell-by date though.

I've never had a woman mentor, black or white.

I'm thinking which white woman could have mentored me.

Mentors? I've got grey-haired men who've helped me see things, people who have helped me.

I think there is a role for mentorship but it has to be taken seriously.

Mentorship should be linked to independent skills development outside the company.

My mentors have all been white males, either Afrikaner or German.

I have had two black men as mentors and one white woman. We should make time to mentor women.

Women as sounding boards

The women that I use as my sounding board are not my mentors, they are my friends;
it's all black females; it's a peer mentoring thing.

Women? Not as mentors but as friends; there are two women in town who are great as sounding boards.

Cultural barriers?

Do you know that when Indian women get married they stop practising as doctors?
It is not uncommon; they are held back by their culture.

Maybe it's happening in African cultures?

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDELINE (USED DURING INTERVIEWS)

Early Life Experiences:

Tell me about where you grew up, what it was like and how it shaped the kind of person you are.

Now thinking about your family of origin/the family you grew up in:

How would you describe your family and your experiences growing up?

Moving on now to your school life:

Starting from primary school to tertiary level, how would you describe your school life?

How did it prepare you for work life?

Work Life Experiences:

Career

How have your career goals and aspirations evolved over the years and why?

In which ways do you feel your current company supports/hinders your career progression?

Your current Role

Tell me about your experience as CEO at

Organisational Support

Tell me about the support you have or have not received from your company.

Personal Impact/Transformation

In which ways have you changed as a person over the course of your working life? What changes do you like and what changes don't you like?

What personal investments have you made to reach your success?

Impact as CEO of

In which ways have you been effective or less effective? Do you think gender or race had any role in this, if so, what role?

Leading Transformation Within

Concerning transformation, and the advancement of women and blacks in particular, how would you describe progress at <name of company>

- To what extent does it embrace and/or promote gender diversity?
- To what extent does it embrace and/or promote racial diversity?

Conclusion

- If you were to start again, and given the benefit of hindsight, what are some of the things, if any, that you would do differently in your career, how so?
 - What about in your role as CEO, knowing what you know now, what are some of the things, if any, that you would do differently if you were to start all over again?
 - What are some of the things that you wish the women who came before you had told you?
 - What lessons have you learnt that you could share with aspiring young women, the dos and don'ts?
-
- Where to from here? What would you still want to achieve, and how close are you to that?
 - What do you think of government policies on gender transformation? Do you think government should do

more or less and why?

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE STUDY: **Lived Experiences of Women Executives in Corporate South Africa: Strategies for Gender transformation in Leadership**

UNIVERSITY: Done for a DBL programme through UNISA SBL

Supervisor: Professor Peliwe Mnguni; Student: Nobuhle Judy Dlamini; Contact Details: 082 990 867 2

Dear Potential Participant,

As part of completing my Doctorate in Business Leadership I am undertaking a research project.

The project examines women's experiences in corporate South Africa with the intention of formulating strategies for gender transformation at leadership level in South Africa. The primary population for the study are women who are currently in executive/CEO positions or women who have left the corporate world to start their own businesses. The aim is to understand how women's experiences have influenced their career progression in corporate South Africa, explore how the intersection of race, gender and socio-economic class impacts on the role experience and career progression. Lastly the study will look at how these experiences might influence strategies for gender transformation in corporate South Africa.

We would like to set up at least one interview session, maybe two, which should take about two hours of your time, at a time and place convenient to you.

Your participation is completely voluntary. An audio tape will be used to capture the interview. Confidentiality will be observed at all times.

Prior to beginning the interview I will ask you to sign this consent form.

1. A follow-up focus group session/one-on-one feedback session will be conducted to get your input on the initial report.
2. I will be providing you with a copy of the final report; however, data will be aggregated such that individuals cannot be identified. In my report I will be quoting, on an anonymous basis, individual comments with your permission.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. If you have any questions in relation to my study, please contact my supervisor at the Midrand Campus of UNISA SBL.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE
