

# Career trajectories of white, Afrikaner women employed in the financial sector of Gauteng

---

by

Sinteché van der Merwe

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MSocSci in Gender Studies

in the Department of Sociology at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: Professor Kammila Naidoo

August 2011



## Declaration

### UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY


**This document must be signed and submitted with every  
essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation and/or thesis.**

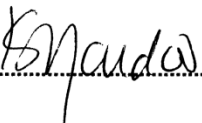
Full names of student: SINTECHE VAN DER MERWE .....

Student number: 25123298 .....

#### Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this DISSERTATION (eg essay, report, project, assignment, dissertation, thesis, etc) is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: 

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: 

## **Abstract**

Using a qualitative, gender-sensitive approach, this particular case study explores the narratives of a group of white, Afrikaans-speaking, women employed in the financial sector of Gauteng. All of the participants were managers on various levels of the management hierarchy at the time of the interviews. I have chosen various feminist approaches to frame my study. These include standpoint feminism, intersectionality and moral feminism. Furthermore, I have incorporated theories around socialisation and the interpretive social science approach. Based on semi-structured interviews this study has aimed to explore women's experiences regarding their political context and their socialisation process and how this affects their career choices and ideals on how to 'balance' work and home life. In terms of career life, this study has attempted to illustrate some of the obstacles that women face when it comes to being promoted, but it has also looked at the positive elements of being a so-called 'career woman'. It has further attempted to show how women exude agency when they attempt to challenge out-dated but present patriarchal norms and values. This study has attempted to show how working women try to manage spending the little free time they have with family and their children and how most of them still have to assume the bulk of the home responsibilities. This particular group's position is fairly ambiguous within contemporary South African society, since they have been known to have enjoyed certain privileges in the past relative to other groups, but they have also suffered and still suffer gender discrimination and gender inequality under patriarchy. Recently some have come to question whether white women should also benefit from Affirmative Action policies. This is not an easy question to answer since it has been widely acknowledged that women experienced discrimination and gender inequality during the apartheid era differently (Kongolo & Bojuwoye 2006: 364). Thus, it is important to understand their accounts of the past, as well as, the future.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, Afrikaans-speaking, South Africa, financial sector, Gauteng, career trajectories, socialisation, intersectionality, work/life balance, apartheid, post-apartheid

## 10 Key terms in layperson's language

Gender:	The masculine or feminine roles that one assumes are not necessarily linked to biological sex; it is part of how a person is socialised in society.
Afrikaans-speaking:	Refers to a person whose mother-tongue is Afrikaans, and who speaks the language on a daily basis.
South Africa:	The country located on the southern tip of the African continent.
Financial sector:	For this particular study the sectors included are banking, corporate law and auditing fields.
Gauteng:	A province in South Africa, which includes Pretoria and Johannesburg. Johannesburg is the financial capital of sub-Saharan Africa.
Career trajectories:	The particular course that one's career follows through one's life.
Socialisation:	The process during which an individual is taught by social agents (such as parents, peers, culture, institutions) what is and is not appropriate behaviour for one's gender in society.
Intersectionality:	A theoretical framework that analyses intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class and nationality that helps to explain gendered choices and experiences.
Work/life balance:	This concept is not used as an approach as such, but rather as a tool to explain how women feel about "balancing" high demands at work, as well as, managing household/domestic responsibilities.
Apartheid era:	A period in South Africa's history where different races had different political and social rights. The white minority was in control of the country and oppressed the black majority. (1948-1994)
Post-apartheid:	The period after apartheid era, characterised by democracy, equality and rights for all. (1994-present)

## Opsomming

Hierdie studie volg 'n kwalitatiewe, gender-sensitiewe benadering wat die narratiewe ondersoek van 'n geselekteerde groep wit, Afrikaans-sprekende vrouens wat tans aangestel is in die finansiële sektor van Gauteng. Al die deelnemers was aangestel as bestuurders op verskeie vlakke van die bestuurshiërgie. Ek het verskeie feministiese benaderings gebruik om my studie te raam, naamlik, standpunt feminisme, interseksionaliteit en morele feminisme. Verder het ek ook teorieë rondom sosialisering en die interpretatiewe sosiale wetenskap benadering, gebruik. Hierdie studie is gebaseer op semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude wat poog om vrouens se ervarings rondom hulle politieke konteks en hul sosialisingsproses te ondersoek. Dit poog verder om te sien hoe die bogenoemde aspekte die deelnemers se keuses rondom loopbane en ideale beïnvloed, veral ten opsigte van hoe hulle hul werk en huislewe 'balanseer'. Met betrekking tot loopbane, kyk hierdie studie na die potensiële struikelblokke wat kan voorkom in terme van verhogings en ander moontlikhede, maar ek ondersoek ook die positiewe elemente wat voorkom as mens 'n loopbaan-gedrewe vrou is. Verder word daar gekyk na hoe vroue hul agentskap bewys wanneer hulle poog om argaïese, patriargale norme en waardes uit te daag in die werksomgewing asook die huishouding. Hierdie studie bestudeer hoe werkende vroue probeer om die beperkte tyd wat hulle het, te spandeer met hulle gesinne en kinders maar ook hoe hulle nog steeds die meerderheid van die huishoudelike take moet verrig. Hierdie spesifieke groep se posisie is dubbelsinnig in die kontemporêre Suid Afrikaanse konteks, want in die verlede het hulle sekere voordele bo ander groepe geniet, maar hulle het ook onderdrukking ondervind, en hulle ondervind dit steeds ten opsigte van patriargie. Onlangs was daar bevraagteken of wit vroue ook voordeel moet trek uit regstellende aksie wetgewing. Dit is nie 'n maklike vraag om te beantwoord nie, maar dit is alombekend dat die meerderheid Suid Afrikaanse, vrouens diskriminasie en gender ongelykheid ervaar het tydens die apartheid era, al was hierdie ervarings verskillend (Kongolo & Bojuwoye 2006: 364). Dus, is dit belangrik om die perspektiewe oor die verlede en die toekoms in ag te neem wanneer daar gepoog word om huidige besluite te verstaan.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the following people for helping and challenging me throughout this research project:

Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof Kammila Naidoo, for her constructive guidance and supportive attitude.

I would also like to thank the members of staff at the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria for educating me in the fascinating discipline that is Sociology.

Thank you to the fourteen participants who were willing to share their stories with me in such a forthcoming and open manner.

Special thanks to Donovan du Plooy for motivating me through long weeks of doing research and unending support in all my academic endeavours. My parents, for their support and motivation throughout my life. I would also like to thank my brother for encouraging me to persevere and to take a break sometimes.

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	2
Abstract.....	3
Opsomming.....	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
Table of Contents.....	7
Table of figures .....	10
List of tables.....	10
I. Preface .....	11
a. Research Questions and Objectives .....	11
b. Study Rationale and Context.....	12
c. Outline of dissertation.....	13
Chapter 1: Literature Review.....	15
1.1. Introduction.....	15
1.2. Gender inequalities and transitions in South Africa .....	16
1.3. Historical episodes that have shaped white Afrikaans-speaking women’s identities ..	22
1.3.1. Entering the labour market: The notion of difference that has shaped white Afrikaans-speaking women’s identities from the 1900s to 1930s.....	22
1.4. South African women in wage labour during the apartheid era (specifically 1960-1980) .....	25
1.5. Women entering the corporate sector: post-apartheid .....	32
1.6. Conclusion .....	35
Chapter 2: Epistemology and Methodology.....	37
2.1. Epistemological Issues .....	37
2.1.1. Understanding gender and the importance of (re)socialisation .....	37
2.1.2. Feminist epistemology.....	40



2.1.2.1. Standpoint feminism .....	41
2.1.3. Interpretive social science .....	43
2.1.4. Intersectional theory and women’s career trajectories.....	45
2.2. Methodology .....	47
Introduction.....	47
2.2.1. Research design .....	47
A Gender-sensitive qualitative approach.....	47
2.2.2. Design .....	48
2.2.3. Snowball sample representation.....	50
2.2.4. Participants.....	50
2.2.5. Situating the subject.....	52
<i>Character description:</i> .....	52
2.2.6. Interviews and Setting .....	59
2.2.7. Data analysis .....	60
2.2.8. Problems encountered during the research process.....	61
2.2.9. The researcher’s reflections .....	62
2.3. Conclusion .....	62
Chapter 3: Gender and Socialisation.....	65
3.1. Introduction .....	65
3.2. Background .....	65
3.3. Political atmosphere in the formative years.....	75
3.4. Conclusion .....	82
Chapter 4: Gender and Workplace dynamics .....	84
4.1. Introduction .....	84
4.2. Women in the financial/corporate industries .....	85
4.3. Obstacles that women face in the financial/corporate industries: The changing structure of previously male-dominated industries.....	87
4.4. Opportunities and long term goals for the participants in the financial/corporate industries .....	98
4.5. Conclusion .....	100



Chapter 5: Gender and negotiating the present and future.....	102
5.1. Introduction.....	102
5.2. Work/life balance .....	103
5.3. There is no such thing as an ‘eight- to-four’ job in the financial sector .....	107
5.4. The issue of spending ‘quality’ time with children and loved ones .....	111
5.5. The choices around having children, nannies and feelings of guilt .....	112
5.6. Conclusion .....	116
 Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	 118
6.1. Answering the initial research questions .....	118
6.2. Theoretical significance of the findings .....	121
6.3. Adding to the debate.....	124
6.4. Future research recommendations.....	124
 Bibliography .....	 126
Appendix A .....	135
Appendix B .....	137
Appendix C.....	140
List of quotes in the order that they occur in the dissertation .....	140

## Table of figures

Figure 1: Selection of participants: the snowball sample.....	50
---	----

## List of tables

Table 1: Percentage of females in the South African labour force .....	26
Table 2: Percentage of economically active women in each racial group: 1960, 1970, 1980 .....	26
Table 3: Percentage distribution of economically active women by race.....	27
Table 4: Women as a percentage of the labour force in each industrial sector .....	27
Table 5: Occupational distribution: Percentage share of women .....	28
Table6: Occupational distribution by race: Percentage female in each occupational category- 1980 .....	29
Table 7: Occupational Distribution by sex: Some high level categories- 1983 .....	30
Table 8: Annual median salaries of graduates in certain occupations- 1979 (Rand)	31
Table 9: Participant personal information .....	56
Table 10: Participant age categories .....	57
Table 11: Participant marital status .....	57
Table 12: Participant child status .....	57
Table 13: Participant position status .....	58
Table 14: Sectors occupied by participants.....	58
Table 15: Management levels occupied .....	59
Table 16: Level of education .....	59

## I. Preface

### a. Research Questions and Objectives

It is commonly conceded that a woman's life choices and chances are shaped and structured by her 'context' which often entails multiple dimensions and contradictions (McCall 2005:1772). This context might reflect the dynamics of political transition, societal inequities and gender inequality. My particular focus in this study is the socio-political context and how it has determined and moulded the women's identities and influenced their career trajectories. The problem that I set out to probe is that of how white Afrikaans-speaking women have experienced the post-apartheid transition to democracy and the extent to which this democracy has enabled or inhibited their inclusion in the workplace. I am concerned about their integration into the financial sector at middle or upper-management levels. In this respect Bartol, Martin and Kromkowski (2003:8) note that surprisingly few international studies have focused on gender and leadership behaviour at the middle and upper levels of management. In the South African context this remains a highly under-researched area. This study aims to make a contribution to building literature in this field. I seek to:

- 1) Examine women's career trajectories to establish the ways in which white Afrikaans-speaking women have been affected by the changing politics in the country and workplace.
- 2) Establish whether women consider themselves treated differently (i.e. discriminated positively or negatively) on the basis of race, gender or both.
- 3) Describe the techniques and strategies that women might employ in order to balance home and work life.

Less than 20% of South Africa's executive management is female (BWA, 2010: 21). This highlights a dismal reality in that female representation in management actually decreased since 2008 when females represented 25.3% of executive management in South Africa (BWA, 2010: 10). No matter how one looks at the situation it is apparent that women of all races are grossly underrepresented in the higher echelons of companies' management hierarchies. This study will attempt to illustrate

some of the obstacles that women face when attempting to climb the male-dominated corporate ladder.

### **b. Study Rationale and Context**

This study was conducted in the Gauteng province of South Africa and the participants were chosen because they either lived or worked in Pretoria or Johannesburg. Johannesburg is the financial capital of sub-Saharan Africa thus it seemed an appropriate place to conduct interviews relating to the financial sector. The participants fell in a particular age group (30-65 years of age), are of the same race (white), share the same language (Afrikaans) and fit into the same socio-economic bracket (middle-class). Participants were chosen if they were currently working in the banking, corporate law and auditing fields, that is, what I categorise as the 'financial' sector for the purposes of this study. During the course of this qualitative study I will attempt to identify the life choices, chances and challenges that individual women have faced in their career histories.

First, I sought to explore how women reached their current position in their career trajectories by looking at how they were socialised and the impact of the political atmosphere while growing up. Second, I was also interested to examine obstacles they may have faced in terms of overt and covert discrimination, as well as the impact of 'old boys' networks, amongst others. Last, I wanted to consider how they were able to 'balance' intersecting roles of mother, co-worker, manager, student, wife, grandmother, sister, community member, and more.

I chose this particular age group because I felt that they would best represent the past and the future of Afrikaans-speaking women in the financial sector. Older women could provide insight into women's circumstances during the apartheid era, while younger women could offer information in terms of current workplace dynamics.

I chose white participants for this particular study because they were easily accessible and I had access to a large number of informants from this particular race group. According to Steyn & Foster (2008: 25) there are many stances available to white South Africans in the new democratic dispensation and they range from deeply reactionary to anti-racist and transformative. " In this new context the central

question for whiteness, as the orientation which takes privilege as normal and appropriate can be put simply: how to maintain its advantages in a situation in which black people have legally and legitimately achieved power” (Steyn & Foster 2000:26).

It also seemed like an interesting group (white, Afrikaans-speaking women) to study because their position in present-day South Africa is fairly ambiguous; during the apartheid era they were subordinate to white males, while in the democratic South Africa they are viewed as previously privileged. I intend to conduct a follow-up study focusing on a different race group, and further a large-scale comparative study.

### **c. Outline of dissertation**

Chapter 1 provides a review of the literature that was used to frame and position my study. This chapter is devoted to contextualising the study. First, I will discuss how gender inequalities have been framed in South Africa, especially in terms of the transition to a democratic government. Second, I will set out some of the historical episodes that have shaped white, Afrikaans-speaking women’s identities in order to situate my participants within a historical context. Last, I will discuss the current state of the corporate/financial sector and how it affects the women working within it.

In the second chapter I will discuss my epistemological position and the methodological framework that was used to carry out this particular study. My epistemological position is overwhelmingly feminist. The methodological framework is used to explain how the data was collected and analysed from the sample of fourteen (14) participants that were chosen using the snowball technique.

The findings and analysis of this particular study are documented in Chapters 3 to 5. Chapter 3 explores how participants’ socialisation and political context have affected them in terms of their decisions to further their education and to pursue certain career choices. Chapter 4 discusses how women who work in the corporate sector operate not only within structures of exclusion and discrimination, but also opportunity. Chapter 5 addresses the concept of the work/life balance that so many working mothers attempt to achieve. It focuses on the high demands on working women’s time and how it is often difficult for them to make time for family or children. This chapter further investigates how women feel about these different demands on

their time.

The final chapter addresses the initial questions posed by the study. In the first section of this chapter I will explore whether this group of women really feel that they have benefited from the policies and legislation geared towards women in democratic South Africa. This section further explores whether race is still a powerful element in terms of differential treatment (whether it is used in a negative or positive manner). The discussion then turns toward ways that women attempt to find some kind of 'balance' between intersecting work and home lives.

In the second section of this chapter I will look at how the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2 have been operationalised in the study. In the final two sections of this chapter I will discuss how this specific study has aimed to add to the debate on gender inequality, and make recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

### 1.1. Introduction

The discussion of the literature that follows is divided into three sections. The *first section* will briefly look at the position of South African women during the apartheid era, and the changes that have occurred since the first democratic elections in 1994. The *second section* will focus on some of the differences within the South African white community, and how these differences have helped to shape the identities of Afrikaans-speaking women. This discussion is situated within a larger discourse of change that has occurred in South Africa over the last twenty years. Upon the completion of the dissertation I hope to illustrate how this specific group's (white, Afrikaans-speaking women) position has changed from under-educated factory workers in the 1920s and 1930s to position-holders in the powerful financial sector. This section includes a discussion on women's involvement in wage labour during the apartheid era, as well as the contemporary situation in the workplace by looking at local and international literature. What should be emphasised in terms of the literature on this topic is that even though much of the research has come from European and American contexts there are important parallels that one could draw with South Africa. Here one could refer to the focus on equal opportunities for women and the similar statistics regarding the most important positions in corporations (such as the chairperson, chief executive, vice chairperson, and president) (Zwiegenhaft & Domhoff, 2007:202; BWA, 2008:19). Furthermore, some of the obstacles and challenges that these women might face as they attempt to progress in their careers, will be discussed.

Even though there is a singular focus in this study (white and Afrikaans-speaking women), my interests are largely in favour of attaining equality for all women in all spheres of South African society. The literature reveals, however, that the system of apartheid has created overt and covert divides between the women of South Africa, and that more work needs to be conducted to highlight their different experiences in the past and present.

## 1.2. Gender inequalities and transitions in South Africa

*“People make their own history (runs the celebrated phrase), but not in a circumstance of their own choice; they act in an arena shaped by the past. Accordingly, to understand the present conjuncture in South Africa it is essential to have a sense of history, to reflect on constraints and the possibilities created by that history”* (Bundy, in Terblanche 2002:3)

South Africa became notorious in the international context due to the system of apartheid and the strict system of segregation that was established when the National Party won the elections in 1948 (James & Lever 2001:30; Terblanche 2002:15). According to Johnstone (1970:136), the power and prosperity of the South African whites was essentially based on the systematic exploitation of African labour. This systemic exploitation led to a differentiated and discriminatory labour structure that will be difficult to fully eradicate, because it defined cleavages in the South African society (Terblanche 2002:15). Within the workplace, this history has created an interesting myriad of dynamics that will be explored in the interviews with the participants.

Another area that has been characterised by a past of racial divisions and gender inequality is the South African education system. This system can also be seen as a contributing factor to workplace politics. According to Unterhalter (1999:49-64), the academic survival of girls in school and progress to higher education has not necessarily correlated with advantages in the labour market or higher earnings. However, women, regardless of racial classification, who have pursued higher education, fare better in terms of financial earnings in comparison to their less educated counterparts. It should be noted that men and women with the same level of qualifications do not necessarily earn similar income or occupy jobs of similar status (Budlender & Erwee, in Unterhalter 1999:51; Welle & Heilman 2005:28).

Gender inequalities have affected women from all ethnic groups with obvious variations in experiences with respect to socio-economic status and involvement in the political struggle (Unterhalter 1999:49; Seidman 1999:291). Many South African women were at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid, they campaigned forcefully against pass laws, Bantu education, poor working conditions, child labour



and a wide array of other inequalities of the past (Meintjes 1996:49). However, women's leadership and involvement in struggles did not automatically challenge the gender hierarchy that remains embedded in the country today (Walker 1995:421). This could be a result of the fact that when women were mentioned by anti-apartheid activists they were described as mothers and wives (Seidman 1999:292) thus perpetuating patriarchy.

During the long struggle for democracy, political activists focused more on race than gender and it was feared that in the post-apartheid context women's interests would remain side-lined, as in other transitional situations (Hassim 2004:7; Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:127; Meintjes 1996:48; Seidman 1999:296). While struggles against racism dominate the discourse, equal attention has not been paid to the gender inequities that were created through institutions like the family, the church and the school. Nonetheless, one has to admit that apartheid was a racial system, as such it makes sense that discussions would emphasise racial dynamics during the time leading up to democratisation (Seidman 1999: 288).

In the larger society, notwithstanding gender empowerment initiatives, women continue to be treated as second-class citizens and political outsiders. Their entry into the public and corporate spheres is both antiquated or short term and conditional upon their maternal social roles (Hassim 2004:4). Since 1994, women's movements and campaigns have focused on the nature and extent of gender discrimination in South Africa and feminists have played an important part in creating gendered citizenship (Seidman 1999: 288). Gender discrimination in general and in terms of customary law was outlawed by the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). Feminist lawyers, grassroots community organisations, women's forums and activists have all been crucial in terms of expanding the concept of human rights, protected by the Bill of Rights (Hassim 2004:6).

Gender discrimination affects all women in South Africa, regardless of class or level of education; violations of economic and social rights still occur. This means that there is still a lot of work to be done towards ensuring equality for all. The post-apartheid South African Constitution is founded on principles of "non-racialism and non-sexism", and the Bill of Rights guarantees freedom from discrimination on the

grounds of sex and gender.

The Constitution has created a Commission for Gender equality to promote equality between the sexes, to protect, develop and attain gender equality. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution reads as follows following under the heading Equality:

*“Equality includes full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, and marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed above is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair”* (Republic of South Africa 1996:9).

At present, discriminatory practices against women, especially in the corporate community are still prevalent in South African society (BWA 2008:19; BWA 2010:22). Women’s advancement still trails behind and it would appear that gender equality has descended to a lower priority status in terms of Affirmative Action policies. Issues around discrimination and affirmative action are highly charged with emotion in the job market. This phenomenon is not unique to South Africa; the same has been argued to happen in the United States (Baron *et al.* 2006:214). Tokenism can develop as a negative effect. Companies are under pressure to meet Employment Equity requirements and emotionally-charged situations emerge when they only have a small group to choose from (April *et al.* 2007:58). This means that people might infer that the relative absence of women in high levels of employment is as a result of their own personal lack of knowledge or expertise.

The presence of token or appointed high-status women might obscure the structural nature of the disadvantages that women actually face in South Africa. Furthermore, it seems that the legislation that was designed to empower women is actually making them pay a heavy price (April *et al.* 2007:58): the phenomenon has created a stigma that clings to previously disadvantaged groups, especially women. According to

Baron, Byrne and Branscombe (2006:216), tokenism is a highly effective strategy to deter collective protest by disadvantaged groups. Fellow workers might be led to believe that the only reason that a woman has been hired is because the company is afraid of accusations of discrimination, and this unfairly brings her capabilities into doubt. One has to keep in mind that affirmative action measures in South Africa do contain an element of reverse discrimination to ensure representation and furthering gender equality; however, if these measures are left unchecked it could undermine the concept of equality (Wilken, in Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:125). In the case of the Employment Equity legislation, April, Dreyer and Blass (2007:52) note that these practices run the risk that companies will only focus on meeting requirements rather than seeing the employment of women as a competitive advantage.

In the past, women in South Africa were discriminated against in most places of formal employment. There was no legislation that specifically dictated gender exclusion, but women's employment was tightly bound by the conservative ideas that existed about women's place in society. During the apartheid era women's patterns of employment usually mirrored their role in the family. This was largely due to the fact that patriarchy was very much a part of the National Party's ideology (Cloete 1992:45). In line with this argument, Littlewood (2004:80) emphasises that patriarchy has its roots in the household, but is maintained by both the social roles within, and political institutions beyond that context.

White women were excluded and discouraged from assuming leadership positions in business and their black counterparts occupied largely menial positions as cleaners and tea-ladies in office buildings. In the domestic sphere, black domestic workers subsidised the lifestyles of white women, in conditions that were at times exploitative (Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:128). Women's concerns were said to belong to the 'private' sphere, while men could concern themselves with the public domain (Meintjes 1996:51). An example of these constraints is that women's aspirations and opportunities were limited by the policies of banks that would not let married women take out loans or open accounts without the permission of their husbands (Msimang, in Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:128). Patriarchal dominance in South Africa engendered suffering for all women, but the system of apartheid made the weight of that suffering worse for black women, while elevating the status of white women. There was a

definite difference in experiences between white and black women regarding their lives in the apartheid era (Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:127; Martineau 1997:386).

South Africa's progress in terms of equality in the workplace has been stunted by the work environment that was inherited from the apartheid era. This environment was based on an economic system that was characterised by massive income and wealth disparities, adversarial labour relations, cheap migrant labour and political instability. The current African National Congress (ANC) government has focused its attention on policies of Affirmative Action that could serve as a political tool to even out the social and economic disparities of the past (Department of Public service and Administration 1998:20). These policies are aimed at redressing racial and gender imbalances in the workplace and education, among others. An even more controversial state tool to redress past inequalities has been the Employment Equity Act; this act has targeted 'designated' groups (black people, women and the handicapped) (Department of Labour 1997:6).

The discourse around Affirmative Action in South Africa has been met with mixed reaction. On the one hand, there has been negativity (Durrheim, Boettiger, Essack, Maarschalk & Ranchod 2007: 112), and on the other hand, the policies associated with Affirmative Action provide new opportunities to those that have been disadvantaged in the past and give individuals a sense of hope that social transformation is taking place.

It has been over 10 years since Affirmative Action legislation took effect and so it is important to review how this legislation has affected the lives of South Africans and, more specifically, the lives of women.

In essence Affirmative Action has been implemented to attempt to redress issues that originated from the systematic discrimination against black people, women and those with disabilities during the apartheid era (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011:1095; Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:123). More specifically, it aims to counter legislation from the apartheid era, this includes among others, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 that intended to 'equip' black people with certain skills to serve their own people in the homelands or to work under white employers, as well as the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 that is said to have paved the way for segregation in the industrial

relationship by emphasising race and class (Vettori, in Jordaan & Ukpere 2011:1095).

When one examines the literature on the reception of this legislation by South Africans, it becomes clear that there is ambiguity around who does and does not 'deserve' to receive advantages from this legislation. One of the main aims of Affirmative Action is to specifically improve the lives and opportunities for women in South Africa (Burger & Jafta 2010:5; Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:123). Recently some individuals have questioned whether white women should also benefit from Affirmative Action. This is not an easy question to answer because it has been widely acknowledged that women experienced discrimination and gender inequality during the apartheid era differently (Kongolo & Bojuwoye, 2006: 364) (Kongolo & Bojuwoye, 2006, p. 364). Women suffered under apartheid differently according to their race, class, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity (Kongolo & Bojuwoye 2006:366; Naidoo & Kongolo 2004:127; Matsepe-Casaburri 1986:41).

It has to be acknowledged that white women were treated unequally during the apartheid era. However, when compared to the experience of discrimination on both a racial and gender level of their black counterparts, it is logical and acceptable that Affirmative Action should benefit black women more, but it should not ignore white women entirely.

This paper does not attempt to position itself in terms of who the beneficiaries of Affirmative Action should or should not be, it merely aims to highlight that there is a discourse around the issue in South Africa and that white women, the particular group of interest to this study, are a part of that discourse.

In terms of the future, Franks, Schurink and Fourie (2006:17) note that women in South Africa will face a steady increase in employment of 3.2% in comparison with males who will face a growth rate of 2.4% [in years preceding] 2011. Contemporary research suggests that young women are becoming more career oriented and that they are increasingly driven by high educational ideals and extrinsic aspirations. However, Franks, Schurink and Fourie (2006:17) and Vere (2007:821) make it clear that young women still place a lot of value on traditional and nurturing roles, and this can lead to internal conflict when career aspirations are posed against motherhood

in contemporary South African society. Tensions are further increased when different life roles come into conflict with each other. These life roles refer to the fact that women can occupy different roles simultaneously, for example, she can be a mother, a sister, friend, colleague, or a community member. Research conducted by Nelson and Burke (Franks *et al.* 2006:18) suggest that women are prone to experience 'role overload' that is brought on by multiple conflicting expectations from others.

### **1.3. Historical episodes that have shaped white Afrikaans-speaking women's identities**

#### **1.3.1. Entering the labour market: The notion of difference that has shaped white Afrikaans-speaking women's identities from the 1900s to 1930s**

The notion of difference within the South African white community might seem obvious, but it is essential to look at the history behind it and how it has specifically shaped the Afrikaans speaker's identity. One of the dividing instances, for example, was the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) that was mainly waged to ensure independence from Britain and British colonisation. Negative perceptions and suspicion of the British increased when the British army introduced concentration camps for Boer women and children as a strategy to cut off supplies to the fighting Boer men and to lower morale, although it eventually had the opposite effect. Since, the Boer fighters only became more motivated to hold out (Reitz 2006 [1929]: 84-85).

In the years following these historical events the white, Afrikaans-speaking community carefully cultivated a unique identity. According to Cloete (1992:45), there were several master symbols through which the white, Afrikaans community could invent themselves as a homogenous group. These symbols emerged repeatedly in school textbooks along with the idea of a God-given destiny and figures from the past that were mythologized. These master symbols included the following: legal authority is not questioned; whites are superior, blacks inferior; South Africa belongs to the Afrikaans-speaking; the Afrikaans-speaking has a special relationship with God; South Africa is an agricultural country and the Afrikaner *volk* (nation) are farmers (*Boerevolk*), the Afrikaner is threatened; the Afrikaner has a God-given task in Africa (Cloete 1992:45). These master symbols support the idea of an identity

based on a common culture, tradition and a common language spoken by all Afrikaners. Other differences of note include the discrepancy in education and socio-economic class, which will be discussed later in this section.

First, I will discuss a difference between women within the Afrikaans-speaking community, where the focus for women was on fulfilling the role of the ideological figure of the 'volksmoeder' during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Vincent (2000:61) suggests that the differences in orientation towards the ideal image of 'volksmoeder' depended largely on the socio-economic status during the abovementioned timeframe.

The middle-class group was more likely to align themselves with the symbolic female ideal of "volksmoeder" that was created by the Afrikaner Nationalist male elite. In Landman's (1994:60) account of *The Piety of Afrikaans women* she critically examines some of the characteristics of Boer women as 'volksmoeders' as illustrated by Willem Postma (1918) and Eric Stockenström (1921). These accounts capitalised on the virtues of the Boer women of the Great Trek in order to form an ideological campaign against women's suffrage that coincided with the inauguration of the Women's National monument. These virtues included that: women are illiterate, and therefore natural and simple; women are moral and they must guide their children; women are fearless because of their faith in God; women do not want to vote and they save men through God's guidance (Landman 1994: 60-64).

Many white, middle-class Afrikaans-speaking women strove to fulfil these virtues through for, example, charity activities that extended beyond familial connections. These women were especially worried about the plight of the urban white poor during the 1920s and 1930s. They established organisations like the Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging (ACVV), under the leadership of Miems Rothman, and they were mainly concerned about white poverty, racial mixing and the rights of women as mother of a family (Giliomee 2003:343; Cloete 1992:52).

Many white, Afrikaans-speaking working-class women chose to align themselves with the militant, class-conscious activities of trade unions. They specifically

identified with the Garment Workers Union (GWU)<sup>1</sup> in order to claim their entitlement to the 'volksmoeder' heritage by sending money to help sustain their families in rural farm areas. This ideological figure was only partially fulfilled, because during the 1920s and early 1930s the white Afrikaans-speaking garment workers were considered disreputable for defying traditional Afrikaner notions of womanhood through their labour militancy (Brink in Kenny 2008:377). The membership of the GWU was initially dominated by white, Afrikaans-speaking female factory workers, but the higher paid and qualified male tailors had more input in union matters (Vincent 2000:63). However, by 1926, white, Afrikaans-speaking women from various sectors had joined this particular union as the needs for representation of worker's rights grew. According to census results, about 15% of white women (approximately 88,000) had joined the labour market by 1926. Many of the members of the GWU came out of the following sectors: teachers (14,000), state and city workers (not including professional positions), nurses and masseuses (1,900), members of the textile and clothing industries (6,700), religious workers (660), clerks and typists (15,800), personal service in clubs and hotels (14,00), retail (7,700), and agricultural activities (4,200) (Van der Lingen 1926:35). By 1938 membership of the GWU had increased to almost 7,000 women and working conditions and wages had greatly improved for women. Thus, the GWU fulfilled a very important role in the lives of the women who belonged to it.

The general pattern of women's entry into the labour market during that period (1920-1930) was marked by poor, single, white, Afrikaans-speaking women who entered the urban industries to support their families (Kenny 2008:367). This development was in line with the rapid urbanisation of the white, Afrikaans-speaking community from 29% in 1910, 50% in 1936 and 75% by 1960 (Giliomee 2003:405).

It has been argued by Giliomee (2003:406) that it was difficult for white, Afrikaans-speaking individuals to find a place for themselves in the city as the non-agricultural sector was mainly dominated by people of British or Jewish descent. In addition, the entrepreneurial activities of the white, Afrikaans-speaking community were very

---

<sup>1</sup> The GWU, originally known as the Witwatersrand Tailor's Association, was founded in 1913. In July 1929 the union's name was changed to the GWU under the leadership of Solly Sachs.



modest. To put them at a further disadvantage, the educational standards of this community were still very low by 1933 in comparison to their Jewish and English counterparts. By 1933 white, Afrikaans-speaking individuals occupied mainly blue-collar jobs (such as mine worker, bricklayer, railway worker, unskilled labourer) with only 9% represented in white-collar occupations that are associated with the professional category (owners of companies, directors and self-employed manufacturers) (Mariotti 2009:4).

By 1935 there were considerable gaps between the Afrikaans and English worker. The English worker was not only better educated but there was also a considerable wage disparity between the two groups that either limited or increased access to a wider variety of career options. In some cases there was also a considerable difference in social status, for example, English-speaking women working in the retail sector would refer to the poorer female Afrikaner factory workers as “factory meide” (Kenny 2008:377). These differences would ultimately determine the direction of the politics in South Africa for the rest of the twentieth century.

#### **1.4. South African women in wage labour during the apartheid era (specifically 1960-1980)**

As mentioned before, women’s experiences of subordination and discrimination are as diverse as women themselves. For the purposes of this section, the discussion will explore what types of wage labour white women engaged in from 1960-1980. It has to be acknowledge that there is a paucity of statistical evidence from that era and also that some of the statistical data should be viewed critically (Pillay 1985: 22).

Matsepe-Casabburri (1986:46) points out that many families often rely on young women to enter wage labour as part of their survival strategies. Historically, poor young women from English backgrounds often arrived in South Africa as domestic servants (Gaitskell, in Matsepe-Casaburri 1986:46). This is also true for white, Afrikaans-speaking women, many of whom became impoverished after World War I and so a rapid exodus to the cities commenced (Vincent 2000:61; Kenny 2008:367).

The image of the white woman in South Africa was largely guided by ideologies that were promoted in schools, the media and the church. The image focused mainly on conservative ideas about women’s place in society. Pillay (1985: 32) and Kongolo

and Bojuwoye (2006:365)note that women’s career choices in South Africa have often mirrored their position in society.

**Table 1: Percentage of females in the South African labour force**

YEAR	PERCENTAGE
1951	19.8
1960	23.1
1970	32.3
1980	32.9

*Sources:* Calculated from S.A. Statistics, 1968, 1980, 1982. Development Bank of Southern Africa, 1980 Census Reports on Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda.

**Table 2: Percentage of economically active women in each racial group: 1960, 1970, 1980**

YEAR	AFRICAN	WHITE	COLOURED	ASIAN
1960	21.6	25.7	32.1	9.2
1970	31.4	29.7	35.2	19.0
1980	32.4	33.1	38.3	25.7

*Sources:* As for Table 1.

Table 1 illustrates the percentage of women in the work force for 1951, 1960, 1970 and 1980. The figures refer to women who are between the ages of 15 and 59 and who are economically active and they are pursuing an occupation, these figures include those who are underemployed and unemployed. One can clearly see that there has been an increase in the percentage of participation by women in the economy from 1951 to 1980 (Table 1). Table 2 shows the percentage of economically active women in each race group from 1960 to 1980. The figures show that in 1960 ‘Coloured’ women were most economically active and ‘Asian’ females were least active (Table 2). ‘African’ women constituted the largest component of women in the labour market from 1960-1980 (Table 3).

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of economically active women by race**

YEAR	AFRICAN	WHITE	COLOURED	ASIAN	TOTAL
1960	63.3	22.3	13.5	0.9	100.00
1970	64.5	21.2	12.1	2.2	100.00
1980	65.5	20.7	11.6	2.2	100.00

*Sources:* As for Table 1.

**Table 4: Women as a percentage of the labour force in each industrial sector**

SECTOR	1960	1970	1980
Agriculture	12.0	35.8	24.1
Mining	0.7	1.0	1.9
Manufacturing	15.0	21.0	24.5
Electricity, Gas & Water	2.2	3.7	7.5
Construction	0.9	2.4	4.4
Commerce	23.6	27.6	38.6
Transport & Communication	8.1	9.2	11.5
Finance	31.9	39.3	44.1
Services	60.5	63.4	56.8

*Sources:* Population Census Report 02-80-03; Development Bank of Southern Africa 1980 Census Reports.

Table 4 illustrates the number of women as a percentage of the labour force in each industrial sector for the period 1960-1980. The sectors that employed the least number of women included the following: Mining; Transport; Electricity, Gas and Water; and Construction. The increase in percentages for these sectors was mainly due to an influx of white women that were employed in clerical and administrative categories (Pillay 1985: 25). The sectors that employed the most amount of women

included the following: Commerce; and Finance and Services. It is important to note that even though a number of women were employed in the financial sector, this was usually on a clerk level. Women were also mostly hired as Service workers from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Table 5 shows that from 1960 to 1980 less than 10% of Administrative, Managerial and Executive workers were female. The majority of management positions were filled by men. This shows the patriarchal nature of the labour system during the apartheid era.

**Table 5: Occupational distribution: Percentage share of women**

OCCUPATION	1960	1970	1980
Professional, Technical & Related workers	41.8	42.7	44.9
Administrative, Managerial & Executive Workers	8.6	6.0	8.5
Clerical Workers	47.5	46.9	51.1
Sales workers	27.1	30.3	40.4
Agricultural & Fishery Workers	11.7	35.1	22.7
Production Workers	10.2	7.5	10.3
Service Workers	68.1	68.5	64.1

Sources: As for Table 4.

**Table 6: Occupational distribution by race: Percentage female in each occupational category- 1980**

OCCUPATION	AFRICAN	WHITE	COLOURED	ASIAN
Professional & Technical	57	37	57	35
Administrative, Executive & Managerial	9	10	15	7
Clerical	22	68	45	27
Sales	48	34	48	20
Service	68	23	75	29
Agricultural & Fisheries	24	5	20	8
Production	9	4	24	25

*Sources:* As for Table 4.

Table 6 illustrates that white women were mostly employed in the Clerical category. Professional and Technical, and Service work are second and third in terms of categories occupied by white women. Only 10% of white women were employed in a Administrative, Executive & Managerial capacity. What is also of interest is that white women were seldom employed in Production and Agricultural & Fisheries sectors; it appears that they worked mostly as ‘white collar’ workers during the apartheid era.

**Table 7: Occupational Distribution by sex: Some high level categories- 1983**

OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE				
		TOTAL (women)	W	C	AS	AF
		%				
Engineers	17595	11 8(0.7)	118	0	0	0
Chemists	1738	318 (15.5)	295	16	4	3
Architects	1919	6(3.2)	64	0	0	0
Quantity Surveyors	3521	78 (2.2)	78	0	0	0
Technicians	63769	4490(6.6)	4136	222	64	68
Dentists	1967	55 (2.7)	52	2	1	0
Doctors	15270	1545(9.2)	1424	16	66	39
Pharmacists	3778	1266(25.1)	1216	26	7	17
Teachers	67217	126591(65.3)	44390	18157	4465	59279

Sources: Manpower Survey, No 15, 1983.

W- White, C- Coloured, AS- Asian, AF- African.

Excludes Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

Table 7 shows women's representation in terms of occupational distribution by sex in some high level categories. White women represented 0.7% of Engineers, 2.2% of Quantity Surveyors, 2.6% of Dentists, 3.2% of Architects, 6.5% of Technicians and 8.5% of Doctors. The occupation that seems to have attracted white women the most was Teaching, with white women representing 35% of all teachers. Teaching was the only occupational category where women were dominant during 1983. The second most popular professional occupation for white women was pharmacy; they represented 24.1% of all Pharmacists during 1983. The least popular professional occupation for women was engineering. This could be as a result of the perceived masculine nature of that career during the time. It is clear that there was discrimination on both a gender and race level. Racial discrimination is probably due

to the Bantu Education system that did not offer the same opportunities as traditional 'white' education did.

Table 8 shows the wage discrepancies between men and women graduates in certain occupations

**Table 8: Annual median salaries of graduates in certain occupations- 1979 (Rand)**

OCCUPATION	WHITE		COLOURED		ASIAN		AFRICAN	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Teacher, Headmaser	10530	6230 (59)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. University lecturer	13260	9390 (71)	9250	7500 (81)	10430	7750 (74)	7750	4750 (61)
3. Social Worker	7080	5140 (73)	-	-	-	-	4000	2930 (73)
4. Architect	12530	8750 (70)	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Chemist	12530	7750 (72)	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Civil Engineer	12830	9880 (77)	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. All surveyed occupations.	-	-	8880	5170 (58)	8720	6810 (78)	7260	3700 (51)

*Sources:* HSRC Reports Nos. M-R.66, M-R-67, M-R-69. Except for the last category all surveyed occupations -which includes employment in both private and public sector- all other occupations refer to employment in the public sector only. The figures in brackets represent women's salary as a percentage of the respective male salary.

Table 8 illustrates that there were significant differences between men's and women's salaries during the apartheid era. There were also noteworthy differences

between the different races' salaries. Once again the labour system showed discrimination on both a gender and a racial level.

It is apparent that the overall pattern of female employment for the period 1960-1980 shows a disproportionate concentration of women in a limited number of sectors and occupations. Also, in sectors where both males and females were graduates and filled the same position, women would only earn about 70% of what the males were earning. What is very prominent when looking at the figures is that patriarchy was the primary determinant in relegating women to subordinate roles in the economy.

Even though transformation has started to occur at various levels of South African society, inequality persists. In relation to white men, white women remain economically and politically disadvantaged.

#### 1.5. Women entering the corporate sector: post-apartheid

The South African Employment Equity Bill makes the advancement of women to executive positions a requirement, rather than an option (Department of Labour 1997:6). In spite of the laws that have changed, the percentage of women in executive positions is rudimentary (April *et al.* 2007:51). Even though there has been some improvement both national and international scholarships have criticised the slow progress with the incorporation of women into the corporate world (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:202; April *et al.* 2007:52). In a South African context, it has been noted that while there has been much focus on racial transformation, gender transformation has lagged behind.

According to the Women in Corporate Leadership Census (BWA 2008:19), women corporate leaders are a minority within a minority. In 2008 about 42.4% of South Africa's women were active in the labour market, 25.3% were employed as women executive managers, 14.3% were women directors and 7.8% were women CEOs and Board chairs (BWA, 2008:19). The 2010 figures show an increase in the total number of women who are currently active in the labour market to 44.6%, a decrease to 19.3% for women occupying executive management positions, an increase to 16.6% for women holding directorships and an increase to 10.5% for women CEOs and board chairs (BWA 2010: 21).



Even though there has been improvement when compared to previous years, the figures of women in top ranks are still dismal. There are a wide variety of reasons for the relatively small percentage of women who occupy positions as executive managers, directors, CEOs and Board Chairs. According to international research on the topic, entry into the corporate sector does not guarantee acceptance into the 'masculine culture' of the financial world. The literature notes how so-called 'women on top' find it difficult to gain access to 'old boys' networks that are vital to their progress (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:203; Davies-Netzley 2007:214). This exclusion from informal networks often restricts women's upward progress in their careers. What makes acceptance into the corporate world even more difficult are the stereotypes that are created of women in executive positions. They are often labelled 'ball busters' or 'dragon lady'. These stereotypical depictions restrict the ways in which these women can act (Tannen 2007:192; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:204). These women feel added pressure from male colleagues who question whether they (women) can have a career and a family (Davies-Netzley 2007:212). One of the strategies that women use to overcome these obstacles is to further their education considerably, so that it in fact surpasses that of their male counterparts (Davies-Netzley 2007:215; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:202).

Mather-Helm (2006:2) notes that although women in South Africa are gaining acceptance to enter the boardrooms informally, unfortunately the culture of long working hours and demanding job requirements discourage women from accepting high ranking executive positions. In line with the statement above April, Dreyer and Blass (2007:53) argue that, even though many South African executive women have broken through the glass ceiling, they are still faced with the challenge of maintaining the work-family or work-life balance. Furthermore, the social expectations concerning child rearing in South Africa have also had an impact on work-life balance career decisions.

Thus, in line with the abovementioned discussion, it is important to examine the strategies that women employ in order to make progress and to survive in the corporate world.

One of the main strategies employed to progress in one's career is to engage in

networking activities. International studies correlate with this statement. Thus, individuals attempt to develop and maintain relationships with those who can potentially provide work or career assistance (Forret & Dougherty 2004:419). Networking can include joining professional associations, seeking high-visibility assignments, participating in the community and increasing internal visibility. Forret and Dougherty (2004:420) suggest that networking behaviour has been critical for women, because it is used as a strategy to break through the glass ceiling.

Furthermore, Maddock and Parkin (1993:4) note that there are certain choices and strategies available to women at work if they want to ensure their success. First, some women may have identified that there is an 'old boys' network at work. This kind of sub-culture is very difficult to challenge and so some women would choose not to confront it in order to survive in the company. Women in this situation are kept in firmly established roles by male managers who are usually very courteous, and who patronise female employees in the 'nicest' way. This kind of behaviour from male managers ensures that their female co-workers will not upset them by confronting them about certain issues. Women recognise that if they become too assertive, too demanding, or if they ask for a promotion they can quickly become 'outsiders'.

The second strategy that women employ works on a physical level. In some companies the male leaders create an awareness of their physical presence to maintain masculine domination. They do this through exaggerated body language. Some women managers have caught onto this strategy and have started to echo this behaviour in their own ways; for example they might wear a lot of perfume, speak loudly, and wear low-cut dresses or very bright colours during meetings. Other women, however, have noted that merely mirroring male behaviour could be dangerous and inappropriate.

The third strategy that women managers might employ is to become a 'smart', 'macho' manager. In this culture women meet deadlines and produce impressive results, but they run the risk of being labelled as ruthless. The ideology that they promote is that if you work hard, fast and can focus on targets, then your gender or ethnic origins are irrelevant (Maddock & Parkin 1993:5-7).

Last, women can make use of new technology to allow the temporal and spatial boundaries of work to be extended. Thus, more people with caring responsibilities may have an opportunity to become involved in a career (Perrons 2003:65). Women managers with access to the Internet might be able to work from home occasionally if they have caring responsibilities at home.

## **1.6. Conclusion**

Although the percentage of women in executive positions has increased, there are still many challenges that women face that can either hamper their progress or exclude them totally from the corporate world. My intention is to explore the career trajectories of women and establish influences on their career choices and paths and the mediation of opportunities and constraints.

In this chapter it is important to note how context shapes and explains people's lives. The political context and history in South Africa has had a significant impact on all its citizens' lives. This is especially true in terms of opportunities related to education and career choices. The apartheid era was notorious for its discriminating practices on the grounds of race and gender. Women, amongst others, worked hard to liberate themselves, even though gender politics were not considered as important as race politics during that time. Unfortunately, gender inequality persists in society. In order to address discrimination and inequality of the past legislative action has been undertaken in the democratic era. Affirmative Action policies have been controversial and reactions to such legislation by ordinary South Africans have been diverse. It is difficult to comment on such a contentious subject, especially once the discourse has turned toward who does and does not deserve to enjoy its benefits.

Even though women on all levels of society were somehow affected by the system of apartheid, this particular study explores how white, Afrikaans-speaking women have been affected. By looking at their involvement in wage labour for the past century one can start formulating some ideas around their gendered experiences. What was most interesting was these women's choice of careers and how these choices correlated closely with society's expectation of a woman during that particular time.

In contemporary South Africa women have made great strides in occupations that were traditionally dominated by men. Progress has been slow and we are still far

away from reaching total gender equality in the work sphere. Nonetheless, a lot of women are courageous enough to actively challenge archaic, patriarchal norms and values. These women serve as good role models to motivate new generations of professional women.

## **Chapter 2: Epistemology and Methodology**

This chapter will focus first on epistemological issues regarding concepts such as 'gender' and the feminist positions that I have chosen. Second, the chapter will set out particular theoretical constructs, 'intersectionality' and 'socialisation', which can help to explain the position of white, Afrikaans-speaking women in the South African society. Together, these theoretical constructs acknowledge how different parts of one's identity intersect with each other in order to explain a person's position within a context. By analysing intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class and nationality one can begin to build explanations of gendered choices and experiences (Shields 2008:301; Knudsen 2007:67). At the same time, I hope to integrate the guiding influence of socialisation and its impact on white Afrikaans-speaking women's social responses and career aspirations. In closing, the methodology that was followed will be discussed.

### **2.1. Epistemological Issues**

#### **2.1.1. Understanding gender and the importance of (re)socialisation**

For this particular study I have drawn on Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and David Glover's explanations and conceptualisations of gender. This has been done in order to give the reader some insight into the way that I conceptualise gender and how individuals are gendered.

Simone de Beauvoir (1953:267) stated that "one is not born a woman, rather one becomes a woman". Thus, gender is something that is acquired over time, something which one is socialised into becoming.

Judith Butler (1990:24) makes a similar point and argues that

gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes, for we have seen that the substance of gender is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practises of gender coherence. Thus, gender constitutes the identity as it is purported to be.

Inherent to my conception of gender is Butler's notion that gender is performed via a set of roles that we are socialised to carry out.

“Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler 1990:33).

Thus, acts that one is socialised into performing over time might appear to be ‘set in stone’, but that is only because of the repetition of these acts.

Glover (2009: 17) explains that

sex and gender are therefore intimately related, but not because one is ‘natural’ while the other is ‘culture’. Rather, both are inescapably cultural categories that refer to the ways of describing and understanding human bodies and human relationships.

What all of these conceptions of gender have in common is that the concept of gender is open to reinvention: “gender is never wholly protean nor totally fluid, at any given time and place it is configured within a range of technological, socio-economic and cultural constraints” (Glover 2009:184-85).

The second important element in this particular study is my conceptualisation of socialisation and the importance thereof.

As human beings, the mere fact of how we are described or classified can have a direct impact on our self-understanding and our actions, because typically these descriptions or classifications bring with them normative expectations and evaluations (Haslanger 1995: 99)

Social construction is important in all individuals’ lives because we acquire certain roles and behaviour through modes of social learning. This process can be explained by what Haslanger (Ontology and social construction, 1995, p. 98) terms causal construction and discursive construction. Thus, social forces either have a causal role in creating gendered individuals or they shape the way we are men and women (Mikkola, 2008).

According to Millet (1971:26), *“[i]mplicit in all gender identity development which takes place in through childhood is the sum total of the parents’, the peers’, and the culture’s notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament,*

*character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression*". This statement helps us to understand that becoming a man or woman is part of a societal effort that involves many social elements. Hence, it would be difficult to penetrate these different social levels if one wants to see some sort of change in the way that socialisation takes place. It is important to admit that it is difficult to counter gender socialisation, but it is not impossible.

Social learning starts at a very early age and it Renzetti and Curran (Mikkola, 2008) record that parents sometimes unconsciously treat male and female children in different ways. This is done by using particular language to describe boys and girls or to assign different colours, clothes or sports to each gender.

Kate Millet (1971: 26) argues that individuals are socialised along stereotyped lines of sex category i.e. 'masculine' and 'feminine'. These categories are based on the needs and the values of the dominant group. It is further dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates. In males, intelligence, aggression and force are valued traits, whereas in females it is valued if one is passive, ignorant, virtuous and docile (Millet 1971:28). Gender is "essentially cultural, rather than biological" (Millet 1971:26).

Kimmel (2000:122) elaborates further on this argument by stating that "*gender is a relationship, not a thing and like all relationships we are active in their construction*". Kimmel argues that we constantly define and redefine what it means to be men and women in our daily encounters with each other. We have the capacity to 'unlearn' these social roles, that is why as feminists we should look towards different ways in which future generations will be socialised and we should look at how re-socialisation can take place.

In terms of the discussion in the section above, I approached my participants in a very specific way. First, I acknowledge the generation gaps between these women and how in some cases this has affected their socialisation process. Second, I realise that there are many factors that influence an individual's socialisation, but one force that is of paramount importance to my study is the effect of being socialised in a patriarchal society. Superson (2009) introduces a rarely discussed strand of feminism, 'moral feminism', and looks particularly at the role that patriarchy plays in a

person's motivation and subsequent action. I look briefly at this issue in my study. When woman has been socialised in a patriarchal society and she decides to pursue a career for herself or she decides not to have children or she challenges a patriarchal 'figure' or if she decides to become a single mother, it shows that she has actively tried to re-socialise herself. Collectively these acts become significant in the sense that assertive women can serve as role models to show that socialisation is not concrete and unchanging, but rather that it is open to reinvention.

### **2.1.2. Feminist epistemology**

In this study I will draw on feminist scholarship and incorporate interpretive understandings to illuminate the many facets of women's lives. Feminist-orientated research is usually conducted by individuals who hold a feminist identity and who consciously embrace a feminist perspective (Neuman 2006:102; Haslanger *et al.* 2011). One of the underlying goals of feminist research, and of this particular study, is to give a voice to women's concerns and to give female subjects an opportunity to tell their story. Feminism emphasises that research is a social activity and it is affected by social organisation and relationships of power, especially those between men and women.

Feminist research reflects different philosophical concerns and approaches to research; despite the differences there is a shared assumption that women's experiences should be placed at the centre of research and analysis. Feminist research aims to deconstruct research that has neglected or placed women's interests on the margins of social investigation or research that has assumed that male experiences are universal (Webb 2000:36; Mikkola 2008).

I have labelled my overall approach as 'gender-sensitive'. This is done because the approach acknowledges that those conducting research are gendered beings, thus every researcher will bring their own gendered experiences into their research. This approach recognises that gender is a pervasive force in society that shapes our most basic values, beliefs and it cannot be isolated or insulated in the research process. By using a feminist theoretical lens, a researcher attempts to comprehend participants' experiences and feelings by also highlighting their own position. In this way the formal barriers between the researcher and those being researched are



blurred so that one can attempt to get closer to the 'truth'. Standpoint feminism is a specific perspective that has interwoven the researcher's private world through the public activity of research. In doing so, the power relationship between the researcher and researched is unsettled (Webb 2000:43).

As already noted, this study examines women in middle and top levels of management in the financial sector of Gauteng. An initial curiosity that arises is why there are so few women in the upper echelons of management (BWA 2008:19; BWA 2010:21-22). Venturing further one could question why certain roles have been traditionally ascribed to men and women (managers are male and secretaries are female). Assessed historically, one can ask how this unequal distribution of power and roles was created, and sustained over time.

Furthermore, one could look at the types of interactions that take place between different genders in different positions and roles. These interactions could include jokes, remarks, verbal and nonverbal communication in formal (meetings) or informal (casual office conversation) settings. One could then question whether these interactions challenge or support structures that have created inequality between people.

An example from my study's literature review is that currently women are being hired in the corporate sector, but only 10.5% of these women reach top CEO positions (BWA 2010: 21). This means that men are still occupying the vast majority of the senior positions in the South African corporate sector.

#### **2.1.2.1. Standpoint feminism**

Standpoint feminism will guide my research. In its most basic form, standpoint feminism interrogates women's exclusion and exposes their experiences and perspectives. One's gender as a researcher, especially if one is a woman, is also a very important factor. Sandra Harding, a standpoint feminist, makes one's role as a female researcher clear in the following statement: "The stranger brings to her research just the combination of nearness and remoteness, concern and indifference that are central to maximizing objectivity" (Harding, in May 2001: 22). This approach acknowledges how the researcher's subjectivity affects the research and the outcome. Standpoint feminism recognises the researcher's subjectivity and

highlights it as a resource and an object of research (Webb 2000:40). Thus, as female researcher one is able to operate from both an oppressed position (as a woman in society) and a privileged position (as a scholar). Harding (2004:29) states that the women's movement needs knowledge that is created for women because women have long been the objects of other's knowledge projects. Thus, standpoint feminist theory has created an opportunity for women to take back control in the research process.

Essential to this approach is the fact that a woman's biography and experiences are central to the production of unbiased accounts of the world. Patricia Hill Collins, a black feminist, underscored the importance of the black women's reliance on experience as a way to survive and to determine what is real and true (Seidman 2004:236). Even though Collins is a black feminist, she was key in drawing attention to the similarities between the experiences of particular groups. She examines the multiple social standpoints of agents of knowledge, including working-class women, black women, and Latino men. These different groups produce a plurality of knowledges, each is viewed as partial. These knowledges involve feelings, personal values and interests of its producers. The knowledge obtained from these groups have broad social and political implications. Thus, Collins values the role of concrete personal experience and feelings as a standard to assess knowledge claims.

Dorothy Smith, a feminist sociologist, offers a good explanation of why women should question knowledge claims. Smith's aim is to create a social theory from the standpoint of women's experiences, interests and values. Smith's contribution to the feminist perspective has encouraged researchers to look at women's daily experiences in order to find problems that require sociological explanation. This kind of research has revealed the multiplicity of women's experiences (Webb 2000:43; Cahill 2008). In essence, Smith's feminist sociology intends to improve women's understanding of the social forces that shape their lives. It seeks to illustrate not only how these social forces can oppress women, but also that social change is possible. Smith sought to create a sociology for and by women that would take women's previously neglected and ignored experiences into account.

Smith states that "[t]here can be no theory, no method, and no knowledge...that is

not made by men and women from a definite standpoint in the society and in the interests of those who make it” (Smith, in Seidman 2004:212). The gendered character of the self and society thus extends to knowledge and how it is produced. Men and women both have their own unique ways of knowing. Women’s unique ways of knowing, their experiences and values have until recently been absent from what are considered ‘dominant’ knowledges. Smith argues that sociology has been made by men and for men and it has contributed to devaluing and erasing women’s distinctive experience and values. Smith focuses on an underlying, common and central feature of the ‘relations of ruling’ in contemporary Western capitalist societies that is the role of knowledge as a social force of domination (Seidman 2004:215; Harding & Nordberg 2005:2010).

At present, men and women are still positioned differently and unequally in Western society. According to Smith, women share common gender experiences although they might differ from each other in terms of class and race (Smith, in Seidman 2004: 212). Women’s lives are said to centre around household and family care activities, whereas the centre of men’s lives in contemporary society is in the public sphere of big business, government, sport and the military. If one was to acknowledge the deeply gendered organization of social life this would potentially reveal sociology’s patriarchal character. Smith’s feminist sociology looks at women at the point where they find themselves in their actual lives. It takes as a starting point for the creation of social knowledge, women’s local and social settings, social relations and daily activities. She envisions a sociology that is a moral or critical inquiry into the everyday conditions of domination to ultimately alter them.

### **2.1.3. Interpretive social science**

The interpretive approach seeks to understand social meaning in context. It further delves into the ways that people understand social life. This approach will help me to discover what is meaningful and relevant to those being interviewed and how those individuals experience daily life. I will also be able to share experiences, feelings and interpretations of the people in an attempt to see the world through others’ eyes. (This is also one of the reasons I have chosen to use a feminist approach.)

The interpretive approach focuses on meaningful social action, not just external or

observable behaviour (Neuman 2006:88; Heath 2011). Humans reason and plan things in their social context. They must also attach some subjective meaning to the action, especially when those actions are directed towards others.

This approach explains that the fundamental nature of social reality is largely what people make it out to be. It adopts a constructivist view of social reality. People go through a constant process of negotiation and communication by interacting with others in order to construct social life. Thus, social life has its foundations in social action and socially constructed meaning (Neuman 2006: 89; Heath 2011).

The constructivist perspective states that there is no inner essence that causes people to see reality; there are only social processes that create social reality. This perspective takes note of things that people might take for granted, because they have become accustomed to them. In the context of this study, the dominant view of the women's place during the apartheid era was that women held subservient and inferior positions to men. The family was accepted to function under patriarchal rule. During those years, gender inequality would have been such an 'everyday occurrence' that people would have accepted it as a 'normal' part of their lives. In addition, men and women accepted that there were specific jobs for specific genders. Thus, many women did not study further after they were married because they would not have to be the primary breadwinner because this position was considered the main role for the man in the relationship. There could also be the alternative scenario where parents did not support their daughter's ambitions to study further, especially in a field that would be considered 'masculine', such as engineering.

All things that we define as part of our social reality have been created in specific places and under particular circumstances. Language is one tool that is used to create and spread constructions that are learnt and passed along generations. As such, this particular study will examine women's narratives to understand the power of social construction. An essential principle of the approach is that knowledge is partial and it is bounded by different perspectives (Webb 2000:35).

The interpretive approach also values human agency. This so-called voluntarism "sees people as having volition and being able to make conscious decisions"

(Neuman 2006:90). In terms of this volition, there are certain circumstances and people's own subjectivity that will affect their decision-making process, but they are sometimes able to change those circumstances and perspectives.

Another valuable feature of interpretivism as an approach is that the information that is obtained is idiographic in nature. This means that it values symbolic representation or 'thick' and in-depth descriptions. For this reason, the semi-structured interview has been chosen as the main research technique that would attempt to 'tap' into the participants' experiences, feelings and the symbolic meanings that they attach to social actions and interactions. The transcriptions of the interviews would almost read like a biography. Each transcript would be similar to a map that outlines someone's social world, their socialisation, careers and daily concerns.

The interpretive approach is further applicable to this study because it reflects authentic and comprehensive insights into the ways that ordinary people function in daily commonplace situations. This approach is further employed to see beyond taken-for-granted experiences and to draw on the subjective experience of the individual. The interpretivist approach acknowledges that people do not exist in apolitical environments. As the researcher I would have to empathise with and acknowledge different political positions. One might have to adopt a position of relativism with regards to other's values.

#### **2.1.4. Intersectional theory and women's career trajectories**

I find intersectional theory appropriate to use when examining women's career trajectories. This approach acknowledges the "mutually constitutive relations among social identities" (Shields 2008:301) and the limitations of using gender as a single analytical category (McCall 2005:1771). This is a central tenet of contemporary feminist thinking and some scholars have even suggested that it has made the most important contribution towards building understandings of gender (Shields 2008: 301-311; McCall 2005:1771-1800). This approach reveals how the individual's social identities influence beliefs about experience and practice. According to this theory, the individual's social location reflects their intersecting identities. What is most important is how gender interacts with power that is embedded within these social identities (Collins in Shields 2008:301; Knudsen 2007:67). Kiguwa (2004:313)

reiterates the point that race and gender should be studied according to their interrelatedness. This is the only way that one can identify the priorities of dealing with oppression.

I will be using a particular branch within this theoretical framework called intra-categorical complexity. According to McCall (2005:1774) intra-categorical complexity “acknowledges the stable and even durable relationships that social categories represent at any given point in time, though it also maintains a critical stance toward categories”. Furthermore, it is helpful to use this approach when studying specific social groups (white, Afrikaans-speaking women) as it considers how those identities cross the boundaries of traditionally constructed groups (Dill in McCall 2005:1774).

An explanation of these intersections can reveal both oppression and opportunity. Thus, if one is advantaged (for example, a middle-class, white woman) there might be less oppression and disadvantage given the person’s access to rewards, status and opportunities when compared to other categories of women (for example, a black working-class woman living in a rural area). There is a further possibility that one intersectional position may be a disadvantage in terms of one group, but advantage in reference to another. A white, Afrikaans-speaking woman is a part of the white community that has always enjoyed certain social privileges, but she is in a disadvantaged or minority position when situated in the corporate sector that has been traditionally male-dominated and where there could be presently fierce competition with other previously disadvantaged groups. This example illustrates how one’s race and gender can be an asset in one context and a liability in another (particularly when other intersections are illuminated).

Intersectional theory has its origins in the studies of women of colour (Browne & Misra 2003:488; Shields 2008:302). Black feminists, like Patricia Hill Collins, have been crucial in the development of this perspective. They identified the need for a theory that could analyse how social and cultural identities intertwine. The relationships between gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class and nationality are important when studies aim to shed light on women’s multiple experiences (Knudsen 2007:67). Traditionally, intersectional theory has been used to highlight experiences of ‘minority’ women, particularly black and third-world women.

In this particular study, white women have become a ‘minority’, not only because there are fewer of them when compared to the black majority, but also because of the loss of power that they have experienced since the first democratic elections in South Africa. Thus, even though they have enjoyed more social privileges in the past when compared to black women, they also faced gender discrimination among the white sector of the population. This discrimination led to unequal opportunities in comparison to their male counterparts. Intersectional theory is particularly valuable when studying changing socio-political positions like those described above. Thus, the main intersections that will be focused on in this study are race, gender, age and class.

## **2.2. Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This particular study explores certain aspects of working women’s lives. It aims to provide insight into the experiences of 14 individuals ranging from work dynamics, balancing work and home-life, and exploring their long-term goals. This study combines aspects of gender that influence working in traditional male-dominated industries while trying to achieve some kind of work/life balance. Each participant in this study has been given an alias and participants will be referred to via their alias and they will be collectively addressed as ‘participants’

For this study I have made use of a case study design. The following section will focus on the methods of data collection and analysis that I implemented in order to gather and analyse the data. First, I will explain the significance of using a gender-sensitive qualitative approach. Second, I will review the method used for choosing a sample and I will discuss the method used to gather data. Thirdly, thematic analysis will be discussed as method to explore transcription data. Last, I reflect on some of the problems I experienced during the research process.

#### **2.2.1. Research design**

##### **A Gender-sensitive qualitative approach**

A gender-sensitive perspective is useful because it challenges traditional ‘malestream’ knowledge about women’s roles in society (May2001:18; Humphries &

Truman 1994:21). This perspective also places emphasis on how women's contributions to the social and cultural world have been marginalised. Furthermore, it attempts to expose entrenched ideas that support the myth of male superiority over women.

A qualitative research approach has been chosen because data can be collected from interviews. This approach also provides in-depth accounts from individual narratives. In its most basic, form qualitative research is usually characterised by observation and interviews in the location of the participants (Endacott 2008:48). For this particular study the semi-structured interview technique will be used to collect data. The strength of this approach lies in establishing rapport and trust with research subjects in order to gain full, rich accounts. The nature of this design is collaborative and participatory and so it minimises suspicion and distrust of the research and provides trust and credibility (Mouton 2001:162). This method is ideal for my study because it will allow me to study the participants in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of conditions and problems and the meanings that they attach to them (Fink 1998:143). This method is appropriate because it is suited to interpretive and feminist approaches and I can use a wide variety of empirical methods like case studies, personal experience, life stories, interviews, observations, and historical and visual texts (Silverman 2001:259).

### **2.2.2. Design**

For the purpose of this study I have chosen the snowball sampling technique that was first proposed by Coleman in 1958 (Salganik & Heckathorn 2004:196). According to Babbie (2005:190) this procedure is appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate, such as the specific group of women in my study. Heckathorn (1997:174) defines such difficult to locate populations as "hidden populations". These populations have two characteristics: first, there is no sampling frame; and second, there are often strong privacy concerns for these groups (for example, membership could involve stigmatised or illegal behaviour) (Salganik & Heckathorn 2004:195). In my particular study it was difficult to locate the women concerned because they were not easy to distinguish from the rest of the population. However, privacy was very important to the sample because there are few women in



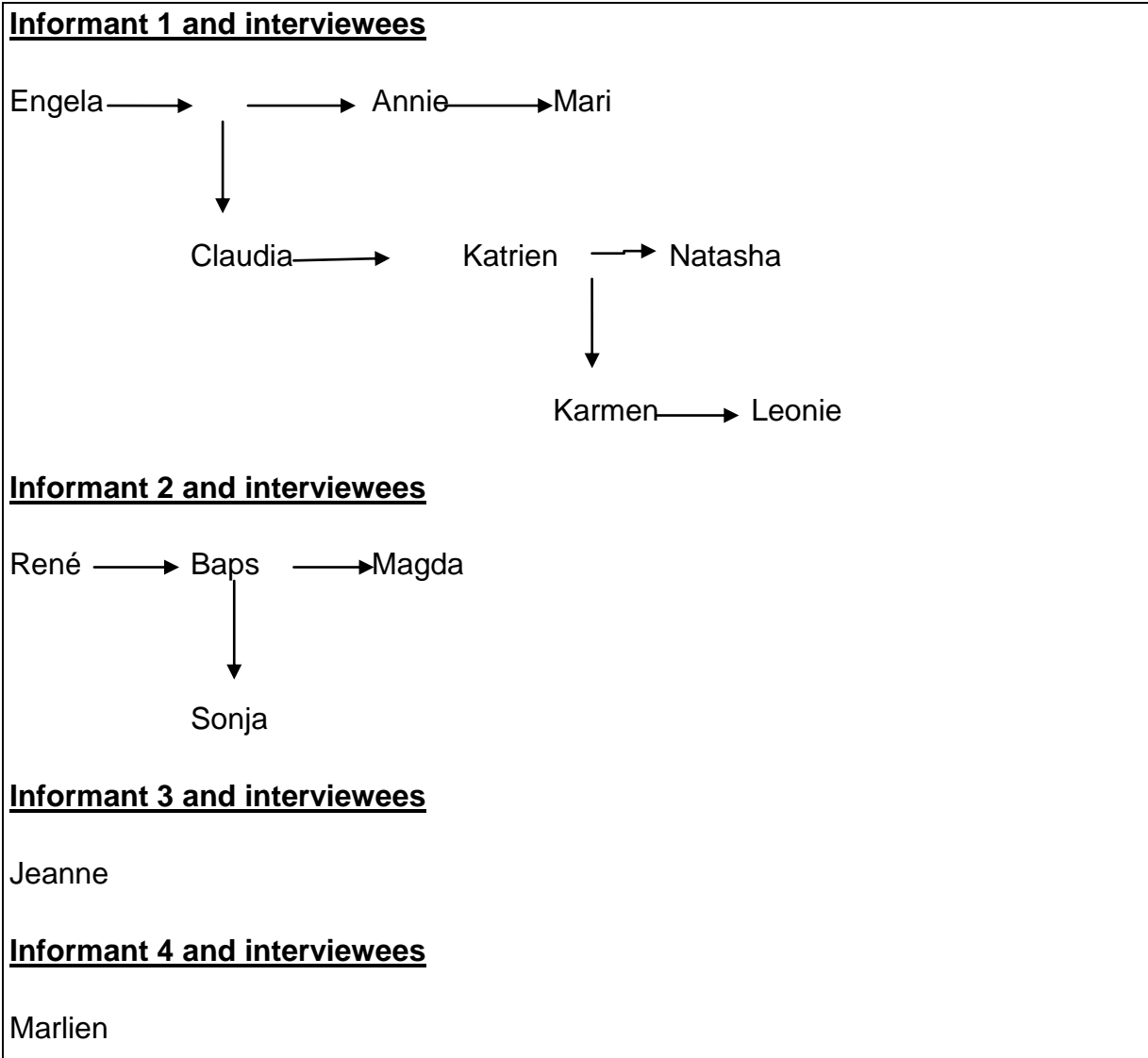
the upper echolons of management and thus they did not want their identities to be made public. The particular characteristics that I looked for in my participants included the following: participants between the ages of 30 and 65 years of age; white, Afrikaans-speaking women; employed in middle or top level management in the financial sector of Gauteng.

The snowball sampling design can be classified as a chain-referral sampling method. The sampling process usually starts when the researcher selects a number of 'seeds'/participants. These individuals would be the first participants in the study. These initial participants would then recruit others. This process is repeated until the desired sample size is reached or data saturation has occurred (Endacott 2008:50).

This particular method of sampling is used when the researcher cannot control the likelihood that any particular member of the population would be selected (Lang 2003:43). This introduces some bias in terms of who the researcher chooses to participate in the study. It should be noted that there are few guidelines for non-probability sampling; usually one would make use of saturation to determine purposive sample sizes (Guest *et.al.* 2006:59). (Saturation will be discussed in the following section.) Advantages of this design are that it remains cheaper and quicker than other methods that are currently being used. My study sought to understand and capture meanings and experiences of participants through their narratives; not to generalise the results of the study.

The figure below is a representation of how the snowball sample was obtained for this particular study.

### 2.2.3. Snowball sample representation



**Figure 1: Selection of participants: the snowball sample**

### 2.2.4. Participants

There are various factors to consider when deciding how many interviews are sufficient for a particular study. It is often recommended that theoretical saturation be used as criterion by which to justify adequate sample sizes in qualitative inquiry. Guest; Bunce and Johnson (2006:64) defines theoretical saturation as “the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change to the codebook”. Fourteen participants were asked to take part in this study; the ‘saturation point’ was reached with this number of participants. Similar studies in this field have taken a quantitative approach and have included a much larger sample (Jamali *et al.* 2007:577; Bartol *et al.* 2003:11; Mathur-Helm *et al.* 2006:313).

For positivist researchers, research should use a probabilistic sampling methodology that is estimated mathematically and is based on pre-selected parameters and objectives. In practice this is not always possible, especially when research includes hard-to-reach, stigmatised or hidden populations. Kuzel (Kuzel, in Guest *et.al.* 2006:61) recommends sample size according to sample heterogeneity and the research objectives. Kuzel (Kuzel, in Guest *et.al.* 2006:61) advocates that six to eight interviews for a homogeneous sample are enough, and 12 to 20 data sources are sufficient when one wants to disconfirm evidence or if you are trying to show maximum variation. Unfortunately no rationale for these prescribed quantities was provided by Kuzel (in Guest *et.al.* 2006:61).

There are various factors in terms of a research project that should be considered when deciding whether a sample size is adequate. First, one should decide how homogeneous the population is and then one should look at whether ones' research objectives are general or specific. Second one should look at the interview structure and the content. Fourteen participants seems to be an adequate number because the sample will be reasonably homogeneous.

Participants were asked similar questions; by asking all participants a similar set of questions one would be able to reach knowledge saturation. In terms of instrument content one would require fewer participants if a particular experience or domain of knowledge is widely distributed. Thus, the phenomenon of interest would not require many participants to explain it. According to Johnstone (Johnstone, in Guest *et al.* 2006:76) "if the goal is to describe a shared perception, belief or behaviour among a relatively homogeneous group, then a sample of twelve will likely be sufficient". One's choice of sample size will thus depend on the objectives of the study.

A certain degree of participant homogeneity was assured, this was mainly because in this purposive sample the participants were selected according to some common criteria. According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006:79) one would need a larger sample (more than 12 participants) if the goal is to assess variation between distinct groups or correlation among variables. If the goal is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals then twelve interviews are considered to be enough.

The participants considered for this case study had to meet certain criteria. First, as already maintained, they should have been between the ages of 30 and 65 years; the youngest would have been teenagers during the last part of the apartheid era when political and gender discrimination was fairly intact. The oldest would have been in their late forties. This means that all of them would have been socialised in the apartheid era. Second, all had to come from white, Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds. Last, they had to be currently employed at middle or upper level management in the corporate sector. All the participants were asked similar questions in terms of the key research questions. While there were some questions where participants had similar opinions, their experiences and feedback were not completely homogeneous. Just as there were similarities there were numerous differences.

The following section focuses on situating the participant. I have done so by using tables to represent the participant's details regarding age, their position at work, marital status, whether they have children or not, and their educational background.

#### **2.2.5. Situating the subject**

##### *Character description:*

**Engela, aged 43**, has two children, a boy and a girl in primary school. She married in her mid-twenties and she got divorced in her early-thirties. She describes herself as someone who enjoys taking part in sports like golf and, running. She comes across as self-assured and outgoing. Her views on politics are fairly liberal. She is an energetic and dynamic person who enjoys working with people and who expect only the best from those who work for her.

**René, aged 57**, has two adult children and she is married for the third time. She describes herself as a hard-working person who is very dedicated to her job. She has always held fairly liberal political views. She is a woman of few words, who is reflective and she likes to work on her own and not to have too many people working under her. Her daughter developed a drug problem in her teens, but has since recovered. That was a particularly trying time for her.

**Claudia, aged 38**, is mother to a six year old daughter and a five year old son and

married when she was 27. She describes herself as someone who enjoys her work. She comes across as a soft-spoken but confident person with a strong work ethic. She describes her management-style as almost motherly, but serious if the situation prompts it.

**Jeanne, aged 43**, has two sons, one in his late teens and the other in his late twenties. She married when she was 21 years old. She describes herself as a strong-willed, conservative person who was a bit of a 'rebel' in her youth. It appears that she has very clear views on what is right and wrong and her Christian values are a guiding force in her life. She describes her management-style as fair and direct and has empathy for those who work under her. She was raised by her grandparents after surviving a fire at her home when she was two years old. Her parents survived, but she didn't go into details as to why she didn't live with them.

**Annie, aged 40**, married for the first time in 2009 and has decided to remain childless. She describes herself as being outspoken about gender issues at the firm where she works and she becomes very frustrated with men who perpetuate sexist behaviour. She comes across as a strong-willed leader who cares about women's interests and who is 'driven' to achieve her career goals.

**Baps, aged 61**, is mother to an adult daughter. She married when she was 27, but has been divorced for over twenty years. The reason cited for the divorce was that her husband felt that she had worked too much. She describes herself as someone who is interested in people's behaviour and she recalls many interesting stories about clients and co-workers. Her relationship with her daughter is a very important element in her life since she has been a single mother because her daughter was a toddler.

**Marlien, aged 54**, has three children, two sons, one in high school and the other in university, and a daughter who is also at university. She married when she was 27. She noted that her husband is not completely comfortable with the fact that she earns more than he does because she only qualified as a lawyer in 1991. She describes herself as being quite conservative and that she has always been aware of the inequality faced by women in the workplace. It appears that her opinions about

general conduct and marriage are deeply rooted in Christian values. She continues to dislike working in a patriarchal environment where she feels that she is always being 'checked up' on.

**Magda, aged 65**, is mother to two adult daughters. She has been married and widowed twice. She lost her first husband and child in a car accident more than 30 years ago. She remarried and her second husband passed away less than five years ago. She explains that it has always been difficult for her to come to terms with the unequal treatment of women in the workplace. She received her matric certificate at age 59 because she left school in standard 8 because it was not necessary to study further to find employment.

**Katrien, aged 36**, has two daughters who are in primary school. She married in her mid-twenties. She is a petite and reserved person who holds strong Christian values. She explains her management-style as understanding, but firm when she needs to be. She enjoys working, but feels guilty sometimes for not spending enough time with her children.

**Sonja, aged 49**, has two adult children and was married in her early twenties to a soldier and she became a 'border-wife'. She has since been divorced. She notes that she has always enjoyed working and did so even when it was not a financial necessity. She likes being independent, but her divorce seems to have made a negative emotional impact on her.

**Mari, aged 42**, has never been married and has raised her teenage daughter by herself. She describes herself as determined and not afraid of challenges. She is an intelligent and critical person who is reflective. She notes that she feels guilty for not being able to always be there for her daughter who has a learning disability and who requires extra attention.

**Natasha, aged 31**, married recently and decided not to have children. She feels that she would require a nanny to raise them because her lifestyle and schedule would not allow her to care for them. She appears to be progressive and driven, and she values her independence even though she is married. She is very professional and

does not mind going to the office on weekends. She notes that her family's history of strong women has helped her to become confident and hard-working.

**Karmen, aged 31**, married at 28 and has a 3 year-old daughter. She describes herself as progressive and having a rebellious streak. She hopes to start her own business eventually. She enjoys working and the financial security that it provides. Although she loves her daughter, she feels that she misses doing things for herself, like going for manicures and pedicures because she would rather spend her extra time with her child.

**Leonie, aged 36**, is a young widow and mother to a son in primary school. She is engaged to a businessman eleven years her senior. She comes across as a hard-worker, but is not overly ambitious. She is reserved and conservative, but will speak out when she perceives something to be wrong. She enjoys her work and looks forward to making progress in her career.

**Participant breakdown:**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Alias</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Position at work</b>
1	Engela	43	Divorced	Director at a consulting firm
2	René	57	Remarried	Bank branch manager
3	Claudia	38	Married	Associate director at an auditing firm
4	Jeanne	43	Married	Senior manager of audit department
5	Annie	40	Married recently	Director of an auditing firm
6	Baps	61	Divorced	Bank branch administrator
7	Marlien	54	Married	Senior partner at a law firm
8	Magda	65	Widowed	Bank branch manager
9	Katrien	36	Married	Chief audit executive
10	Sonja	49	Divorced	Financial advisor
11	Mari	42	Single, never married	Senior manager at an auditing firm
12	Natasha	31	Married	Senior manager at an auditing firm
13	Karmen	31	Married	Senior manager at an auditing firm
14	Leonie	36	Widowed, engaged	Senior manager at an auditing firm

Table 9: Participant personal information



**Age Summary:**

Participants in their thirties	5
Participants in their forties	5
Participants in their fifties	2
Participants in their sixties	2

**Table 10: Participant age categories**

**Marital status summary:**

Participants	Engaged	Married	Single, Never married	Divorced	Widowed
Participants in their thirties	1	4			
Participants in their forties		2	1	2	
Participants in their fifties		1		1	
Participants in their sixties				1	1
Totals	1	7	1	4	1

**Table 11: Participant marital status**

**Children:**

Participants	Children: Yes	Children: No
Participants in their thirties	4	1
Participants in their forties	4	1
Participants in their fifties	2	0
Participants in their sixties	2	0

**Table 12: Participant child status**

**Summary of Position at work:**

Participants	Position	Total
Participants in their thirties	Senior manager (audit)	3
	Chief auditing manager	1
	Associate director (audit)	1
Participants in their forties	Senior manager (audit)	1
	Director (advisory for audit firm)	1
	Senior manager: Branch banking audit	1
	Director of a legal consulting company	1
Participants in their fifties	Senior partner in law firm	1
	Specialist manager: banking	1
Participants in their sixties	Bank branch manager: contract worker	1
	Bank branch administrator	1

Table 13: Participant position status

**Summary of Sectors occupied**

Sectors occupied	Total
Auditing	7
Law (Financial)	2
Banking	5

Table 14: Sectors occupied by participants

### Summary of different levels of management

Management levels	Participants in their thirties	Participants in their forties	Participants in their fifties	Participants in their sixties	Totals
Executive	1	2	1	0	4
Senior	4	2	0	0	6
Middle	0	1	1	2	4

Table 15: Management levels occupied

### Education background summary:

Participants	Qualification	Total
Participants in their thirties	B.com degree in Accounting (CA)	5
Participants in their forties	B.com degree in accounting (CA)	2
	Diploma in finance	1
	B.com degree in Accounting and MBA	1
	Degree in Industrial psychology and MBA	1
Participants in their fifties	Degree in Social work and Library sciences and Law	1
	No formal tertiary education, but extensive in-company training	1
Participants in their sixties	No formal tertiary education, but extensive in-company training	2

Table 16: level of education

### 2.2.6. Interviews and Setting

A semi-structured interview was chosen as the research technique for this specific study. This research technique is characterised by open questions that are pre-determined, but they allow the researcher and participant to deviate from the initial structure if wish to explore or explain certain ideas in more detail (Endacott 2008:50).

This technique then allows one enough freedom to get in-depth responses that one did not expect initially. It is further useful in terms of the feminist and interpretive approaches because both emphasise the value of unique, in-depth, individual responses.

This technique was selected to create a social situation of conversational exchange between two people for the purposes of collecting information from a specified setting. The setting in which the interviews were carried out was defined by the roles and expectations of the people engaged in this exchange. Other conditions that are taken into account involve the location, duration, recording/non recording and the degree of anonymity.

The locations were chosen according to the convenience of the participant. People generally feel more comfortable taking in their own territory (Endacott 2008:50). The locations that were selected included the participant's office or a restaurant that was close to their home. Ideally the location should be a quiet setting where there are no outside noises and disturbances. The duration of the formal tape recorded interviews lasted between 1 and a half to 2 hours. The interviews started off with a casual discussion that was not tape recorded, but notes were made during this time, these informal discussions lasted about 15 to 20 minutes. I made use of pseudonyms to protect the participants' identity and they were all asked to sign a letter of consent once they felt that their anonymity was ensured. Once the formal interviews commenced the digital tape recorder was turned on. The voice recordings have all been stored securely on a compact disc (CD) to further ensure confidentiality.

I used a pre-established outline that guided the interviews through certain key topics that I sought to probe. This method allowed me the freedom to explore certain facets of the conversation that were interesting or noteworthy. The semi-structured interview schedule is included in Appendix B.

### **2.2.7. Data analysis**

The data was analysed through line-by-line examination of transcripts to develop codes were later used to create categories. The type of data analysis technique that I have selected is thematic in nature. Themes are a starting point in a report of findings from a study. Effective reporting will depend on using data (literature) and

further resources besides the research findings (Bazely 2008:1).

This type of analysis is descriptive and helped to document the significant aspects of the situation, such as the physical location of the persons involved in the exchange, the types of relationships that the person is a part of. This method of analysis goes further to place the person in the social system, for example, work, family, and the local community. It will also illustrate the 'intersections' of individual women's lives. The relationships between gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class and nationality are important when studies aim to shed light on women's multiple experiences (Knudsen 2007:67).

The analysis was based on the interpretation of recordings, qualitative transcripts or discursive data. This method involves the 'breaking-up of data into themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton 2001:108). According to Mouton (2001:109), interpretation involves the synthesis of the researcher's data into a larger coherent whole. This is the goal that I have in mind.

The interpretation of the interviews with the women were guided by feminist insights and explored in terms of intersectionality. My study focused on identifying themes, specifically themes relating to the socialisation of participants and how this has affected their career choices and constructions of marriage and motherhood. The following final three major themes emerged: gender and socialisation; gender and working in the financial sector; and the so-called 'work/life' balance.

#### **2.2.8. Problems encountered during the research process**

One of the first problems that I encountered during the research process was that often a participant would suggest meeting in a place that was too noisy to conduct interviews in. There were two particular instances where the participant suggested we meet at a restaurant near their office and in both instances the restaurant background noise affected the quality of the audio recording of the interview considerably. Follow-up phone conversations were made to establish what participants meant when certain parts of their interviews were unclear.

Furthermore, some participants felt very uncomfortable during the initial stages of the interviews. I tried to put them at ease by engaging in a less formal discussion. This

discomfort sometimes led to them giving abrupt or incomplete answers. This was frustrating because even though I tried to probe them a little further they still did not give me sufficiently detailed comments.

At times it was difficult to remove myself from a 'social individual' role and fill the 'interviewer role', especially when the interviewees started asking me personal questions. I did not want to lead their responses in any way, but I also did not want to alienate them by not answering their questions.

Although the participants were all very cooperative and answered all of the questions posed to them, the older participants frustrated me at times with their feedback. When they answered questions it often appeared that they felt as if I expected them to give me an ideal response or to give me some sort of lesson from their experience. They also tended to go off the topic more than the younger participants.

### **2.2.9. The researcher's reflections**

As a researcher it is important to acknowledge and clarify one's own subjectivity when taking part in the research process. I am a young, white, South African, Afrikaans-speaking female student residing in a middle-upper class suburb in the east of Pretoria. I have always been interested in the 'career woman' because my mother has been a practicing labour lawyer since I was a child and her influence on my life is noteworthy. I have first-hand experience of how a working mother attempts to balance different spheres of work and home life and I have also seen how gender discrimination can affect one's career progression.

My participants and I share some commonalities in the sense of shared history, skin colour, language, culture and gender. I feel that this has helped me to collect information that is fairly unbiased, because most of the participants were comfortable talking to me. I felt that I had established rapport with them and that I built relationships of trust and levels of understanding that benefitted the whole data-gathering phase of the research.

### **2.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the epistemological position that I have taken to inform this particular study. First, it set out all the main influences from major gender theorists like Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir David Glover and Kate Millet that have

shaped concepts like 'gender' and 'socialisation'. Second, this chapter focused on the specific feminist frameworks that have further informed this study. Standpoint feminism contributed to this study by emphasising women's exclusion and how they experience and make sense of this exclusion. As a researcher it has also highlighted my role and influence on the research; I am also female and I bring my own subjective thoughts and experiences to this particular study. The interpretive social science approach highlighted the importance of social meaning in particular contexts and emphasised the significance of individual's experiences of daily life. By understanding how people make sense of everyday occurrences one can attempt to understand the other person and how they 'construct' their world and attach meaning to it. Intersersectional theory provides an important lens that can be used to explore women's experiences. It sheds light on all the different forces that constitutes a person, and it helps to contextualise those who were part of the research process. It will become clear later in this study how important the intersections between, specifically gender, race, generation and class are when trying to discover how a particular person has reached a specific point in their life.

The second major part of this chapter focused on the methodology that was employed in this study. A gender sensitive approach was chosen to shed light on all the different roles and experiences that are intimately linked to one's gender. This approach acknowledges that gender is a pervasive force in society that shapes our most basic values, beliefs and it cannot be isolated or insulated in the research process. This approach helps to create more knowledge that addresses women's lives, thus challenging traditional 'malestream' knowledge. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provided rich narratives through the in-depth interviews with participants.

In order to select participants the snowball sampling technique was chosen to locate women from similar networks and managerial backgrounds to help inform the study. Even though similar experiences were found, there were also differences between the participants. The semi-structured interview was used as a research technique in order to ask specific questions, but also to probe certain answers and go in a different direction if the situation prompted it. During the interview process this particular technique gives the researcher the freedom to explore certain areas of the

participants' narratives that were not envisioned initially. Line-by-line examination of the transcripts allowed me to analyse the data and to identify certain topics that were later used to categorise all the participants' experiences. This allowed me to use the data meaningfully in the main discussion of the findings. My epistemological position helped to guide the analysis of the transcripts and to discuss the findings.



## **Chapter 3: Gender and Socialisation**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The following chapter will deal mainly with themes on gender and socialisation. Early on in the discussion I will look at reasons why women make certain decisions around education and career and how these decisions are influenced by the norms of society. Later, I explore how the participants' grew up during the apartheid era and how this has affected them as individuals and shaped the decisions that they have had to make.

There is usually a process of constant negotiation that a woman goes through as she navigates the trajectories of life. There are many variables that need to be weighed against each other and decisions that need to be made. The strategy we choose to resolve these decisions is dependent on the way that we have been socialised in our households and society. Our socialisation guides what is important to us and also what is deemed to be 'acceptable'. The discussion now turns to the socialisation process and how it can be seen as an indicator of life choices and life chances that are available to a person. It is also important to look at the intersections between gender, race, generation and class in order to explain certain positions of advantage and disadvantage during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.2. Background**

The discussion now turns to socialisation and the introduction and maintenance of certain norms during childhood that ultimately affect an individual in adulthood. Women are said to develop a feminine gender identity because of differential socialisation in comparison to men. There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration if one is to understand why women make certain decisions in terms of education, family and career choices. It has been acknowledged that boys and girls are socialised and educated differently (Powell & Graves 2003: 35-35).

---

<sup>2</sup>Apartheid (1948-1994) and post-apartheid (1994-present) as concepts: while the contrast refers to two historical phases, it also refers to eras distinct in terms of patriarchal socialisation, corporate sensitivity to gender equality, and rights.

The ‘feminisation’ process starts the moment a little girl is born and she greets a world smothered in pink ribbons, ‘easy-bake-ovens’ and dolls. Mattel’s advertisements dazzle us with clever adjectives to create an image of a perfect feminine role model, Barbie (Powell & Graves 2003:36). The differences between boys and girls are apparent in the earliest stages of childhood in terms of interests and activities. Powell and Graves (2003) observe that boys’ and girls’ toy preferences are evident from the age of 2 years; also the different genders differ in terms of styles of play. It is also noted that institutions such as schools, churches, the military, legislative forces and the mass media are key role players when it comes to creating and enforcing these types of norms.

According to Lindbeck and Nyberg (2006:3) there are deliberate “norm senders”. These “norm senders” are usually agents that are affected by the individual’s work effort and they include parents, friends, employers and co-workers – referred to as agencies of socialisation. The “norm sender” would be affected in terms of the individuals’ emotional, physical and financial dependence. Thus promote norms and values that would increase the individual’s independence in order for that particular individual to be able to ‘function’ in society. In the work environment, for example, it is important that co-workers share some basic norms surrounding hard work and responsibility, otherwise co-operation and communication in the workplace would be difficult.

Lindbeck and Nyberg (2006: 4) note that parenting styles are very important in the formation of norms and values that will ultimately enable the individual to become independent. A supportive family environment is important to make children choose their parents as role models and this is further promoted if parents use an authoritative parenting style. “To instil social norms, parents need to sensitise their children to the opinions of others, and in the case of internalised norms they need to influence children’s preferences for work and/or benefit dependency directly” (Lindbeck & Nyberg 2006: 3). In line with this particular finding, four out of the 14 participants indicated that one of their parents had been their role model in terms of pursuing a particular career.

Parents are in a very unique position in terms of their children's life courses and decisions. If parents believe in equal relations between genders and reject stereotyping their children are more likely to deviate from gender stereotypes. Another crucial factor in the socialisation of children is the employment of parents, specifically whether or not the mother is employed. According to Powell and Graves (2003), research suggests that if a girl's mother is employed then she will have more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles than those girls whose mothers are unemployed. These girls would then pursue their ambitions even if they do not fit in with the traditional roles. Furthermore, in households where both parents are employed there is a better division of household tasks when compared to those households where there is a stay-at-home-mom. Employed mothers serve as good role models in terms of deviating from the norm or traditional roles.

*Oh yes, my mother worked, and so did most of the men and women in her family. My grandmother went to university and my great-grandfather also attended university. So from the beginning it was imprinted that if you wanted to do something, you could. My great-grandmother also did courses at the university, but she never really finished. I come from a family where women can also do things, the woman contributes to the family and it isn't an issue (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*Probably my mother, she was a teacher and in the end I decided to study teaching. I never really explicitly thought that my mother was my role model, but maybe she was my role model sub-consciously (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)*

An important factor that plays a major role in gender construction is the early mother-daughter dynamic. According to Tyson (Tyson in Kaltreider1997:33) there are various aspects of a woman's life that can be traced back to the complex mother-daughter relationship, including a woman's willingness and ability to stand up for herself, the ability to seek realistic goals, and the ability to deal with criticism. Most women at some point in time have thought about how their relationship with their mother has influenced the successes or failures in their lives. The current roles we fulfil and the patterns of interactions that we follow are all influenced by past relationships.

For the younger women the drive to work was in most cases to gain financial

independence or to help provide for their families.

*What motivated me the most is the financial stability, I think it's well known that my type of qualification (chartered accountant) usually puts you in a good position. It was just to the effect that I'm not going to go to university to waste my time if I'm not going to be rewarded in the end (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*And so it happened that it went well each time I wrote my exams and in the end I became a CA (chartered accountant). It was also, I think it was because my husband's job didn't pay enough to really support us. I think that if he had made enough money from the beginning I might not have been where I am today. I might have still taught at a school or I would be doing something a little more relaxed. I think that might have been my first choice (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*No, it was basically something that I had decided for myself and the motivation behind it was because we grew up poor and I said to myself never in my life am I going to be poor. So that was my motivation (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

Parents, friends and institutions play a vital role in determining whether a child would pursue certain ideals, and in this case specifically whether a young woman would ultimately want to pursue a professional career. In Betty Friedan's famous and influential book *The Feminine Mystique*, she notes that it is clear how the social environment can contribute towards creating and reinforcing certain types of identities, norms and values. The creation of a certain type of gender identity, known as the feminine mystique, troubles Friedan, because she observes how the media and certain interested parties tried to change the image of women from the 'career girl' of the 1920s and 1930s to the image of the 'kitten-like housewife' in the 1950s. Friedan, ([1963] 2010: 5) suggests that women are influenced by the mass media because "...in all the columns, books and articles by experts women were told that their role was to seek fulfilment as wives and mothers".

In the past, when women's wages were viewed as simply a supplement to the male's

salary it would make sense that women did not further their education or pursue their own ambition 'Being driven', as we understand it today, was never appropriate for women because they were considered merely extras. The main function of women lay in caring for a household, or at least that is what many women had been socialised into believing. Magda, age 65, a widowed, bank branch manager, recalls that there was not any real pressure for her to continue her education because she would eventually stay home and raise children anyway.

*In those days you could leave school in standard 8 (grade 10), because why would a girl want an education? Those days the women would stay at home and men would go out and work. That was just the way it was (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager).*

The structure of society, as well as the way in which women were socialised in in the past further limited women's aspirations in the sense that they often did not see themselves as entitled to the same spectrum of options that were available to men. Friedan ([1963] 2010: 25-6) notes that "[i]t is like remembering a long-forgotten dream, to recapture the memory of what a career meant to women before 'career woman' became a dirty word ...". In this particular study some of the participants were aware that they would not necessarily be able to study what they wanted to. Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm, notes that certain career trajectories for women were limited in the past.

*But in those days when you wanted to go study further, the choices were specified; you could basically just become a nurse or a teacher. Female doctors and lawyers were a rarity in those days (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm).*

All the participants in my study have in some way indicated that they saw the importance of having a career and they understand what it means for their independence and identity. The following excerpts will indicate how individuals were socialised into certain roles to make certain key decisions about their lives.

Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm, comes from a wealthy middle-class background and explains that both her mother and father had tertiary

degrees. Her father was a qualified engineer and her mother was an archivist for a long-distance tertiary institution. She notes that from a very early age (three years of age) she was motivated by her parents to study further. She feels that her socialisation intersecting with the standard of living that she was exposed to played a large role in her choice of a tertiary degree.

*I would say that we were a totally average type of family. Both my mother and father worked, my mother was very determined that we should have a tertiary education, so it was like that from the start. I mean, I was three when my dad took me to the university to show me where I would be going one day. There was never an option for anything else (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm, explains that both her parents had tertiary qualifications. Her mother was a paediatrician and her father worked as a chartered accountant. All the daughters (four) in the household were told that they had to go and study after school. This idea was enforced over the years. Also the type of degree that she would ultimately enrol for had to conform to her parents' standards, and for them accounting was the obvious choice for their daughter.

*Oh, yes, definitely. I think there was always the expectation that as people we would be professionals. I don't think my parents were ever the type who made us understand that they would be looking after us for the rest of our lives. They actually brought us up to be independent and they pushed us. I don't think my parents ever thought that we were worse off because we were women and you can see this clearly when you look at all my sisters. It was expected of us to make something of our lives (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm, comes from a middle-class background and indicates that both her parents worked full-time. It was expected that she would go to university, but very little guidance was given to her in terms of the full spectrum of options and degrees open to women. Her mother wanted her to become a doctor and she was disappointed when Mari decided to

study agriculture. She considers her mother to have been a kind of a feminist and someone who raised her daughter to believe that men are not her superior. Mari, however, indicates in the interview that she was unhappy with her mother for socialising her with these beliefs because in reality she felt that men did not react well in the workplace if they were not treated as women's superiors.

*No, but I think, what I can remember is that when I wanted to help in the kitchen my mother would say 'Listen, go and study Mathematics and Science, you can always learn how to cook out of a cookbook later'. So I think my mother was more..., because she didn't have the opportunity to study, my grandfather didn't believe that girls should study further. She was the one that totally believed that we have to be able to look after ourselves and that we shouldn't be dependent on a man (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm, comes from a middle-class background. Her parents both worked full-time as advocates. Engela notes that she was pushed to do well at school, but she felt that her parents focused on her brothers' studies more. She feels that girls in our society still have marriage as a kind of a back-up plan and that is why boys are pushed harder to be successful.

*I can't really say, and I don't necessarily want to say that my mother was my main role model. My mother is also a career woman, she is an advocate, and you know for her to be twenty years older than me, I think it was even more difficult to pursue a professional career then, than it was for me. So that was pretty much what I saw a woman has to do, to pursue a professional career path (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm, comes from a middle-class background. Her mother worked as a teacher; her father was a farmer. Her mother motivated her to study, and the fact that she always worked was a big part of the motivation to study further after school. She feels the fact that her mother was a career woman influenced her greatly because she saw how a woman can also work as a professional person.

*No, she wouldn't have really liked it if you got married straight after matric. We all went to study further, four of us studied law. My one sister studied B.com marketing, she didn't finish, but she is actually doing better than all of us. One is an engineer and my other sister has a degree in political science, she has been living in New York now for a year and she works for the United Nations. My youngest sister has a beauty qualification (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm).*

René, 57, re-married, bank branch manager, wanted to study oceanography after school and was awarded a bursary to go and study at The University of Cape Town. However, her father refused to let her go because he considered that particular university 'too black'. In addition, he viewed Cape Town as a kind of 'Sodom and Gomorrah'. In her case it was not really a matter of not wanting to go and study further after school, but to study where she wanted to study. She eventually ended up not studying at all. Her mother was a housewife until she divorced her husband of twenty-five years. Her family believed that a woman had to stay at home and the man had to go out and work. She admits that she never really planned a career and that she only worked to bring in extra income to supplement her husband's earnings. Her actual wish was not to work at all, but she never considered herself rich enough to be able to do that, so she continued working.

*No, it was mostly the circumstances, they wanted me to go and study further. But they didn't want me to go and study where I wanted to study. I wanted to study further (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager).*

Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator, grew up in a middle-class household. While she was growing up it was expected of a girl to be able to cook and to look after those in her household. Girls and women were never specifically told to study, they could make the decision for themselves. She brings up the same type of issues during the 1950s and 1960s that Betty Friedan discusses in *The Feminine Mystique*, for example, there was no maternity leave in those days so women had to resign if they became pregnant, or they might even be fired.

*Because we were girls, in the times that I was still living at home, that was about forty years ago, we were brought up that a girl has to be able to cook*



*and that you should look after those in your household. So, the house has to be clean, your clothes have to be whole and everything should be neat and in order* (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator).

In terms of pursuing tertiary education, nine out of the ten women under 50 have university qualifications, whereas only one out of the four women over 50 has a degree. This disparity creates an interesting issue in terms of age and socialisation and the motivation for attaining an education. The older women received gender socialisation in the way described by Friedan (1963: 21-22) and Millet (1971: 31). While this hampered their early careers; some of them withstood these forces and carved independent financial lives. Two of the older participants were able to achieve their goal to further their education; the one started to study to become a lawyer in her thirties and the other obtained her matric certificate when she was almost 60 years old. The above statements by the participants all illustrate the important role that parents and socialisation play in determining whether women want to pursue higher or tertiary education.

Almost all of the women over-50 years of age who participated in the study were raised in middle-class households with a mother who was either a full-time housewife or had a half-day working schedule (such as a primary school teacher). Hence, the roles that these women were exposed to are not comparable to those that the younger participants were exposed to. Most of the younger participants had mothers who worked in a professional capacity, such as a paediatrician and an archivist.

Across all age categories the women expressed how valuable education is if one aspires to actively pursue a career and be independent, even though older women did not all do so, since their early socialisation didn't prompt them to do so. It is also important to reiterate that the younger women place a lot of emphasis on being financially secure and cite this as a reason for continuing to study and work.

It would appear from this particular case study that the parents of the participants in the over-50 category believed that their daughters had a 'back-up' plan in the form of marriage. It would seem that employers viewed women similarly during the apartheid era where numerous participants indicated that although they had the same

qualifications and the same job description as their male counterparts, they still earned almost 50% less in some cases. The ideology of patriarchy was the primary determinant in relegating women to subordinate roles in the economy during the apartheid era. It was well-known that during the apartheid era professional women who were employed in the public service were paid lower rates than men (Pillay, 1985, p. 29). This is made clear in the statements that follow.

*When I started to work I received R299, but men with the same qualification received an extra R100, in those days it was considered a lot of money. The first year the salaries weren't equal to the qualifications because when they appointed me as an administrative clerk, the men with the same position got more money solely on the grounds that they were men. And that was a bit of a delicate matter for me. (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm)*

*...Maybe salary-wise in those days, the men in the banks were just paid more than the women. The same position, but the men would be paid more (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager).*

*When we were appointed I started with R200 a month. The men were appointed on R400. So it was double your (woman) salary and that was on a junior level, the entry level. In other words, in those days there was always that 100% distance between you and a man. For example, housing was never even spoken about for women, and we never knew about it. Vehicle financing, you didn't know that you could get vehicle financing, this is how it was in the bank in those days, everything was there for men. A man could buy a house and a man could buy a car. And when it came to promotion time then you are evaluated, the men would always be promoted more than the women (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager).*

According to the feedback by the participants, salary differences have been partly levelled out since the beginning of the democratic era. Salary differences certainly are not as apparent as they were in the apartheid era, but that does not mean that those differences do not exist at all. According to Hultin and Szulkin (1999:468), past studies found that discrepancies in male-female earnings were partially due to the fact that women had unequal access to organisational power positions,

structures and resources. Some might even argue that the situation still has not really changed with reference to the unequal access to organisational power positions and structures.

For the women in the age categories under 50 years of age, in most cases the participants were motivated to study further after school. Most of the motivation stems from parents, a spouse, a supportive friend or boss, or the financial security that a degree would offer. The fact that most of these women's mothers were employed while they were growing up also plays a role in terms of seeing that one can have a family and a career. Most of the women noted that their mothers played a significant role by telling them that it was important to become independent.

The younger women (under 50 years of age) in my study had very specific views on dependence and these views coincide with the following statement; "since economic resources carry more value, more prestige and more marketability than domestic work, income dependency tends to be associated with powerlessness and inequality in other spheres" (Ward, Dale & Joshi 1996: 97). It is important to note that women's dependence on men leaves them financially vulnerable in the event of divorce, separation or widowhood. Money from employment is important to women in the sense that it gives them more decision-making power within the family and there are fringe benefits that might include an occupational pension, a company car or credit worthiness (Ward, Dale & Joshi 1996: 100).

### **3.3. Political atmosphere in the formative years**

All of the participants grew up during the apartheid era and this has had implications for their socialisation. Not only were they brought up in terms of the gender expectations of that historical period, but the messages transmitted from 'norm-senders' were sometimes highly racial and embedded in religious ideology.

When the National Party won the elections in 1948 the party was at the height of its popularity as a representative of Christian Nationalist, Afrikaner sentiment. The Nationalist movement became stronger and soon included organisations like the secret society known as the Afrikaner Broederbond, the Dutch Reformed church, the Federation of Afrikaner Cultural organisations and also included major agencies like Sanlam, Santam and Nasionale Pers (Vestergaard 2001: 20; Hyslop 2005: 781-

782).. These organisations have traditionally been known to support patriarchy and male involvement in most of their management hierarchies. Furthermore, the identity of the Afrikaner was based on the values of God-fearing Calvinism, structures of authority (in the form of husband and father, priest, school principal, political leaders, all of whom were considered to represent God on earth). Along with these values the adherence to certain traditions was paramount, for example, the fundamental importance of the nuclear family, heterosexuality and the importance of whiteness (Vestergaard 2001: 21). Most, if not all of the participants in this study said at some point in the interview that they had not really been aware of the workings of apartheid in the sense of the stories of atrocities that came out when the democratic government came into being after 1994 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings shed light on the deeds of the past. Vestergaard (2001: 26) reports this same finding by saying that most ordinary Afrikaners just tried to live their lives as good law-abiding citizens. Although it may be true that they never killed or tortured anyone, they were still beneficiaries of a system that was kept in place by those who committed human rights violations at the expense of black people and those who were against apartheid.

*I don't want to say it, but in those days we weren't really influenced by it, because we weren't at a disadvantage, so I think it was never... Because at that stage we were advantaged, so it didn't really matter to us. You know, you never really saw the other's (blacks) need. It was very easy for us, I mean, when we went to school, it was a white school, and it didn't really affect us (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*When I think back to it, we were totally sheltered. We had our two 'ousies' (black, female, live-in domestic workers) that worked in the house, but they were more like members of the family, if I can put it like that. Besides, the fact that I can't even think that I came into contact with people of my age from other races. We were also just...nothing to do with the whole thing. I think I was totally oblivious, to be honest. When you hear later what actually transpired, then it is to that effect that you didn't...I had no idea. I think it was kept from us (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*So let's take an example, I didn't realise for many years that I was living in apartheid. Because I don't think, I ever wondered...until one day my child asked me if I played with black children...I didn't know. I must've known that they existed, but I was never exposed to them. I didn't really realize it was apartheid, I think we were protected against it by the fact that they didn't sleep there, and that they lived in the location (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Mari made another interesting comment in terms of living in an apartheid regime rooted in Calvinist values and the effect it has had on her as an adult. These comments suggest that gender socialisation in South Africa often has to be understood alongside the larger racial and political dynamics of the country. 'Sheltering' and 'overprotection' are gendered processes, but they were heightened for many of these women given the political ideologies and insecurities of their parents.

*...Then she said Afrikaans-speaking, white women or people are born with guilt, Calvinistic guilt. And our parents reinforce it, our church and our schools reinforce it. Children are to be seen and not heard, if you do this then you go to hell, all that type of stuff. But you are born with guilt, it is the first thing. You feel guilty about everything and you don't have the same... There is a big difference between being cocky and being self-secure or arrogant and self-secure, but our parents didn't teach us that. Our parents taught us not to take liberties and to not be so arrogant, not that it was good if you were confident but you were still modest (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

When asked, most of the participants said they were not raised like their English counterparts, whom they considered to be more self-secure and confident and often raised to be more liberal.

*In my era there was no such thing... A child was to be seen but not heard. You must've heard those things from the old people? This was true, you were taught to respect an older person or alternatively, you had to respect your superiors. You had to say 'yes, boss', 'no, boss' and it was always a man.*

*That's just how you were raised as a child because your father was the head of the household and what he said was right. Whether it was right or not, you had to listen to your father. (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager)*

*And I think when I look back at how I grew up, you know we grew up with that thing that "children should be seen and not heard", you know that... So I think that has something to do with confidence. And you get the feeling that you don't have confidence when you look at English people. I think English people have more confidence (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*Yes, I do think that there is a difference between Afrikaans and English people, and English men and women. I think in general they grow up less inhibited, and they can say and do as they please, highly outspoken and a lot of confidence. We were taught that children should be seen and not heard. That is half the mind set of Afrikaans people. Sometimes these English can be cocky and it's quite irritating. Then I will rather be in my place doing my work, sitting and keeping quiet in the corner (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

Most of the participants in this study indicated that they grew up in households that were fairly conservative and politically moderate. The family setup that the participants were exposed to is what is considered to be 'traditional' i.e. a mother and father who are married with children and no extended family living with the core family, except in one participant's case where she was raised by her grandparents.

Socialisation and the context of the household has an impact on the formation of one's social being, thus it would seem appropriate to discuss the political environment that the participants were exposed to while growing up in apartheid South Africa.

Leonie, 36, widowed but engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm, recalls that her parents voted for the Conservative Party. When asked how she experienced the apartheid regime, she replied by saying that she was not really aware of it while growing up because she was in a school where there were no black children. She

did not have a problem with it at that time because she was not really aware that it existed. She further remembers that she was raised in a very protective household and she feels that the media also limited what they could know. Her current political view is that she is not a particular supporter of any political party, but she does vote for the DA and she agrees with the values that they advocate. The participant noted that if the system of apartheid had continued she feels that she would not have reached the goals that she was able to reach in the democratic era, also she acknowledges that even though she would have been disadvantaged in the apartheid era she would still have benefitted more relative to other groups.

Leonie also feels that white women have an advantage over white men in this point in time because in many cases job opportunities are not made available to white males. When asked if there was something specific in the apartheid era that would have stopped her from pursuing her career she answered that if one really wanted to make your mark the 'old boys' club' would never have accepted you. The situation however has now changed for women.

*Look, white males in our environment are becoming...they can't just apply for positions, because a position might not be allocated for white males, it might be identified for a black man, a black woman or an Indian person. So you can't... Then maybe as women we have a bit of an advantage over them. Especially in our profession there are less than a thousand black CAs in the country, so that is very little. And I think in total there is something like twenty-three-thousand CAs, so if you look at it in relation to that we are a small group, women don't even make up half of the grand total. So I think we are at an advantage (Leonie, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm, notes that she was always raised to treat others fairly and she feels that this has helped her to adapt to the democratic South Africa. Her parents were never really involved in politics. When asked what her political view was during the apartheid era, she answered that they were never really influenced by it because it did not put her at a disadvantage. At that point in time they benefited them so it did not really matter. She feels that

they did not really see what the system did to other people. She feels that even though she was in an advantageous position during that time, the white males still had a lot more privileges and opportunities than the white females. For her the real issue was between men and women because there were many things that women weren't allowed to do.

*Sinteché: How would you describe your position in the past, would you say you were in a weaker position when compared to a white man or white boy?*

*Yes, definitely, during that time it was like that, I think it was even more...there are people that were with me at school, my sister's friend, for example, wanted to become a pilot. And in those days a woman couldn't become a pilot (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

Sonja, 49, divorced, financial advisor, feels that although she has not really experienced any discrimination on the grounds of her race or gender, some people still make comments like 'it is because you are white' in weekly meetings at work. She was brought up at time when people suggested that it was not acceptable for black and white people to go to the movies together, or to have sleepovers. But she was never taught to believe that being a different colour was a bad thing. The political norms of the house decreed that there is place for everyone in this world and you should respect that. Her family did not support a particular political party, but she did say that they were afraid of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB).

*There was never... my father's best friend when he was a boy, was a black man because on the farm it works like that, you live too far away from other friends so then you play with each other on the farm. And I think it was a very good thing. When you hear how other people talk then it makes you scared because it's cruel (Sonja, 49, divorced, financial advisor).*

Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of an audit department, notes that her guardians (her grandparents) voted for the National Party (NP) and she experienced them as staunch NP supporters. They had a lot of 'time' for other races and she feels that if they were still alive they would have accepted the new South Africa. In her opinion, her immediate household accepts everyone because it is about who you



are, and not your skin colour. Her husband came from a family that considered themselves to be white supremacist; however since their marriage he has changed his point of view.

*The people from the sixties, like my mother in-law, were very racist. I don't like it at all because I am not a racist, I didn't raise my children to be either, but she is definitely racist. And it was also a... because she was English, superior when compared to Afrikaners. And you aren't allowed to say anything wrong about the English, she has very weird ideas (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager, explains that her parents were supporters of the National Party (NP), but she did not consider them to have been very politically active. During the apartheid era she was perceived as being a communist because she had always considered herself as 'left' of the government. She originally came from Zimbabwe and there were many aspects of the segregation policies in South Africa that were very strange to her, especially the park benches that said 'whites only'

*What was funny to me when I came here from Zimbabwe, were the benches in the park... in those days we rode with them (blacks) on the bus, we ate together, you know it wasn't... They didn't vote, but it was different than today. When I came here and I saw 'whites only' written on the park benches, I thought it referred to the clothes you had to wear if you wanted to sit on them (laughs). That is just how it worked; they had their own entrance (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager).*

Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager, recalls that her parents were staunch Nationalists, but they never forced their political views on their children. She recalls that she was never really aware of apartheid because they had been friends with the black children on the farm where she grew up. She never experienced her parents to be unfair when it came to their relations with black people. So she experienced the day-to-day living under apartheid as being fair.

*I would say no, and I am thankful to my parents for that, we were just an*

*Afrikaans family. There was no such thing as that guy is black and you are white and that there should be discrimination. Never. He was in his place and you were in yours, but there was never any discrimination (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager).*

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This chapter examined the dual influence of 'gender' and 'racial' socialisation. While emphasis is placed on the influence of gender socialisation, it is very difficult to ignore the significance of racial socialisation in a South African context.

All the women in this study were socialised as women generally are in Western societies (Friedan 1963: 21-22; Millet 1971: 26 to accept their place in the gender hierarchy, to be 'subdued', patient and have respect for authority. Yet, at the same time, their acquisition of high-earning, financially secure positions, suggest primary grounding to be independent and secure. Those who had mothers who worked or were ambitious tended to be more driven than others who were exposed to a more traditional, home-bound mother. There also appeared to be generational differences in terms of gender socialisation. There was a more active effort by parents to motivate the younger participants to pursue a career to ensure financial security for themselves.

The gendered 'norm-sending' in the Afrikaans-speaking South African context is not as coherent as that presented in international literature. These women were socialised to believe that men were their superiors and that they were inevitably tied to the household and should raise children. Nonetheless, some of the participants managed to think beyond that and were spurred them on to challenge the norms and to become executives in their own right.

Gender dynamics, however, as intersectional theory asserts, cannot be understood outside of other cleavages: race, class, place of birth and generation. All these strands have come more forcefully into the lives of these women: while not oblivious in the past, their renewed understandings of the privileges have re-socialised them into tempering their own ambition. While some of the women, particularly the older women, suggested that there was little or no discrimination on the basis of race in the past, most of them especially the younger women expressed guilt about being

oblivious and unaware of unfairness and inequality in South African society during the apartheid era. This could explain why most of the women in the study appeared to be almost apolitical, but very career focused.

Although socialisation can have a significant impact on how individuals develop, it is certainly not set in stone. It is flexible and open to the individual's interpretation, thus we are able to, sometimes, transcend the socialisation of our childhood and to re-socialise ourselves.

## Chapter 4: Gender and Workplace dynamics

### 4.1. Introduction

*“What is certain is that hitherto woman’s possibilities have been suppressed and lost to humanity, and that it is high time she be permitted to take her chances in her own interest and in the interest of all”* (de Beauvoir 1953: 714).

The quotation above highlights a context in which women have been blocked in terms of certain opportunities that they wanted to pursue. There is a suggestion that this has been to the detriment of society. In the following sections I will discuss how women’s progress is still sometimes stunted by certain structures like the ‘old boys’ clubs’, formal and informal systems of discrimination. I will also look at new opportunities that arise from working in industries that have been traditionally dominated by men. Once again, it is important to note how intersections between gender, race, generation and class have influenced these women and the decisions they have made. It ultimately explains how they have come to fill their current positions within the workplace. Following a qualitative style of presentation, I make extensive use of quotes from the transcribed interviews with the women in my study. This material is presented as themes which are reiterated in the concluding section of this chapter.

Professional women in Western society have been viewed differently since the 1960s when they were initially perceived as sexless if they had a career, while stay-at-home-moms retained their femininity. The 1970s saw the dawn of the discourse of ‘choice’ – an opportunity for women to have a career and family and to become some kind of a ‘super being’. During the 1980s it became common practice for families to have more than one wage earner; it was obvious that major changes in perspectives were occurring. The 1990s started to focus on the tensions that employed women experienced because they still had to perform in the workplace and fulfil traditional domestic roles at home (Kaltreider 1997:52). Women continue to experience tensions relating to responsibilities at work and home. The following section will attempt to highlight tensions experienced at work. Chapter 5 will focus on managing the so-called ‘work/life’ balance.

## 4.2. Women in the financial/corporate industries

In her book, *There's no crying in business: How women can succeed in male-dominated industries* (2009), Roxanne Rivera gives a compelling account of how women function in male-dominated industries. Many of these businesses have traditionally viewed women as mainly fulfilling the role of secretaries and they seldom envision higher level jobs for women. This view has come from conventional expectations that women would marry, become pregnant and then leave the workforce.

Male-centric environments can vary, thus the obstacles and opportunities for women may be different. The following industries have been labelled as traditional male industries, although it has to be said that progress in terms of women's advancement in these industries have been made through the years: engineering, science/technology, accounting, law, clergy, manufacturing, math/science, and high tech/software.

There are many different types of discrimination that people experience. One particular type that was noted by the participants is overt sexism. This particular type of sexism occurs when women are expected to adhere to traditional gender roles (Settles, Pratt-Hyatt & Buchanan 2008: 455). Those who perpetuate these roles and behaviours often do this to maintain some sort of power either in the public or private sphere.

Modern day sexism is far more subtle than the blatant sexism of the past; sexism now manifests as benign beliefs that include the denial of continuing discrimination and antagonism towards women's demands (Baskerville Watkins *et al.* 2006:525; Settles *et al.* 2008:455). Benokraitis and Feagin (1995:2) comment on the same phenomenon. They argue that people are often not aware that sexual discrimination still exists and this leads them to wrongfully conclude that women are absent from positions because they do not meet objective standards and requirements. There are also those who believe that women simply do not want to apply for certain positions. Arguably, it is because sexist structures are still operational, even though they work in more subtle ways.

According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995:41), modern sexism in the form of subtle

discrimination can often be explained in terms of the following examples. Men are often taunted because: 'are you not too good to be doing administration?' whereas a woman's message is: 'are you good enough to be doing administration?' In their study, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt and Buchanan (2008:460) also note that participants' ability was questioned on the grounds of their gender.

Recently there has been an emergence of neo-sexism which is also part of modern day sexism. Neo-sexism can be explained in terms of negative attitudes towards affirmative action policies that are designed to benefit women and is further related negative evaluations of women's' competencies. (Tougas, Brown, Beaton & Joly, in Baskerville Watkins *et al.* 2006:526).

In my study, most of the participants were able to recall an incident where they were either expected to perform a 'gender-appropriate' task (pouring tea for everyone in a meeting), were perceived and treated like a secretary, or that people questioned their ability to do a particular job on the grounds of their gender.

*I feel that all men are chauvinistic they just hide it. But you have to deal with it, for me it's not an issue, I know this. So many women are very shocked when a man makes a comment, but you have to know it and learn to live with it. It's not an issue for me. One of the CEOs, he's from a big multi-national company, sat with me and one of the male partners to discuss results. And when his secretary brought the tea, after about five minutes he looked at me and the CEO said that women are supposed to pour the tea. I just looked at him and I laughed and he never did it again. Then he poured the tea (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*I was working in N-manufacturing Company as the cost and risk manager for the supply chain and I had to attend negotiations with big suppliers and the last cost negotiation that I did was worth four-hundred million rand. What was always interesting was that I was usually the only woman there because the supply chain is male and they communicate with other males. So the actual telecommunication industry is a male industry. And then the South African men, Japanese men and German men would walk in and they would greet everyone with a handshake, except me. The one asked me once "hi, are you*

*going to take the notes of the minutes of this meeting?”. Then I answered him “I am the negotiator”. And it was always interesting to see that they were...they weren’t really mean, but it’s as if I’m not there, I’m just the PA. They assume that the fact that I’m there and that I’m a woman, I have to make the tea and take the minutes (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*I watch them (men) when the tea and coffee arrives, I have been told so many times to pour the coffee or tea. Then I just say: “no, I won’t”. I have seen when I pour tea for myself; everyone is supposed to help themselves. And many times I can read the men’s expressions to see who expects me to pour for them. They do this because you’re a woman (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

*I know for example that when I used to go and see clients, when we would get to the client they would be half taken aback that a woman arrived there, and this woman is a lawyer. I had to take white males with me sometimes because they were busy with their training. And then I would do all the talking, the trainee has all the questions and I answer the questions, but the client would keep eye-contact with the male. They won’t even look at you (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

*Even now there are still people, not just men that see and treat me as a secretary. They don’t ask you... when I went to go see a client, that guy thought I was a secretary he never thought that I could be anything more than that. It was a relatively old man. But it happens a lot, they would walk in, even when I was younger... it’s a lot better now but that is what they think when you are there with a man (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm).*

#### **4.3. Obstacles that women face in the financial/corporate industries: The changing structure of previously male-dominated industries**

It is sometimes difficult for women to truly penetrate traditional male industries because they have been run by males for many years. In the history of certain male organisations they may have never had a woman in their senior ranks. One of the obstacles that women face in traditional male industries is that they are often not

taken seriously. The following statement will illustrate this;

*It's not about generation...in our firm the partners are in their late forties and early fifties. One of our expert partners... now it's just me and a man (R) in our area. He (expert partner) invites me and R to a meeting. R this and R that, and I had to hold myself back, I was at the point where 15minutes into the meeting I wanted to take my handbag and say to them "see, apparently I am not needed in this meeting, you don't want to talk to me because you are only addressing R. Why did you invite me, I am going to leave now?" (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

Mari comments on how difficult it was working in the car manufacturing industry, especially because the manufacturing industry is one that has been traditionally dominated by men:

*And it was exceptionally difficult because I had four black men who were cost clerks and they had to report to me. They were not willing to accept my leadership because they were, what I consider, blue collar workers. And they would call me 'poppie' or they would down-talk me. It was really difficult for me because these guys were passive aggressive. They wouldn't say they weren't going to do something, they just didn't do it or they would take three days to do it (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*So I think in that respect you realise they have the attitude because you are working with labour law and you are working with unions and black men so they assume that you can't do it. Many times with clients... a situation has to take place first where you put a union in its place or you have to act against someone to show them that you can do it before they expect you can do it. Men don't need that type of test, men don't have it... men think that other men can do the job. And when you arrive at the businesses I always think that they don't think you can do the job, because you're a woman (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

However, this being said, one participant made an important point by stating that there are some men who really do try to give women credit where credit is due.



*I have to tell you that I have no respect for men who do that because a lot of the time it is those same men who don't know what's going on. My mentor at work is a fantastic man, that is why I want to do this job; I want to be like him. There have been instances where he sees the situation and he knows I want to become a partner, he helps me a lot. If the client asks him a question he would rather turn to me and say "I'll ask my colleague, she knows best". The trust that he has in me leads to trust on the clients' behalf. Because if this man in who they have so much trust looks to me for answers it turns the whole situation around (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Even though it might seem a woman is only worth something once a man has deemed it so, there is still some hope that men will start changing their behaviour to help create a situation where women are respected without such direct intervention. This type of change will only occur once men have truly accepted that women are valuable counterparts in organisations. It would be unrealistic to expect that this type of change can occur through women's efforts alone. The reality is that men and women work together in organisations so one cannot expect to be successful unless all the parties become involved.

A further obstacle that women face in male dominated industries is the feeling of being 'alone' because there is not really a support network available to them. Even in industries where there are more women these days, there appears to be a feeling of distance between them. Only one organisation mentioned in this case study had a formal network that was set up for women at that particular firm, but the participants who mentioned the network did not really see it as a tool to bring women closer to each other- it was more of a mechanism to initiate community projects. This feeling of being alienated from other women can also come from the competitive atmosphere that women often find themselves in when there is little room at the top.

Annie comments on the lack of a coherent social network for women in her firm and how this affects their in-house governing voting system:

*The women withdraw so when we have to vote then those women are not in the social network, we don't all see each other, I don't even know all the partners, you don't see each other. You are not going to vote for someone*

*you don't know. The women at the parties...I have been there so many times, I go and then the men stand and talk in their own little circle. You feel out of place and almost stupid there. So what do you do? Next time you don't go. The more you stay away, the less you are in the social circle, and the less votes you'll get (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

*I think so, I think you do have friends at work with the same role as you, the same everything, but I think what you said is also true that it can happen that women have to turn against a friendship if they are going in for the same job. It's possible (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*No, I've experienced it a lot, I work very closely with women in high positions and most of the time I don't like those women. They are very bitchy, they are out there to prove a point especially against other women (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Participants also noted how men make blatant sexist remarks to them in professional settings where such comments are considered offensive and inappropriate. While women can use this type of male behaviour to their favour, most of the time such comments have no place in society.

*Clients have made comments before. Once I said what type of car I wanted to buy but that if I continued to work in Company E, I won't be able to afford it. Then the client responded by saying that I should consider working at Teasers (an erotic dance club for men) and that he will make sure that I can afford that car. You just laugh at those types of comments, but next time I know that I can use it because there's obviously something about me that interests that person and I can use it to my advantage (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*Just the other day I was sitting in a meeting across the table from this one guy and then he said "yes, it's like when a man ... (word for the male orgasm)". I just sat there thinking, and then another guy said "hey, we've got a lady in the room!" But you know, just understand that this is how they operate, and they don't do it on purpose it happens by accident. But what an unacceptable*

*comment! So I sat there and said “well, I don’t appreciate it” (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

During the interviews some participants made it quite clear that they are sometimes labelled as ‘too emotional’. Appearing ‘too soft’ or ‘too hard’ can become a real handicap in one’s career (Brescoll & Uhlman 2008:268) In situations where men cry they are perceived as sensitive and caring; when women cry they are labelled incompetent and incapable of doing their jobs (Shields, in Rivera 2009:29). Furthermore, men are accepted and even rewarded sometimes when they become angry, but women who do the same are often viewed as displaying inappropriate and unprofessional attributes. Studies have shown that men who express anger in professional settings are more likely to be hired than men who express sadness. These men are also given more status, power and independence in their particular jobs (Tiedens, in Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008:268). It is interesting to note that some women label ‘other’ women as emotional- an attribute which is regarded as detrimental in the workplace. Thus, while being critical of certain masculine attitudes, many women tend to valorise these masculine attributes as necessary for ‘survival’.

*I almost like it more to work with men. Men don’t bring the emotional side to work whereas women bring the emotional side to work sometimes. And that is totally unacceptable. If I had a bad morning at home I don’t bring it to the office, you leave it in the car and you can deal with it tonight. A lot of women don’t know how to divorce the two (work and emotion) (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*And women are just more emotional. A lot of the time... I think you have to be in control of your emotions in the workplace, so that you don’t appear emotional because then you lose credibility (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*You either have to be in survival mode or you have to withdraw, there are only those two options. The median way is not available in this reality. And then there is that other thing, women react differently to things than men. And men don’t understand this. If I burst into tears at work, it happens rarely, but when I am at that point where I burst into tears and I walk out that office and I slam*

*the door, then I just can't take it anymore. Then it is anger, and my anger makes me cry and then I am even angrier with myself because I am crying out of anger. But it's because the frustration is unbearable so you have to react emotionally (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

*For example, we have a boss now and I think he's totally okay. And he told me the other day that I should get another role model. When I asked him what he meant he told me that when his wife shouts and nags him to go and wash the car he wouldn't necessarily do it. All that he does is he shuts down and he isolates himself. But if she came and sat on his lap and she asks him sweetly then he won't hesitate to do what she asks (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Mari emphasises that men do not listen to women when they are shouting or nagging. The only way that women can get men to listen is to suppress all frustration and to ask for things in the most demure and rational way possible.

Some participants note that patriarchy is still prevalent in their organisations because there are men who are constantly 'checking up' on women and women's movements; more so than they would with other men. If women do not answer their phones for whatever reason then they are labelled 'unreliable', however when the men do the same it is assumed that they are busy.

*Yesterday again, we were all sitting around the table for the budget meeting. Then they (men) started to moan about women who don't answer their phones. Then I interjected and asked "Did you at all consider that they (women) might be with a client?" But you know, the woman is brought into disrepute. Because she must be on holiday? (sarcasm). These are the type of things that I have to deal with on a daily basis (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

*At our firm, my partner and I...I am also kind of the boss, but it seems that it's kind of a problem for him if I want to go somewhere. When we were younger he would phone me to ask where I was, but I never ask him those kinds of questions. It's as if he wants to be in control. I have to also tell you that he is*

*my brother, but I don't let him bother me. When the clerks drive around he never asks where they are. It doesn't happen that often anymore, it was more when we were younger; he is a year younger than me. I think a lot of women experience this in the work environment (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm).*

#### **4.4. The 'old boys' club'**

The traditional 'old boys' club' is probably one of the most widely acknowledged and discussed obstacles that women face in organisations. According to international research on the topic, entry into the corporate sector does not guarantee acceptance into the 'masculine culture' of the financial world. The literature notes how so-called 'women on top' find it difficult to gain access to 'old boys' networks that are vital to their progress (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:203; Davies-Netzley 2007:214). This exclusion from informal networks (such as clubs and golf courses) often restricts women's progress in their careers. What makes acceptance into the corporate world even more difficult is the stereotypes that are created of women in executive positions. They are often labelled 'ball busters' or 'dragon lady'. These stereotypical depictions restrict the ways in which women can act (Tannen 2007:192; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff 2007:204).

The participants in this study all alluded to the existence of some or other boys' club in their work environment. These clubs could either be subtle or quite obvious. According to Rivera (200:14) the most distinctive trait of these boys' clubs is the atmosphere. Machismo is a negative term that describes this atmosphere. Another characteristic of these clubs is a culture where qualities such as aggressiveness, risk-taking and one-upmanship predominate. Typical sectors where boys' clubs might exist include the following: construction, politics, academia (upper echelons), policemen/firemen, commercial brokerage, commercial real estate/development, old-line consulting firms and financial services.

Benokraitis and Feagin (1995:29) note that the men who dominate particular organisations tend to perpetuate a masculine ethos. Newcomers are often assimilated into these networks. A radically diversified management structure does not significantly impact on this. Women are often not included in these predominately

male networks. These networks can function in an informal or formal capacity. Men would often go for drinks after-hours, or they would go on golf outings. These men often have spouses or partners at home who manage their household responsibilities so that they have time to mingle with each other and establish collegial and friendship bonds.

Women do not have that support structure at home so they are seldom able to join these after-hours activities. In turn they are automatically excluded from the male networks. Often, when these social groups do get together in an informal setting, they discuss critical information with each other and without realising it; women find themselves at a professional disadvantage for not being able to attend or not being invited.

Annie comments on the definite presence of an old boys' club at her firm:

*So in the decision-making capacity, where it is decided upon the politics and in the decision-making capacity where it is decided upon how we run things...I call it the boys' club.... you are not invited to social functions where there are men, they go and play golf. I am a golfer but I don't get invited. It's just that, you are not invited because you can't participate in 'those' type of things. If they would only ask me to join them, I would. But no one invites me. No one invites the women. Socially they bond like that, they go on golf tours and they play golf once a week, they go out for lunch and they have beer together (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

*There could be a possibility, I wouldn't put it out of the picture, like-produces-like and you will promote your best buddy before you promote someone else (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

Claudia feels that it is not just any type of 'old boy's club' that functions at her firm, but that white, Afrikaans-speaking men are the biggest obstacle.

*Yes, I would actually say the problem when you get to a firm like this one where there are white males... And we still have that problem in this firm that white males are dominant and you know you want partnership so at some stage you feel a little left out. And even now, I think we restructured a little last*

*year and still with the restructuring all the men still got all the high positions. One of the women in my unit, she's a director and she isn't advantaged at all (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*Come to think of it, during my articles I really think there was actual gender discrimination. I did my articles at GM, the most difficult people to work for I don't like to say it but it's middle-aged, white males, you know. But like I said my parents were relatively progressive thinkers, but I think there is a big generation-gap between white males of that age. They don't like it when a young white woman stands up for herself. I think the managing partner there didn't like me at all, but I won't keep quiet if something is not right (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*K-firm was like a Robben Island to a lot of old boys' and what forced them to change was the fact that we couldn't get BEE points. And for years it was a male organisation and only men were in senior management, very few women were partners, and there were almost no black partners. It was a male organisation. Many times we talk of the 'old boys' club' then they get very angry. In a big way it has started to change, but it is forced change and they don't really believe that women and black women and black men and Indians can add value. It is only about getting the points otherwise we don't get work in (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*Oh yes, it exists, it exists absolutely. Because when something is arranged then just the 'boys' go. Golf...don't worry if I can or want to play, I am not invited. I think golf is the most general thing, and other sport activities like rugby games and so on. Yes, the men get preferential treatment when it comes to sport (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

*The young men are invited into the inner-circle and they are pushed and pushed and they go through the ranks because they are part of that inner-circle. And they don't want to be associated as the one that is equal to a woman; they are part of the boys' club because that is more important to them career-wise. They are moulded, everyone is moulded. Women and men are moulded in society's expectation and that isn't going to change (Annie, 40,*

married recently, director of an auditing firm).

In their study, Baskerville Watkins, Kaplan, Brief, Shull, Dietz, Mansfield and Cohen (2006:527-28) found that those who hold neo-sexist beliefs often turn to others who hold the same beliefs for advice at work. They also found that men and women who held sexist beliefs, particularly against women, would often benefit in terms of career outcomes. Furthermore, it was shown in their study that having a male instead of a female mentor translated to greater objective career benefits and protégés would be at the greatest advantage if their mentor was a white male.

A further issue that many women perceive as an obstacle in the business world is that women expect that it is based on fairness and that it is meritocratic. These women find it very hard to accept the unfairness and dishonesty that sometimes prevails in this sector; men often take credit for women's work, or male bosses make promises that they never intend to keep.

*I think in a big way they (the boys' club) understand how a woman's mind works and they play on that. So they know that we are driven and they know we want to achieve constantly and they actually know that women's moral values are much more solid than men's. There is a lot more things that are black and white in terms of what is right or wrong in the work environment. We are also a lot more caring (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*There are other barriers, your value system. Are you willing to destroy your values; are you willing to take part in the politics and to break down your colleagues to get where you want to be? Or are you going to walk the straight and narrow road? You get to that fork in the road, I can go forward by breaking down my colleagues or I can walk the straight and narrow road by being decent and to keep with my value system. My feeling is that if you go with your value system you become the victim of their political games. So if you don't take part in the political game you won't progress. The probability that I am going to achieve my life's goal isn't as great as I would like it to be, but it's because I don't want to play political games to get ahead (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*



Women who speak their minds and who communicate directly are often side-lined by men in the work environment. It is said that ‘boat-rockers’ do not succeed in modern corporations, so often older and less aggressive women are appointed in senior positions (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995, p. 30). This kind of behaviour from male managers ensures that their female co-workers will not want to upset them by confronting them about certain issues. Thus, women recognise that if they become too assertive, too demanding, or if they ask for a promotion they can quickly become ‘outsiders’. Women in this situation are kept in firmly established roles by male managers who are usually very courteous, and who patronise female employees in the ‘nicest’ way. This kind of behaviour from male managers ensures that their female co-workers will not want to upset them by confronting them about certain issues.

*I have made conscious decision that they will not do to me what they have done to others. But if you are the outspoken one, then you become the “problem child”, a stirrer. And that is how you are perceived, I don’t worry about that, but many women do and then they withdraw. And then their leadership capabilities are suppressed and they give up and decide that it’s only an eight-to-five job (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

During the interviews, the participants indicated that they felt that they were often being marginalised in some way by men in meetings, but they adapted certain strategies that help them to gain more authority. Most of the participants mentioned that they prepare well in advance before a meeting in order to make sure that they are an expert in their particular field. In some companies the male leaders create an awareness of their physical presence to maintain masculine domination. They do this through exaggerated body language. Some women managers have caught onto this strategy and have started to echo this behaviour in their own ways; they might wear a lot of perfume, speak loudly, and wear low-cut dresses or very bright colours during meetings. A strategy that many of the women in this particular study employed to gain awareness in meetings included being very well prepared.

*I think one thing that I’ve learnt, especially in the business world is that if you*

*want to say something you have to be prepared. I think one of my techniques, particularly when going into a meeting with men is to show that you are prepared and that you know your facts. I think it's something, especially if you specialise and you are well read then you know you can put your facts on the table. So if you want to make a point your facts have to be clear and organised. So that is one of the techniques I use to make them listen (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*I think being prepared...I am not a very good speaker, my English is pathetic and everything happens in English so I try not to say a lot. What I do say has to be correct and said at the right time. I'm not the type that talks the whole time. I think it's my technique to prepare and to know when to say what. I won't talk impulsively because I struggle to communicate in English. I can write it easily enough... you know some Afrikaans people come across stupid, I'm one of them (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*I make sure that I'm prepared because if you know what you're talking about then they listen (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*There are situations like that, yes, but I think it depends on your confidence. If you are going to feel inferior in the meeting you are going to have an inferior attitude. If you feel that you are equal then you will be able to deal with them on an equal basis. So I haven't really felt that I'm not someone else's equal, but that's because I know my field. If I didn't know my field it might have been different (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

#### **4.4. Opportunities and long term goals for the participants in the financial/corporate industries**

Despite suggesting that there are significant constraints, it is clear that opportunities in male-dominated industries exist. Space for gender transformation is growing. Literature points to the fact that the lack of women in these industries is actually creating exciting new opportunities for women in organisations, because the structure of society has changed in such a way that women can offer new input that will help organisations to compete more effectively. Rivera (2009: 15) points out that the demise of certain male-dominated organisations is sometimes a result of

'inbreeding', which results in the same ideas being circulated without any new ones ever coming in. According to the BWA's 2010 report, there is a strong business case for including women in the upper echelons of companies' leadership hierarchies (BWA 2010: 20) . Reasons why women should be incorporated include that women are a potential source of competitive advantage, women have considerable influence in the economy as workers, consumers and business owners, the presence of women on boards is a potent indicator of the company's intentions and environment and this will affect whether other companies want to be associated with them or not.

The women in this particular study have many aspirations and they generally have a positive view of the future. Regardless of the obstacles that have been discussed in the previous section, these women's agency and strength should ultimately shine through. Their endurance and courage to take on new challenges like pursuing studies or attempting to climb the corporate ladder in the face of adversity, is admirable. These women should give others in the same position hope and inspiration as they serve as role models for the next generation of career women in the South African financial sector.

*I have a twenty year plan to eventually become a partner at this firm. I am very competitive and very ambitious. If there is someone in my group that is doing better than me then I would work ten times harder to do better than that person (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*I actually see myself starting my own business. I don't think it will be something related to what I'm doing now. I don't think my personal future plans include working for a boss. I am not the type of person that gathers a pension, whatever I do next has to be able to sustain me so that I don't have to stop working at 60. I'm not 100% sure how or when this will all happen. I also want to complete a law degree, but I don't know if I want to do it now (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*If I have to say then I would continue doing what I do. I don't have to necessarily take over the CEO's job in the next five or ten years. If I'm still the chief audit executive and if I have expanded the audit function and things are going well and if the company gets value out of the audit function, then I will*

*be happy. But my children should still know who I am and I want to know what goes on in their lives. For me the goal is to find a balance and to maintain it (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*I definitely want to work. At this stage my children are in primary school and I see that as a five/six year thing to get them through primary school. I think once they are finished I would like to study further. I want to study law. So that is definitely something I want to do in the future (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*I have a ten year plan, a life plan before I am 60, which isn't too far away. I would really like to become the CEO of this bank, but whether it's possible, I don't know. But that won't stop me from trying. That is what I'm working for (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

*In terms of my career I would really like to become the MD (managing director) of this company, I think that opportunity will present itself. I think when it comes to that day it will be difficult to shift positions, but I would like to be the MD of this company. I want to be somebody. I think I have it, but I still need to work a little harder. I want to walk into a place and have presence; people have to know that this is the person that you are. Now that I'm finished with my MBA it would actually be nice to become a bigger career woman in South Africa. I would like to develop myself to the point where people will say "let's get Engela to be the MD of this company". I don't know how to get myself on that level, yet (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

*My specialist area is in procurement. I want to become the chief procurement officer for a big company. I think that is what I want to be in the next three or four years (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed that there are various obstacles that women face when attempting to break through 'glass-ceilings' in traditionally male dominated sectors like finance. It is very difficult to break down longstanding traditions and institutions

that suppress women. In exploring the dominant discourse it emerges that it is not so much about your skin colour, but rather about unequal power relations that continue to exist between men and women. It is also about becoming aware of all the covert ways that men use to continue traditions like the 'old boys' club', infiltration of these traditions seem almost impossible at this time.

It is also interesting to note how women who try to be 'like the boys' often think they succeed in infiltrating that group, but eventually they find out that they have not. Unfortunately in the process these women often alienate other women in their attempts to be more like the men in their company.

Intersectional theory can aid in shedding some light on these women's experiences within the workplace. The first intersection that one can note is gender, and how it acts as a barrier to block access into certain male-dominated social networks. Also, this intersection brings with it modes of prescribed behaviour that are deemed appropriate and inappropriate. Thus, women might attempt to downplay feminine traits and emphasise masculine ones in order to 'survive'.

The second intersection is generation. The older participants to this study (above 50 years of age) may have missed certain opportunities in their youth due to discriminatory practices during the apartheid era and now, because they are older, they might forfeit certain opportunities due to old age. This might also explain why only one of the older women held a senior position. The younger women benefitted from education received during the apartheid era and they are all still 'young enough' to fulfil any position they choose. This is probably also why their long-term goals are hopeful and ambitious.

The third intersection is race. In the last few years white women's presence in management has become a topic for debate in terms of whether or not they should benefit from Affirmative Action legislation. All the women in this study, at some point, reflected on this and whether they would be able to apply for certain jobs or remain in their current positions because they are white.

Despite the above mentioned obstacles these women are still optimistic and show agency by verbalising their hopes and dreams for the future.

## Chapter 5: Gender and negotiating the present and future

### 5.1. Introduction

*"It would be easier to live with a greater clarity of ambition, to follow goals that beckon toward a single upward progression. But perhaps what women have to offer in the world today, in which men and women both must learn to deal with new orders of complexity and rapid change, lies in the very rejection of forced choices: work or home, strength or vulnerability, caring or competition, trust or questioning" (Bateson, in Kaltreider 1997:3).*

Currently men and women are still positioned differently and unequally in Western society. Women's lives are said to centre around household and family care activities, whereas the centre of men's lives have always been in the public sphere of big business, government, sport and the military. As the opening quote suggests, the binary opposites that divide people and choices should be done away with because the only function they fulfil is usually negative. By rejecting forced choices it will be easier to express ambition and move closer to equality.

Almost all the women in this study have chosen to have both a career and a family; thus rejecting the forced choice of work or family. This choice does not come without consequences. This chapter will explore how the different roles that women fulfil intersect. This intersection of gender, work and home life can often cause a lot of stress for women. First, I will explore what the concept of the work/life balance means to working women with families. Second, the focus is on the high demands on working women's time, especially if they aspire to 'climb the corporate ladder'. I will also discuss what society expects of working women who have families and how these women feel added pressure to spend 'quality time' with loved ones because they spend most of their time at work. Last, I will examine how women feel about the intersection between their work lives and their family lives. Following the qualitative style of presentation I make extensive use of quotations from the transcribed interviews with the women in my study. This material is presented as themes which are reiterated in the concluding section of this chapter.

## 5.2. Work/life balance

In this particular study the concept of the 'work/life balance' is not used as an approach as such, but rather as a tool to explain how women feel about 'balancing' high demands at work, as well as, managing household/domestic responsibilities. The reason why this concept is not used as an approach is because if I were to do so, I might be accused of exaggerating assumptions about separate spheres and the difficulties of 'balancing' or harmonising different domains in more gender equitable ways. Arguably, this might undermine progress towards more gender-equitable workplaces (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport 2007: 365).

In their study, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt & Buchanan (2008:463) state that women confirm that career and family choices are often difficult to make. Combining both roles could be stressful and challenging. Society also has specific social expectations of women, and often women feel they cannot live up to certain expectations; for example, that food has to be on the table by the time the husband arrives home from work, that the house is tidy, that the children are driven around, that if there is an emergency the women can take off from work but men do not have to, and that women have to be emotionally available at all times in relationships.

*Luckily my husband started his own business about four years ago so he also works long hours. We are in a relationship where both of us work long hours, which helps. But a man is a man and when they get home they want their wives to be there. A lot of the time I feel that I work harder than he does and when I eventually get home he still expects me to cook dinner. It's something that he was used to (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*I think it's stressful, and I don't know but when you are a mother things are a little different. You always believe that no-one can do it better than you. I always feel that if there is housework to be done then I am the one who has to do it because my husband can't do it (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*Intimate relationships are a big problem, for various reasons. The first is that I am not available every day and I don't have the energy to be nice every night.*

*And I am not always here (often works late or has to travel for work) (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*I had a full-time maid and the school was close enough that the children could walk in the mornings and afternoons. But if there was a crisis then he wouldn't take off from work, I would have to go and fetch them. Even now, it doesn't matter where they are, if there is a crisis it is my crisis. He can't take off from work, but I can (sarcasm). Going to the doctor or dentist those were all my things (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm).*

*But you get home tonight and you make sure that the food is on the stove and you have to make sure that everyone gets fed and bathed and that they do their homework. The men don't do that. We use to joke that when you come home from your day-work your nightshift starts. And it is much worse than your dayshift. In the mornings you rush to get the kids to school, in the afternoon you rush again to pick them up and then you have to go back to work because you're behind. Then you have to let the kids sit and play while you finish work (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager).*

It is clear from the statements that women still feel that society's expectations are weighing down on them in certain aspects of their lives. The first account shows that even though the interviewee and her husband both work long hours, he still expects that dinner should be made by her instead of making it himself. Thus, it seems preparing dinner and meals are still deeply seated within the woman's realm of duties.

The second, fourth and fifth extracts, are all probably a by-product of successful advertising campaigns that target mothers as their main audience: the message is that no-one can be a better parent than you, no-one can clean the house like you, no-one can cook like you. If women continue believing this they will have to continue doing these things, because no-one can do it better than them. This myth feeds men's opinions that domestic and household duties are for women only and that men should sit back and let their wives 'be all that she can be'; the best mother, best housekeeper, and the best cook. Betty Friedan would be very disappointed to see that women still behave like this and think that what they are perpetuating is right.



The third quotation shows how difficult it sometimes is for a single, executive woman to maintain an intimate relationship where it is expected of her to always be emotionally available. After all, is that not what every 'good' woman should do? But the question never turns on the man who is often only available when it suits him, because this is how society has constructed the single man to be. There is also the notion that a man has to be 'caught' which implies that it is difficult in the first place to 'make him yours'; whereas it is assumed that the woman would always 'fall into the arms' of her man. There is added pressure on a woman who is in her forties and still single to get married before it's 'too late'. Society approves of the bachelor in his forties getting married when he deems that the time is right. The bachelor does not have a 'due date', but the single woman in her forties risks becoming a 'spinster' as time ticks on and her youth fades.

In the public discourse women praised as 'multi-skilled' and celebrated as managing to somehow balance the aspects of home and work life (Hochschild, in Moen & Yu 2003:293). According to Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport (2007:365), the ideal worker is one who can prioritise paid work above all other activities. This model is becoming more problematic as workloads are intensified in contemporary contexts.

When asked about how Katrien deals with responsibilities at home and at work, she had the following to say:

*Yes, that is my greatest challenge every day (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

The frustration and fatigue that Katrien is experiencing due to role strain is made very clear in this statement. Trying to assume all work and household responsibilities obviously has an impact on her. It is interesting why women do not actively challenge their husbands in this respect. Has the socialisation process been so successful that it has normalised the notion of 'sacrificial duty'? Is it because many mothers enjoy being martyrs too much? The rhetoric around being a mother is seldom that of pleasure and mostly it deals with all the sacrifices that will have to be made once the children arrive.

Furthermore, according to Hochschild (in Moen & Yu 2003:296) "[j]obs and career

paths come pre-packaged in ways that presume workers are without family responsibilities”, this causes tension at work when women sometimes feel they have to almost apologise, for example, for having children or becoming pregnant. The following statements highlight this issue.

*I know that a lot of us who have children also work decreased hours and they use that to discriminate against you. Naturally I feel that we are a lot more affective because we do exactly as much work in an 80% workday as when we worked on a 100% workday. The perception now is that you cannot become a partner because you don't work full day, but you actually still do a full day's work (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

Annie comments on a statement that one of the partners at the auditing firm made about women in their company that are given bad ratings while on maternity leave. Ratings are different from previous years because the person was not on maternity leave then:

*On Monday I was told that we had to look at the ratings of the women that are on maternity leave because their contribution for this year isn't the same. And then this one guy came, one of the partners, and he asked why should we pay them (women on maternity leave), they only cost us money (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

The issue around maternity leave is a difficult one to resolve. One suggestion is that one can level the amount of paternity leave to that of maternity leave. If we equalise the amount of time available to spend with new-born children it will not be a gender issue anymore; there are single fathers who have to raise infants by themselves. One could ask why mother-child bonding is valued more than father-child bonding. It could answer a lot of questions about why fathers abandon their families or become absent. If we do not value both parties the same in society it is obvious that the party who is valued least will feel a lesser sense of responsibility. If we perpetuate in placing emphasis on only motherhood we will continue to see absent fathers and we will continue to hear insensitive comments in the boardroom about maternity leave. Surely, the answer does not lie in women deciding to remain childless in order to compete with men for top jobs?

### **5.3. There is no such thing as an ‘eight- to-four’ job in the financial sector**

In their study, Gorman and Kmec (2007:829) indicate that there is a trend towards an increase in work effort and that this increase is significant in women’s feedback on the subject. The consequences of this increase will be experienced in women’s daily working lives and their career trajectories. One might also expect them to experience more anxiety, depression and burnout. This trend is supported by the study by Moen and Yu (2003:292). Their research shows that workers are putting in more hours on the job than was the case in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The increased hours contribute negatively towards the feeling of being rushed and over-worked (Robinson & Godbey, in Moen & Yu 2003:292). If a woman wants to work and have a family the responsibility of creating or finding a ‘balance’ is her problem. These women feel added pressure from male colleagues who question whether women can have a career and a family (Davies-Netzley 2007:212).

Hochschild (1996:24) makes an interesting argument in terms of why people might be working more hours on average per week. His study shows that people actually like being at work more sometimes than they like being at home. This makes sense for women because the home represents a much wider variety of chores and tasks, while work represents a creative space where growth and occupational satisfaction is possible. When women work they are partially freed from household ‘hassles’ or the so-called ‘second shift’. He suggests that there has been a reversal of family and work cultures. “Thus the contraction of emotional culture at home is linked to a socially engineered expansion of the emotional culture at work”(Hochschild 1996: 22). One spends a considerable amount of time at work and so friendships and bonds develop between people. Hochschild (1996:27) points out that along with gender de-segregation of the workplace and the lengthening workday, there is an opportunity for people to meet and sometimes to develop romantic or quasi-romantic ties. One participant explained how the emotional culture at work affected her.

*It was very close to happening to me, because you work with people at a place and you really bond since you work long hours. You are with them so you become more comfortable. It almost came to the point where it led to ‘something’ at work. It’s just God’s grace that stopped it in time so nothing came of it. I told my friend, she is the only one besides my husband that*

*knows, I learnt that it happens so easy and no one... I always thought that I would be immune against it, there was never any notion of affairs. I mean, you only see your husband and children at night and then you get back to work again. And you never see your husband during the day. In the mornings you get dressed quickly and when you get to work some of the men would say things like; "gee, you look nice, good to see you again!". It feels great and then you are obviously an easy target. And then when you get back home you think to yourself why your husband never says you look pretty anymore (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

This extract proves Hochschild's point that the work environment can lead to the formation of bonds between people, including quasi-romantic ties. The fact that people spend extended amounts of time together at work will inevitably lead to bonds being formed between them.

A further and more obvious reason why people would work longer hours is the fact that there is a perception that you will only be able to make positive progress in your career if you put in more time than what is expected of you. This is often difficult because many women who have careers also have children or other responsibilities. The following excerpts from the participants' interviews indicate how one cannot expect to be promoted if you only work from eight o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon.

*There aren't that many women here in high positions, because this is a 24/7 job. I can't see myself having children with this job, it's impossible. I'm away from home a lot. Last night I had to go to Menlyn at nine o'clock so that I could buy some groceries because that is the time that I get home, otherwise there would be nothing in the house. So if you want kids and that type of thing... yes, I am all for a balanced life but then you shouldn't do this type of job. Then you have to do some other type of job (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*In the past I would've easily sat here (at work) until two o'clock in the morning if it meant that I could walk in the next day and the previous day's work is concluded. You just can't do that. There are some women that can do that,*

*but then you lose your family. I mean if you can't maintain some form of balance then you have to compromise. I am with her (young daughter) from quarter past four in the afternoon and then I will stay with her until she is bathed and she is sleeping, then I would work again and only get into bed after two o'clock in the morning. Because this is how you do it. But I don't even think that is enough for some... it's a classic example, luckily I have a supportive husband, but I don't think everyone has that. It's the issue of when there is a board meeting and you can see it's coming closer to six o'clock in the evening and there's no one to pick up your child. You will have to excuse yourself (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*There are female directors that have children, but then... I think it is a personal choice, you know whether you decide that another person will raise your child because you are working until eight or nine o'clock at night. So I think the way you manage it is a matter of what you prioritise (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*The thing with the previous audit firm is that they sell time, you have to keep clients happy, and you have to sell the employer. It's a totally different ballgame. To a certain extent there is flexibility, it's not that they want to see you there until five o'clock, but then you work at night when the children are sleeping or over weekends (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*Oh, and see a woman always does more. I wouldn't have gotten promoted so quickly if I didn't put in the time and effort. If I didn't make sure my work was of a very high quality. And I don't work from eight-to-four; I work from eight-to-seven, eight or nine at night. I make sure my work is of such a quality that they can't... they don't have a reason to send me off. You work twelve hours plus, it's not the standard eight hours (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department).*

*You aren't going to get onto my level by coming to work at half past eight in the morning and leaving at half past four in the afternoon. If that is all you do because everyone else does it then you won't find yourself in another position (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

All the extracts indicate that these women have put in a considerable amount of time and effort to reach the positions that they hold today. They have gone beyond what is expected and that seems to be the implicit rule of their success. These extracts further show that it is through sheer determination that these women have achieved a certain status; most of them also have children and household responsibilities to deal with.

An interesting finding in this particular study was that one of the participants was sceptical about some women who want to have a career and a family. For her it is important that if you get paid the same salary as a man you will be treated like a man, and that means that she has very little patience with those women who want 'special treatment' solely on the grounds that they are women.

*It's hard work, don't expect when you just get out of school or university and you've finished with your articles that you will work at THE COMPANY from half-past eight in the morning until half-past four in the afternoon and now your dedicated to the company. And you tell everyone how dedicated you are to the company and you think you are going to get somewhere in the company. That irritates me a little. I had to walk a long road to get where I am, and I did it while I had children, while I was married and while other demands were made on my time, I still did what I had to do. I never used the excuse that I have children or this or that (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm).*

Annie also comments on meetings that are impulsively scheduled after five o'clock and how that affects women who have children who have to attend those meetings:

*In the past, because there were primarily male partners in this environment, then they would suggest that everyone meet at six o'clock that evening, and then the meeting is from six until eight. A woman has to help her children with homework, I don't have children, but that is how other women feel (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

When looking at the feedback the participants make it clear that men can deal with demands on their time after-hours better, largely because they have wives at home

who take care of the household responsibilities. These men often do not take into account that women in management, no matter how progressive things might seem in the workplace, also have to deal with domestic responsibilities. There was only one exception in the study, otherwise all the women indicated that they had to take care of household responsibilities when they arrived at home.

The fact that powerful corporate men engaged with ambitious women in the workplace, but went home to compliant, stay-at-home wives was mentioned by some of the participants.

*No partner's wife works and they are all 'poppies' (dolloed up, just concerned with rearing children and maintaining their appearance) (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*The majority of the men in this environment have 'trophy' wives and they prefer 'trophy' wives. Their wives stay at home, I'm talking about the senior men, and they raise the children, they drive the children around, they look pretty and they receive your guests. They don't question you and they tell you how wonderful you are, even though these are strong men and they are strong at work they prefer their wives like that at home (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

These statements indicate that the men who hold executive positions have wives to fall back on when the meeting continues after 6 o' clock in the evening, or if they have to go have drinks after work. Women often do not have the luxury of a stay-at-home father or a 'trophy' husband. The participants' feedback on this matter always held a hint of sarcasm or disgust.

#### **5.4. The issue of spending 'quality' time with children and loved ones**

Most of the participants indicated the importance of spending 'quality' time with loved ones and children. Hochschild (1996: 21) affirms this tendency and notes that there is a clear gender pattern because most women work outside the home and they perform less family rituals. Thus they feel the need to work in 'quality time' with loved ones when they can fit it in.

*I go in to work very early, I don't see my children in the morning, but I made a conscious decision and I said that in the mornings it is rush time anyway. Then I try to come home earlier in the afternoons so I can spend more quality time with my children (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive).*

*I still feel guilty now sometimes, because in the afternoons we go home and I help him with homework and those types of things. I am tired by then and then there isn't really that much quality time. I feel guilty about that (Leonie, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*The one thing that we are adamant about is that we don't want a nanny or something like that. We work so when we are at home we do everything for her ourselves. Personally, I feel that it doesn't have to do her any harm, I really try to spend quality time with her (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*Financially things were dire and I really had to watch what we spent. Even when she was small I really made time to spend quality time with her. Even now that she is all-grown up we still spend time together (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator).*

These statements clearly show that women express a need to spend 'quality time' with their children. Women feel that they are somehow cheating their children out of having a devoted mother. Once again society's expectations of mothers weigh heavily on those who do not fit into the traditional mould. These statements do show agency; the women have made peace with the fact that they only have a certain amount of time to give, and they have gone as far as to actually give that time a name. This shows that these women are actively rejecting the forced choice of 'motherhood or career' because they are embracing both.

### **5.5. The choices around having children, nannies and feelings of guilt**

In this particular study two out of the 14 participants indicated that they did not envision having children in the near future. The reasons they cited for making this decision include that first, they work until late at night and sometimes over weekends so they would not be able to look after a child/children. Second, the one participant



was afraid that she would be viewed differently in terms of her capacity to act in a senior position. There is a perception that being a mother is viewed as an impediment to upward progress in a company. The following two excerpts indicate how motherhood can be used as a tool to discriminate against women who apply for senior positions.

*But, like I said I think especially on my level, that is where I'm going to stay, you won't become a director if you still have small children (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm).*

*I think if you talk about top executive management and directors of companies then I think in the end it's family life that eliminates you from it and it is a form of discrimination, I saw it (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

The statements below explain why two of the participants do not want to have children at this point in their careers.

*I think he (husband) also realises that we can't manage it (having a child/children) right now. I am not going to have my child raised by a domestic worker or a nanny. But I suppose you pay the price, I think all decisions in your life have a price. My mother always asks me what's going to happen when I'm old and then I always think; "what is my child going to do for me when I'm old?" (rhetorical, sarcastic question) (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*And like I said I made the decision not to have children because I'm not a 'nanny' mom. I don't want a child to have a nanny as a mother, why do I have a child then? But in my personal relationships it's a big problem. The man that I'm married to now is very successful, he has his own business. I am the type of person if they say travel more then I pack my bags and go. I feel very strongly that if you are in a man's world and that is what the job expects and you want to do that job, then you have to do it (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm).*

These extracts both suggest that these women do not want to be replaced by

nannies if they did decide to have children, instead they would rather remain childless for now. The first extract suggests that there is pressure on those who decide to not have children. This pressure comes from society and perpetuates the myth that children will look after parents in their old age. In modern society, this is something that no child necessarily looks forward to even if their parents gave them all they could when they were young. There is no guarantee that a child will look after his/her parents in their old age.

The second statement illustrates the freedom that women have if they choose to remain childless. Also, it provides evidence that this participant feels that gives her a competitive edge because she can have the same freedom that a man has if he needs to go away for work.

Even though women experience pressure to conform to modern ideals of care, Alwin, Braun and Scott (1992:33) found that the majority of their participants from Germany, Great Britain and the United States approve of women working when the care of children is not an issue. However, the participants' views differ dramatically when there are pre-school children present; in this case the majority believe that women in that situation should not work outside the home. In her study of maternal employment and time spent with children, Bianchi (2000:402) notes that mothers' reallocation of their time in the labour market has had little effect on children's well-being. She also notes that we tend to over-estimate maternal time with children in the past, since we know relatively little about women's non-market activities and the actual time spent with children might have been exaggerated.

One of the main challenges that working women face is the issue of making sure that children are taken care of, especially children under the age of six years. Most of the participants who have children (12 out of 14) made use of grandmothers, friends and pre-schools to look after their children during the day or when they could not.

The issue of getting a nanny to look after children seems to be a sensitive subject for participants, with only one of the participants indicating that she might consider getting one if responsibilities become unmanageable at home. In their study, Alwin, Braun and Scott (1992:14) indicate that the changes in the labour market in the past century have been accompanied by a number of changes in the family, including an

increase in the age of first marriage, a delay in the initiation of child-bearing (except for post-War baby booms experienced by most Western countries), a declining amount of time spent caring for children, and an increased reliance on non-familial sources (such as nannies, au pairs, and day-care centres).

Hochschild (2000:35) notes that in the past one could rely on grandmothers and other female kin, but the economy has pushed even these women into the workforce, so it is seldom that they are still be available to look after children. A trend that has developed in the United States of America is to hire a nanny to look after children. This tradition has been widespread in South Africa where most middle to upper-class households employ domestic helpers. These workers often perform a myriad of household chores and that sometimes include looking after small children. When asked, some of the participants were not enthusiastic about the idea of having a 'stranger' raise their children. Hochschild (2000) notes that having a nanny is like hiring a wife; this is something that could make a few working mothers uncomfortable as this will have implications for how children become emotionally attached to their nannies.

The ideal of care has always been associated with things private, natural and well-functioning. Hochschild (1995:332) notes that care is more central in the lives of women than in men because women are mainly involved in looking after children, the sick and the elderly. Furthermore, the image of the female caregiver is propagated by corporate advertisers who use the mother-and-child image to sell anything from diapers to insurance, as well as a wide range of foods. Women feel pressure to conform to this image and when they do not they might feel like they have failed themselves, their children or their family in some way. The following excerpts from interviews indicate how some of the women in the study feel guilty for not completely conforming to the ideal image of a mother who is always there providing constant care.

*I feel that I neglected my child somewhat, because like I said I had to let him stay with people so that I could study and then I would only pick him up at night (Leonie, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*My job has a tremendous impact on my child because I have to work outside*

*the country a lot. She stays with my maid, she's the only child and I'm a single parent. She has told me before that she thinks I love the firm more than her. But she has learnt that I have to work otherwise I can't look after her. I am at a stage in my life where I don't know if it's a benefit to be a career woman and to be hard working and driven. It's not worth the sacrifice (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm).*

*The bank puts a lot of stress on their employees. You have to fill more than one position and you have to put in a lot of over-time if you want to do the job right. When raising your child... you're not there for sport activities, you get home late. Time and effort-wise you don't get paid that much for all the extra work you do. I would say that I wasn't really there for my child, there are a lot of days when I realise that (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager).*

*My job had an impact on my marriage. Part of the reasons behind my divorce was my job. Because there were times that there just weren't enough personnel and I had to work late and so I couldn't be at home (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator).*

These statements show that being a working mother is a difficult task and that working mothers seldom have enough time, or enough energy to do both effectively. In addition, they feel that they are not paid enough for what they are sacrificing. It is clear that these women experience a deficit in more than one way and that this takes an emotional toll on them.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter set out to explore how women deal with work and home responsibilities that often coincide. What makes matters worse for working mothers is that society puts further pressure on the individual to meet its expectations. Often these expectations are almost archaic and out of sync with contemporary lifestyles and this puts the individual in a more difficult situation to try and deal with the expectations. One of the main expectations that society has of women is that they must put their families' needs above all others, but this is difficult in contemporary society where women have to work in order to support their families financially.

One can imagine these contradicting forces pulling in opposite directions, leaving the woman in the middle to deal with the pressure of balancing their work and home life. Things are definitely not becoming easier; workloads in contemporary society are on the increase. Furthermore, the ways in which jobs/positions are set up, do not take into account that the individual fulfilling the position might have responsibilities at home; rather they are set up for single individuals without children.

The strain of having to balance home and work responsibilities might also become worse in the case where the mother is 'driven' or ambitious and directed towards climbing the so-called 'corporate-ladder'. The little time that she did have with her children will definitely be sacrificed if she wants to pursue her goals, because of the widespread perception that only those who are willing to sacrifice 'deserve' promotions. The merit system in many companies is still to the men's advantage because men can afford to stay at work after-hours because their wives are at home looking after the children and managing the household duties.

Thus, whether women want to acknowledge it or not, they have to become more like men if they want to 'make it'. For this reason two of the participants have remained childless; it allows them to compete with men for the top jobs.

These women also feel immense guilt about the fact that they are not able to be 100% devoted mothers. They feel that they might have failed somewhat because society paints the picture of the ideal mother as one who is always available for her children, without fail.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This particular study has focussed on a selected group of women who have been shaped by South Africa's political history and who hold particular racial, cultural and gender identities. The participants were all between the ages of 30 and 65 years of age at the time of the interviews. They were all white, Afrikaans-speaking individuals who work in the financial sector of Gauteng. Furthermore, all of the participants were employed in different levels of the management hierarchy, thus they were all either middle, senior or executive managers. My aim was to reveal how these women's life experiences had influenced their career trajectories, especially in terms of their socialisation, political context, obstacles to upward career progress and how they balance work and home roles.

In the following section I will discuss my conclusions in terms of the main research questions that were posed at the beginning of this study. I will consider the theoretical significance of my findings, and I will look at how this particular study adds to the debate. I will make further recommendations for future research.

### **6.1. Answering the initial research questions**

I set out to examine women's career trajectories to establish the ways in which white, Afrikaans-speaking women have been affected by the changing politics in the country and workplace. Most (9 out of 14) of the participants felt that the change from the apartheid state to the democratic government had in some way advantaged them, as well as women in general. Simultaneously, they were of the view that they would have been striving for good careers regardless of the government, because they believe that it is hard work that leads to progress. Only one participant indicated that she doubted that she would have been in such a high managerial position in the apartheid era because she perceived the 'old boys' clubs' to have been especially prevalent during the apartheid era and they would not have accepted women in their management ranks. The older participants (50 years and older) all noted that in general they observed more opportunities for women in the democratic era than was the case in the apartheid era. Thus, the racially segregated past was also one in which gender hierarchies defined women's life chances.

An interesting point to note was that no participant indicated that they wanted to

leave South Africa and emigrate elsewhere, although some seemed to entertain the idea. There was consensus that there were many opportunities available in South Africa, especially for those who were willing to work hard. Most of the women felt that it is still an issue of 'men versus women' that causes them frustration at work. In Chapter Five, the particular problem of 'old boys' clubs' was discussed. These networks are considered a remnant of the apartheid era that remains prevalent today. Arguably, it shows that patriarchy is still operating in the current democratic society, or at least in these women's environments. What embeds patriarchal behaviour is the fact that men still appear to be 'over-protective' of women in the sense that they always question where they are going or why they are not answering their phones. Women are also not sent out to areas that are considered 'dangerous'; men are sent, and they are not invited to informal gatherings because it will not be viewed appropriate for a woman to be there.

The second research question sought to establish whether women consider themselves to be treated differently (i.e. discriminated positively or negatively) on the basis of race, gender or both. The general feeling that I noted from participants' feedback was that the main issues they faced were still more gender-based than it was race-based.

Some of the participants noted that they felt that companies only employ 'previously disadvantaged' groups because the government requires them to do so. There is no active spirit of change, according to them, rather it is perceived as a forced change that needs to occur for the numbers to 'look good'. The fact that this is still happening might contribute to the continuation of tokenism and all the negative effects that go along with this particular social phenomena.

There was some resentment when participants spoke of family members who had been retrenched because of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) regulations, but overall the participants felt that the process was reasonably fair. Participants indicated that they have come to accept that their skin colour might put them at a disadvantage when applying for positions, especially if the other candidates are black and have more or less the same qualifications. This does not, however, set them back because they have mentioned that there are many opportunities

available. Issues of race were ever-present in the interviews especially when the discussion turned to perceive white privilege and perceived black incompetency in the work place. The last issue that I wanted to address was to describe the techniques and strategies that women might employ in order to balance home and work life. All the participants indicated that they experience varying levels of tension in terms of managing home and work responsibilities. Those participants with children (12 out of 14) all indicated that they felt they did not have enough time to spend with their children. They emphasised the importance of spending or finding 'quality time' with their children. This finding is echoed in the study by White (1995: 13). White's study was based in the United Kingdom and found that women in management did not have a lot of time to spend with their families and that these women also employed the notion of spending 'quality time' with their families. This shows that careers and families do not have to necessarily be in conflict with each other because those different roles might offer psychological benefits. This might explain why all the women in my study indicated that they enjoyed working even though the time spent at work took them away from their children.

A second element of White's (1995:13) study that resonates with this particular study is that all the women involved worked continuously and full-time. They aimed to fit domestic responsibilities around their work or some chose to remain childless (2 out of 14). These women realised that full-time employment is a pre-requisite for their career success.

Furthermore, White (1995:6) notes that the process of investment in work or family roles is poorly understood and that past research has not focused on theoretical aspects of this phenomenon, rather it is mainly descriptive. This particular study would follow this style by being more descriptive because women's narratives have been used to explain their experiences, but it is also rooted in a theoretical framework, i.e. interpretive social science. Interpretive social science seeks to understand social meaning in context; it further delves into the ways that people understand social life. This approach helped me to discover what is meaningful and relevant to those being interviewed and how those individuals experience daily life.

As indicated in Chapter Five, it is important to note that all the participants wanted to



play an active role in their children's development and nannies were not considered a viable option unless all other alternatives had been exhausted. Thus, it appears that the discourse around 'having it all' is still present in these women's narratives. This can either be liberating, in the sense that women find meaning and purpose in actively taking part in work and home life, or it can be physically exhausting and it may lead to disappointment in oneself and one's abilities.

In conclusion, striking a 'balance' between different and sometimes conflicting roles is not an easy task; rather participants indicate that it is a great challenge. Furthermore, society has certain archaic expectations of mothers that some of these women cannot fulfil because they have to work full-time to provide for their families and to actualise their own ambition. It is also difficult for these women to deal with the guilt of not being able to spend the amount of time that they want to with their children, especially in cases where a child might have special needs. They feel that often their male counterparts at work do not experience these challenges because they usually have wives at home who focus only on running the household, thus freeing the males to pursue their careers more vigorously. There is also an implicit problem that women who want to compete with men for top jobs may have to sacrifice some of their femininity or even decide to remain childless in order to gain an advantage over their male counterparts.

## **6.2. Theoretical significance of the findings**

By choosing standpoint feminism as one of the theoretical frameworks for this particular study I have been able to investigate women's exclusion and lack of full integration into the upper echelons of the management hierarchy, I have also been able to explore their experiences and perspectives. This approach has allowed me to reflect on my own position as a researcher and how the researcher's subjectivity affects the research and outcome. Essential to this approach is the fact that a woman's biography and experiences become central to the production of unbiased accounts of the world.

Following in the tradition of sociological feminist Dorothy Smith, this study has aimed to create social theory that looks at women's daily experiences in order to find problems that require a sociological explanation. This particular study has sought to

improve women's understanding of the social forces that shape their lives, how these social forces might oppress them, and most importantly to illustrate that social change is possible. Like Dorothy Smith's, this study focused on women and where they find themselves in their contemporary lives.

I have further made use of interpretive social inquiry to try and understand social meaning in context. This approach has helped me to discover what is meaningful and relevant to the participants and how they experience their daily lives. Furthermore, I was able to share experiences, feelings and interpretations in an attempt to see the world through their eyes. This approach further explains that the fundamental nature of social reality is largely what people make it out to be, thus adopting a constructivist view of social reality. People are said to go through a constant process of negotiation and communication by interacting with others to construct social life (Kimmel, 2000, p. 122).

Within a social reality that has been shaped by those within it, it is important to emphasise that people do not only have single social roles, but many roles that intersect. Intersectionality as an approach is a central tenet of contemporary feminist thought and it has been credited for broadening conceptions of gender. The approach reveals how the individual's social identities influence their beliefs about experience and practice. The individual's social location also reflects their intersecting identities. An explanation of these intersections can reveal both oppression and opportunity. Thus, if one is on the advantaged side (for example, a middle-class, white woman) there might be less oppression and disadvantage given the person's access to rewards, status and opportunities when compared to other categories of women (for example, a black working class woman living in a rural area). There is a further possibility that one intersectional position may be a disadvantage in terms of one group, but advantage in reference to another; a white, Afrikaner woman is a part of the white community that has always enjoyed certain social privileges, but she is in a disadvantaged or minority position when situated in the corporate sector that has been traditionally male-dominated and where there could be presently fierce competition with other previously disadvantaged groups. This example illustrates how one's race and gender can be an asset in one context and a liability in another (particularly when other intersections are illuminated).

What is important is how gender interacts with power that is embedded within the above mentioned social identities (Collins, in Shields 2008:301; Knudsen 2007:67). Furthermore, socialisation of the individual is equally as important because it is what moulds a person to ultimately fulfil particular roles. I have acknowledged the generation gaps between these women and how in some cases this has affected their socialisation process. I also realise that there are many factors that influence an individual's socialisation, but one force that is of paramount importance to my study is the effect of being socialised in a patriarchal society. Millet (1971:26) explains that socialisation is a process that involves parents, peers and cultural notions of what is acceptable and what is not. It has also deemed what is appropriate for each gender in terms of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture and expression.

The participants in my study all fulfil various social roles simultaneously; some of these roles are often in conflict with each other and this can cause tension for the individual. It is important to investigate how social and cultural identities intertwine. The relationships between gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class and nationality are important when one attempts to study women's multi-layered experiences (Knudsen 2007:67). Intersectionality as an approach has been especially valuable in exploring changing socio-political positions that have been described in this study.

This particular study has positioned itself squarely against biological determinism (Kimmel 2000: 54). My main position holds that individuals are shaped by culture, socialisation and other social institutions. This view is supported by Kate Millet (1971: 28) when she states that gender is constructed via culture and not biology. This study has been set up to illustrate the importance of context and how it explains individual's identities and behaviour. I have also tried to illustrate how my participants have shown agency by actively challenging certain patriarchal values and norms in an attempt to re-socialise themselves to become more independent as women. Thus, because gender is socially constructed and open to reinvention, the concept is liberating for women as a whole. Some of these women have been able to create alternative conceptions of femininity in order to adopt certain masculine traits to 'survive' in the traditionally male-dominated corporate sector. In no way have they chosen to become entirely masculine, but rather to integrate certain traits that they

deem to be valuable in that particularly competitive environment.

### **6.3. Adding to the debate**

It appears from the literature that relatively little is known about the white, Afrikaans-speaking women in contemporary South Africa. They are often simply referred to as one of the beneficiaries of the apartheid system. They are also sometimes wrongly included under the label of 'Afrikaner'. Not all Afrikaans-speaking women have to or want to embrace the 'Afrikaner' identity and its accompanied value systems and norms. My study has shown that 12 out of the 14 participants indicated that they are just Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and not necessarily Afrikaners. In the corporate environment it seems to be to these women's advantage to appear almost apolitical, because re-affirming the stereotypical image of the Afrikaner-associated with the right-wing AWB during the apartheid era would be to their detriment. Furthermore, the Afrikaner identity has been associated with patriarchy; these women do not want to associate with the identity anymore because they have in some ways transcended it by actively challenging prescribed roles of behaviour.

No study that I have come across so far has looked specifically at white, Afrikaans-speaking women that work in the financial sector in some kind of a managerial capacity. This particular study has aimed to contribute, on a micro level, towards a better understanding of women's attempts to evaluate and engage with their socialisation process, their career choices, opportunities and obstacles; as well as, how they cope with managing (often competing) home and work roles.

On a macro level, I hope to add to the gender inequality debate in terms of providing some insight into reasons why women still hardly make up 20% representation in management levels of South Africa.

### **6.4. Future research recommendations**

In setting out this research project my goal has not been to focus on race, although it is important if one attempts to explore different contexts. "Women of all races faced some degree of state-sanctioned discrimination since legislation ranging from tax codes to pension recreated women's subordination by assuming their dependence on male breadwinners" (Seidman 1999: 291). Rather, my aim has been to highlight issues surrounding gender-inequality.

The issues emerging out of this research can be applied to and explored when researching the experiences of other races, ages, language groups and social contexts. If one is interested in the racial dimensions of this research one can conduct a comparative study based on similar research concerns. This type of qualitative, gender-sensitive study would be able to highlight general issues that most women face in the financial sector. Ultimately, one could possibly affect policy and legislation with such findings.

Furthermore, if the aim is to generalise the results of this particular study, one could conduct similar case studies in the financial sectors of other regions in South Africa. Future studies could also turn the lens towards men's experiences in the corporate sector and probe whether the racial and class diversification of the corporate sector is undermining existing networks and patriarchal hegemony. Also, what alliances can be built between women of different races, ethnicities and ages to further the interests of gender equality? These are questions and challenges for a democratic South Africa.

## Bibliography

Alwin, D.F., Braun, M. & Scott, J. 1992. The separation of work and the family: Attitudes towards women's labour-force participation in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. *European Sociological Review*, 8(1), pp.13-37.

April, K., Dreyer, S. & Blass, E. 2007. Gender impediments to the South African boardroom, *South African Journal of labour relations*, 31(2):51-67.

Babbie, E. 2005. *The Basics of Social Research (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*.Canada: Thomson Wadsworth

Baron, R. A., Byrne, D. & Branscombe, N.R. 2006.*Social Psychology (eleventh edition)*.New York: Pearson Education.

Bartol, K.M., Martin, D.C. &Kromkowski, J.A. 2003. 'Leadership and the glass ceiling: Gender and ethnic group influences on leader behaviours at middle and executive managerial levels,*The Journal of Leadership and Organizational studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 8-19.

Baskerville Watkins, M., Kaplan, S., Brief, A.P., Shull, A., Dietz, J., Mansfield, M. & Cohen, R. 2006. Does it pay to be a sexist? The relationship between modern sexism and career outcomes. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, 69(2006), pp.524-37.

Bazely, P. 2008. Analyzing qualitative data: More than "identifying themes", *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1-15.

Benokraitis, N.V. & Feagin, J.R., 1995. *Modern Sexism: Blatant, subtle and covert discrimination*. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Bianchi, S.M., 2000. Maternal employment and time with children: Dramatic change or surprizing continuity? *Demography*, 37(4), pp.401-14.

Brescoll, V.L. & Uhlmann, E.L. 2008. Can an angry woman get ahead? Status conferral, gender, and expression of emotion in the workplace. *Psychological Science*, 19(3), pp.268-75.

Browne, I. & Misra, J. 2003. The intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29(2003): 487-513.

Burger, R. & Jafta, R. 2010. *Affirmative Action in South Africa: an empirical assessment of the impact on labour market outcomes*. CRISE working paper no.76. University of Oxford Press.

Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

BWA (Business Women's Association). 2008. *South African women in Corporate leadership Census*. Dictum Publishers (Pty) Ltd. Available at: <http://www.bwasa.co.za/Portals/4/docs/CENSUS2008.pdf> [Accessed 22 August 2009],

BWA (Business Women's Association). 2010. *BWA South African women in leadership*. [Online] Available at: [www.bwasa.co.za/Portals/4/docs/BWACensus2010Report.pdf](http://www.bwasa.co.za/Portals/4/docs/BWACensus2010Report.pdf) [Accessed 31 March 2011].

Cahill, A.J., 2008. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online] (Fall 2008 Edition) Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/femapproach-continental> [Accessed 29 April 2011].

Carli, L.L. & Eagly, A.H. 2001. Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction, *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4): 629-636.

Cloete, E.1992. Afrikaner Identity: Culture, Tradition and Gender, *Agenda*, 13(1992):42-56.

de Beauvoir, S. 1953. *The Second Sex*. New York: Knopf.

Davies-Netzley, S. 2007. Women above the Glass ceiling: Perceptions on corporate mobility and strategies for success. In: Arrighi, B.A. (ed.) 2007. *Understanding Inequality (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Department of Labour. 1997. *Employment Equity Bill*. Government Gazette: Pretoria. Available at: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70548> [Accessed 22 August 2009]

Department of Public Service and Administration. 1998. *White Paper on Affirmative action*. Government Gazette: Pretoria. Available at: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70434> [Accessed online 22 August 2009 ]

Durrheim, K.; Boettiger, M.; Essack, Z.; Maarschalk, S. & Ranchod, C .2007. The colour of success: a qualitative study of affirmative action attitude of black academics in South Africa. *Transformation*, 64(2007), pp.112-40.

Endacott, R. 2008. Clinical research 4: Qualitative data collection and analysis, *International Emergency Nursing*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 48-52.

Fink, A. 1998. *Conducting Research Literature Reviews*. Sage: United.

Forret, M. & Dougherty, T.W. 2004. Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences for men and women?, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(2004):p 419-437.

Franks, K., Schurink, W. & Fourie, L. 2006. Exploring the social construction of life roles of career-orientated women, *S.A Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 31(1):17-24.

Friedan, B.[1963] 2010. *The Feminine Mystique*. London: Penguin.

Giliomee, H. 2003. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Glover, D, 2009. *Genders*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Gorman, E.H. & Kmec, J.A. 2007. We (have to) try harder: Gender and required work effort in Britain and the United States. *Gender & Society*, 21(2007), pp.828-56.

Guest, G. Bunce, A. & Johnson, L. 2006.How many interviews are enough? An experiment with Data Saturation and Variability, *Field Methods*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 59-82.

Harding, S. 2004. A Socially Relevant Philosophy of Science? Resources from Standpoint Theory's Controversiality, *Hypatia*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 25-47.

Harding, S. & Nordberg, K. 2005.New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 2010-2015.



Haslanger, S. 1995. Ontology and social construction. *Philosophical topics*, 23(2), pp.95-125.

Haslanger, S., Tuana, N. & O'Connor, P. 2011. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online] (Summer 2011 Edition) Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/feminism-topics/> [Accessed 29 April 2011].

Hassim, S. 2004. *Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces: Reconfiguring the Women's Movement in democratic South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

Heath, J. 2011. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online] (Spring 2011 Edition) Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/methodological-individualism/> [Accessed 29 April 2011].

Heckathorn, D.D. 1997. Respondent-driven sampling: A new approach to the study of Hidden populations, *Social problems*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 174-199.

Hochschild, A.R. 1995. The culture of politics: Traditional, Postmodern, Cold-modern and Warm-modern ideals of care. *Social politics*, 1995(Fall), pp.331-46.

Hochschild, A.R. 1996. The emotional geography of work and family life. In: Morris, L. & Stina Lyon, E. (eds). 1996. *Gender relations in the public and private: New research perspectives*. London: Macmillan. pp.13-32.

Hochschild, A.R. 2000. The nanny chain. *The American Prospect*, 11(4), pp.32-37.

Hultin, M. & Szulkin, R. 1999. Wages and unequal access to organizational power: An empirical test of gender discrimination. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(1999), pp.453-72.

Humphries, B. & Truman, C. 1994. "Feminist challenges to traditional research: have they gone far enough?" In: Truman, C. *Rethinking Social Research*. Brookfield: Avebury.

Hyslop, J. 2005. Political Corruption: Before and after Apartheid, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31 (4): pp. 773-789

Jamali, D., Safieddine, A. & Daouk, M. 2007. Corporate Governance and women an empirical study of top and middle managers in the Lebanese banking sector, *Corporate Governance*, vol. 7, no. 5, pp. 574-585.

James, W. & Lever, J. 2001. The Second Republic: Race inequality and democracy in South Africa. In: Hamilton, C.V. (ed) 2001. *Beyond Racism: Race and inequality in Brazil, South Africa and the United States*. London: Marliene Rienner.

Johnstone, F.A. 1970. White prosperity and White supremacy in South Africa today, *African Affairs*, 69 (275): 124-140.

Jordaan, C. & Ukpere, W.I. 2011. South African Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 and current Affirmative Action: An analysis of labour and economic history. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(4), pp.1093-101.

Kaltreider, N.B. 1997. *Dilemmas of a Double Life: Women Balancing Careers and Relationships*. London: Jason Aronson.

Kenny, B. 2008. Servicing modernity: White women shop workers on the Rand and changing Gendered respectabilities, 1940s-1970s, *African Studies*, 67(3):p365- 396.

Kiguwa, P. 2004. Feminist critical psychology in South Africa. In: Hook, D. (ed.) 2004. *Critical Psychology*, Cape Town: UCT Press.

Kimmel, M.S. 2000. *The gendered society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Knudsen, S. 2007. Intersectionality-A Theoretical Inspiration in the Analysis of Minority Cultures and Identities in Textbooks. Caught in the Web or Lost in the Textbook. Available at: [http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque\\_iartem/pdf/knudsen.pdf](http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque_iartem/pdf/knudsen.pdf) [Accessed 17 August 2009]

Kongolo, M. & Bojuwoye, O. 2006. South African experience of Gender and Affirmative Action: A research report. *Gender Technnology and Development*, 10(3), pp.361-83.

Landman, C. 1994. *The Piety of Afrikaans women*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Lang, P. 2003. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Germany: Peter Lang

Lewis, S., Gambles, R. & Rapoport, R. 2007. The constraints of a 'work-life balance' approach: an international approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), pp.360-73.

Lindbeck, A.& Nyberg.N.S. 2006. Raising children to work hard: Altruism, work norms and social insurance. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* , 4(November), pp.1-34.

Littlewood, B.. 2004. *Feminist perspectives on sociology*, Harlow: Pearson

Maddock, S. & Parkin, D. 1993. Gender cultures: Women's choices and strategies at work, *Women in Management Review*, 8(2): p3-8.

Mariotti, M. 2009. Labour markets in South Africa during Apartheid. Australian National University. Available at: <<http://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/14127/> [Accessed 8 September 2009]

Martineau, R.1997. Education in a New South Africa: The Crises of Conflict, the Challenges of Change, *The Journal of Negro Education*, 66( 4): 383-395.

Mather-Helm, B. 2006.Women and the glass ceiling in South African Banks: An illusion or reality, *Women in Management Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 311-326.

Matsepe-Casaburri, I. 1986. On the question of women in the South African struggle. *African Journal of Political Economy*, 1(1), pp.40-59.

May, T. 2001. Perspectives on social scientific research, in May, T.(ed) *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

McCall, L. 2005. The complexity of intersectionality, *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 1771-1800.

Meintjes, S. 1996. The women's struggle for equality during South Africa's transition to democracy, *Transformation*, 30(1996): 47-64.

Mikkola, M. 2008. *Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender*. [Online] (Fall 2008 Edition) Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/feminism-gender/> [Accessed 29 April 2011]

Millet, K. 1971. *Sexual Politics*. London: Granada publishing.

Moen, P. & Yuu, Y. 2003. Effective Work/Life strategies: Working Couples, working conditions, gender, and life quality. *Social Problems*, 47(3), pp.291-326.

Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies: A South African guide and Resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Naidoo, V. & Kongolo, M. 2004. Has Affirmative Action reached South African Women?. *Journal of International Women's Studies*,6(1): pp. 123-135.

Neuman, W.L. 2006. Chapter 4: The meanings of methodology. In: Neuman, W.L. 2006. (ed.) *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Perrons, D. 2003. The new economy and the work-life balance: Conceptual explorations and a case study of New Media, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 10(1): pp. 65-93.

Pillay, P. 1985. Women in employment in South Africa: Some important trends and issues. *Social Dynamics*, 11(2), pp.20-37.

Powell, G.N. & Graves, L.M. 2003. *Women and men in management (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. London: Sage.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act. 106. In Bill of Rights. Available at: <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm#9> [Accessed 22 August 2009]*

Reitz, D. [1929] 2006. Adrift on the open veld: The Anglo-Boer War and its Aftermath 1899-1943. In Emslie, T.S. (ed) *The Deneys Reitz trilogy (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Cape Town: Stormberg Publishers CC 1999

Rivera, R. 2009. *There's no crying in business: How women can succeed in male-dominated industries*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan.

Salganik, M.J. & Heckathorn, D.D. 2004. Sampling and estimation in hidden populations using respondent-driven sampling, *Sociological Methodology*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 193-239.

Seidman, G.W. 1993. "No freedom without women": Mobilization and gender in South Africa, 1970-1992. *Signs*, 18(2), pp.291-320.

Seidman, G.W. 1999. Gendered Citizenship: South Africa's democratic transition and the construction of a gendered state. *Gender and Society*, 13(3), pp.287-307.

Seidman, S. 2004. Critical race theory, in Seidman, S.(ed.) *Contested Knowledge: Social theory today*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Settles, I.H., Pratt-Hyatt, J.S. & Buchanan, N.T., 2008. Through the lens of race: Black and White women's perceptions of womanhood. *Psychology of women Quarterly*, 32(2008), pp.454-68.

Shields, S.A. 2008. Gender: An intersectionality Perspective, *Sex Roles*, vol. 59, pp. 301-311.

Silverman, D. 2001. Relevance and Ethics. In: Silverman, D. 2001. (ed) *Interpreting qualitative data: methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*, London: Sage.

Steyn, M & Foster, D. 2000. Repertoires for talking white: Resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(1): pp, 25-51

Superson, A. 2009. *Feminist moral psychology*. [Online] (Spring 2009 Edition) Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2009/entries/feminism-moralpsych/> [Accessed 29 April 2011]

Tannen, D. 2007. Talking from 9 to 5: How women's and men's conversational styles affects who gets heard, who gets credit, and what gets done at work. In: Arrighi, B.A. Maryland (eds.).2007. *Understanding Inequality (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Terblanche, S. 2002. *A History of Inequality in South Africa 1652-2002*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Unterhalter, E.1999. The Schooling of South African Girls. In: Heward, C. and Bunwaree, S (eds). *Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access To Empowerment*. London: Zed Books

- Van der Lingen, E.C. 1926. "Ons Dogters", *Die Huisgenoot*, (22 January 1926): p35-36.
- Vere, J. 2007. "Having it all" no longer: Fertility, Female Labour Supply, and the New Life Choices of Generation X, *Demography*, 44(4): 821-828.
- Vestergaard, M. 2001. Who's got the Map? The negotiation of Afrikaner Identities in post-apartheid South Africa. *Deadalus*, 130 (1), pp. 19-44
- Vincent, L. 2000. Bread and Honour: White Working Class Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26(1): 61-78.
- Walker, C. 1995. Conceptualising motherhood in the twentieth century South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21 (3): 417-440.
- Ward, C., Dale, A. & Joshi, H. 1996. Income dependency within couples. In: L. Morris & E. Stina Lyon, (eds). *Gender relations in public and private: New research perspectives*. London: Macmillan. pp.95-120.
- Webb, S. (2000) 'Feminist methodologies for social researching', in Burton, D. (ed.) *Research training for social scientists*, London: Sage
- Welle, B. & Heilman, M.E. 2005. Formal and Informal discrimination against women at work. In: Steiner, D., Gilliland, W. & Skarlicki, D.P. (eds.). 2005. *Research in social issues in management: Managing social and ethical issues in organisations*. Westport, CT: Information Age Publishers
- White, B. 1995. The career development of successful women, *Women in Management Review*, 10 (3): pp. 4-15.
- Zweigenhaft, R.L. & Domhoff, W.L. 2007. Women in the power elite. In: Arrighi, B.A. Maryland (eds). 2007. *Understanding Inequality (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

## Appendix A

### Consent form for research on the career histories of white, Afrikaner women employed in the financial sector of Gauteng



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of  
South Africa

<http://www.up.ac.za>

Tel. 09012 420-2330 Fax:  
09012 420-2873

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Sociology

My name is Sintechè van der Merwe and I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting research as part of the fulfilment of my Masters degree at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Sociology. The title of my dissertation is '*Career trajectories of white, Afrikaans-speaking women employed in the financial sector of Gauteng*'. I would therefore like to ask your formal permission for you to participate in the interview that will be held at a convenient venue. The interviewer will largely deal with your experiences in the financial sector, as well as, your career history. This research seeks to examine how the socio-historical context has influenced women's discourses around life chances, choices and challenges.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to be involved. Anonymity is assured. Your real name, identity and affiliated company will not be revealed in the dissertation or transcripts. Furthermore, I will make use of pseudonyms to protect your identity.

If you agree to participate in this study I would like to request that you please sign the consent form in the space allocated below. Once we start with the formal interview you are under no obligation to continue with the interview and you can terminate the session at any time.

The interview will be recorded using a digital recording device. The duration of the recorded interview will be approximately 120 minutes. Only I, as the researcher and my supervisor, Professor Kammila Naidoo of the Department of Sociology, will have access to the transcripts. The Department of Sociology will store these transcripts for 15 years for legal and ethical purposes.

**Dissemination of research results:** The results will be used to complete a master's dissertation. Furthermore, the results of this particular study will be disseminated at relevant meetings/conferences such as the annual South African Sociological Association (SASA). The research results could also be published in relevant academic journals.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this research (now, or in the course of this study or later) please do not hesitate to contact me at the following number, 083 445 9167. I will be glad to answer all questions.

Thank you

Sintechè van der Merwe

**Formal acknowledgement of consent**

I, ..... on this day of .....2010, agree to participate in the interview for the masters research project on career histories. I understand that I will be asked questions regarding my experiences in the financial sector.

Signed.....

Date.....



## Appendix B

### Semi-structured interview schedule



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002

Republic of South Africa

<http://www.up.ac.za>

Tel. 09012 420-2330

Fax: 09012 420-2873

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Sociology

#### 1) Background information

- Tell me about your early childhood (where were you born, which places did you move to, why did you move, parent's work etc.)
- How would you describe your parent's socio-economic status over the years? (High/low; changes?)
- Were both of your parents employed? (How ambitious were they – father/mother?)
- How can you best describe your parents' relationship? (Egalitarian or not; what were your feelings towards their relationship?)

- How would you describe your relationship with your parents? (Did they push you to achieve, or were they casual about their expectations of you?)
- Were you raised according to Afrikaner values and traditions (roles that were assigned to each gender, father as the patriarch, etc?)
- What were your parents' political views?
- What were your political views?
- How did you perceive the apartheid regime?

## **2) Socialisation**

- Can you recall having a particular role model? (someone in the family, a character on a television program)
- Were you taught that there were differences in competencies between men and women? (Only boys can do this, only girls could do that.)
- Do you think you were brought up differently in comparison with a male sibling if any?
- Do you think your parents had specific expectations of you as a young woman in apartheid South Africa?
- How did your mother and father feature in terms of support and decisions that you had to make?

## **3) Career Choices**

- What factors do you think influenced your career choices and path since the beginning of your working life?
- What obstacles did you experience, and were there differences encountered in the apartheid and post-apartheid period?
- Who did you talk to concerning your ideas about work/studies? (Potential role model?)
- Do you feel that you are supported in your career choices, so far? (Experience of stigma?) (Probe).
- What did you aspire to do after completing matric? (Did you have a 'dream job'?)

- Explain how you have been affected by the changing politics in the country and workplace. (changing gender expectations, focus on equality, etc.)
- Did opportunities open up for you after 1994 and, if so, how did you react to these opportunities? (probe)
- What positions have you held?
- Have you been promoted, or ever overlooked for a promotion?
- Do you feel that you are being treated differently (i.e. discriminated positively or negatively) on the basis of race/ gender? (probe)
- Are there any specific techniques that you employ in order to manage workplace dynamics? (How is gender and racial stereotyping handled?)
- Can you describe your daily workplace routines? (probe)
- How do you envision your long term prospects? (will you remain in the financial sector, are you likely to leave?)

#### **4) Work/life balance**

- Are you married?
- What does your partner/husband do?
- Is your husband/partner supportive of your career?
- How do the long hours you work affect you?
- Has your career ever influenced any of your personal relationships?
- Do you have children? (Probe if the participant says “no”)
- Does your husband/partner share childhood responsibilities?
- Do you feel that you have a double role to fulfil?
- How do you think women with children in very high positions deal with the work/life balance?

## Appendix C

### List of quotes in the order that they occur in the dissertation

The original quotations of the participants' feedback have been reproduced in this appendix as they appear in the main text. All the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans so this appendix was added to make sure that none of the translations were made out of context.

### Chapter 3

#### Background information

O ja, my ma het gewerk en veral my ma se familie. My ouma was op universiteit en my oupagrootjie was op universiteit, so dit was so half van as jy wil dan kan jy. My oumagrootjie het ook kursusse gedoen by die universiteit maar sy het nou nie heeltemal klaargemaak nie. Ek dink as my oumagrootjie nou nog gelewe het dink ek was sy al honderd en twintig. Ek kom uit 'n familie uit waar vrouens ook iets doen, die vrou *contribute* tot die gesin en familie, so dit was nie 'n *issue* nie. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Seker maar indirek my ma wat 'n onderwyser was, want dit is op die einde wat ek gaan swot het. Ek het nou nie geloop en dink my ma is my rolmodel nie, maar dalk onbewustelik. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Wat my die meeste gemotiveer het, is *financial stability*, ek dink dit is *well known* dat ons kwalifikasie sit jou gewoonlik in 'n goeie posisie. Ek het net daai effek van, ek gaan nie universiteit toe gaan en my tyd gaan mors met iets wat my nie op die einde gaan *reward* nie. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

So het dit toe gebeur dat dit elke keer goed gegaan het met my eksamens, en ek is op die ou end 'n CA geword. Dit was ook, dink ek omdat my man se werk op daai stadium nooit van so aard was dat hy ons kon *support* nie. Ek dink as hy van die begin af genoeg geld gemaak het dan sou ek nie gewerk het nie, en dan sou ek nie gewees het waar ek is vandag nie. Ek sou dalk nog skool gehou het, of iets rustiger gedoen het. Ek dink nogal dit sou my eerste keuse gewees het. (Katrien, 36,

married, chief audit executive)

Nee, dit was basies iets wat ek in myself besluit het, en die motivering daarvoor was ons het arm grootgeword, en ek het gesê ek sal nooit in my lewe arm wees nie, so dit was my motivering. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

Daai tyd kon jy in standerd agt uit die skool uitgaan, want hoekom moet 'n meisie 'n geleerdheid hê? Want daai jare het die vrouens by die huis gebly en die man het gewerk. Dit is nou maar hoe dit geloop het. (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager)

Maar die keuses daai tyd toe hulle gaan swot het, was baie meer bepaal, jy kon basies net 'n verpleegster geword het of 'n onderwyseres. Vrouedokters en prokureurs was daar daai tyd dungsaaï.

Ek sou sê ons is 'n totaal en al gemiddelde gesin tipe van gesin. My ma en pa het albei ge-swot en gewerk, my ma was nogal vreeslik ingestel dat ons 'n tersiêre opleiding moet hê, so dit was van die begin af. Ek meen ek was drie toe het my pa my al die universiteit gaan wys en gesê jy kom eendag hiernatoe. Dit was glad nie 'n opsie gewees nie vir enige iets anders nie (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

O ja, definitief. Ek dink daar was altyd 'n *expectation* dat mens sal professioneel wees. Ek dink nie my ma'le was ooit die tipe wat ons laat verstaan het dat hulle vir ons gaan sorg vir die res van hul lewe nie. Hulle het ons eintlik grootgemaak om *independent* te wees en hulle het ons *ge-push*. Ek dink nie my ouers het gedink ons is slegter af omdat ons vrouens is nie en jy kan dit duidelik sien as jy na al my susters kyk. Die *expectation* van ons was om iets te maak van ons lewe. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Nee, maar ek dink, wat ek kan onthou is dat as ek in die kombuis gehelp het, het my ma gesê "luister, gaan leer eerder jou Wiskunde en Wetenskap, jy kan altyd leer kook uit 'n kookboek uit". So ek dink my ma was meer, omdat sy nie die geleentheid gehad het om te studeer nie, want my oupa het gesê dogters studeer nie. Sy was die een wat *totally* daarin geglo het om vir onself te kan sorg, en dat ons nie afhanklik van 'n man moet wees nie. (Mari, 42, single, never married, Senior manager at an

auditing firm)

Ek kan nie regtig dit sê nie, en ek wil ook nie noodwendig sê my ma was pertinent 'n rolmodel nie. My ma is ook 'n beroepsvrou, sy self is 'n advokaat, jy weet, en vir haar om nog twintig jaar ouer as ek te wees, dink ek was dit nog moeiliker om in 'n professionele rigting in te gaan as wat dit vir my was. So dit was *pretty much* dit wat ek gesien het 'n vrou moet doen, is om in 'n professionele rigting in te gaan. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

Nee, sy sou nie baie daarvan gehou het as jy net na matriek gaan trou het nie. Ons het almal gaan swot, vier van ons het regte gaan swot. My een suster het B.com bemarking gaan swot, sy het nie klaargemaak nie maar sy doen eintlik die beste van ons almal. Een is 'n ingenieur en my ander suster het 'n graad in politieke wetenskap, sy bly al in New York vir 'n jaar en werk vir die United Nations. Die jongste suster het 'n skoonheids kwalifikasie. (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm)

Nee, dit was nou maar net omstandighede, hulle wou hê ek moet gaan studeer. Maar hulle wou nie hê ek moes gaan studeer waar ek wou gaan studeer nie. Ek wou gaan studeer. (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager)

Omdat ons dogters was, in die tye wat ek nog in die huis was dis omtrent veertig jaar terug, het ons maar grootgeword dat 'n meisiekind moet kan kos kook en jy moet kan jou huismense versorg. So die huis moet skoon wees, jou klere moet heel wees, alles moet in plek wees en in orde wees. (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator)

Toe ek begin werk het, het ek R299 'n maand gekry maar die mans met dieselfde kwalifikasie het R100 meer gekry, want daai tyd was dit nou baie geld. Die eerste jaar was die salaris nie gelyk aan die kwalifikasies nie, want hulle het my aangestel as 'n administratiewe klerk en mans wat dieselfde posbeskrywing het eenvoudig omdat hulle mans is, meer gekry. En dit was altyd vir my nogal 'n teer punt. (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm)

Miskien vroeër jare salaris *wise*, die mans in die banke word maar meer betaal as die vrouens. Dieselfde pos, maar die man sal meer kry. René, 57, Remarried, Bank

branch manager

Toe ons aangestel word, ek het begin met twee-honderd rand 'n maand, is ek mee aangestel. Die mans is op vier-honderd rand aangestel. Net mooi dubbel jou salaris en dit was in 'n *junior* posvlak, die intree vlak. Met ander woorde, daar was altyd daai honderd persent distansie tussen jou en 'n man. Byvoorbeeld, behuising was daar nooit oor gepraat vir die vrouens nie, ons het dit nooit geweet nie. Motorfinansiering, jy't nie geweet jy kan 'n motorfinansiering aangaan nie, so het dit gegaan destydse jare in die bank, dit was alles net vir die mans. 'n Man kon 'n huis koop, 'n man kon 'n motor koop. En as dit nou verhoging tyd is dan word jy nou eers ge-evalueer, die mans het altyd baie meer verhoging gekry as ons vrouens. Magda, 65, Widowed, Bank branch manager

### **Political Atmosphere in the formative years**

Ek wil nie nou sê, maar daai tyd was ons nie so beïnvloed daardeur gewees nie, want ons was nie benadeel nie, so ek dink dit was nooit vir ons... Want ons was op daardie stadium bevoordeel, so dit het nie regtig vir ons saak gemaak. Jy weet, jy het nie eintlik die ander nood daarin raakgesien, of iets nie. Dit was vir ons heel maklik, ek bedoel, toe ons skool gegaan het, dit was 'n blanke skool, dit het ons nie eintlik beïnvloed nie. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

As ek terug daaraan dink, ons was *totally ge-shelter*. Ons het ons twee ousies gehad wat in die huis gewerk het maar hulle was soos *members of the family*, as ek dit so kan stel. Behalwe dit kan ek nie eers dink dat ek in kontak gekom het met mense van my ouderdom van ander rasse nie. Ons was maar ook.... niks daarmee uitgewaai gehad nie. Ek dink ek was *totally oblivious* gewees om eerlik te wees. As jy later nou hoor *what actually transpired*, dan is dit daai effek van, jy het hoegenaamd niks van... geen idee gehad nie. Ek dink dit is half van ons af weggehou. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

So kom ons vat net 'n voorbeeld, ek het vir baie lank nie eintlik besef ek leef in *apartheid* nie. Want ek dink nie, ek het nooit gewonder...my kind het nou die dag vir my gevra of ek met swart kinders gespeel het, ek het nie geweet nie. Ek het seker geweet hulle bestaan, maar ek het hulle nooit gesien nie, ek was nie aan hulle blootgestel nie. Ek het nie eintlik besef dis *apartheid* nie, ek dink ons was redelik

beskerm van die feit dat hulle mag nie daar slaap nie, en hulle bly in 'n lokasie. Ek dink ek het dalk 'n swart kind gesien, daai week van Kersfees toe die bediende haar kinders na ons toe bring en ons bederf hulle bietjie. Maar ek het nooit gewonder waarheen gaan hulle nou as hulle...(Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Toe sê sy Afrikaanssprekende wit vrouens of mense word met *guilt* gebore, Calvinistiese *guilt*. En ons ouers *reinforce* dit, ons kerk en ons skole *reinforce* dit. Kinders word gesien en nie gehoor nie, as jy dit doen gaan jy hel toe, al daai ander goedjies. Maar jy word met *guilt* gebore, so dit is die eerste ding. Jy voel skuldig oor alles en jy het nie daai selfde... Daar is 'n groot verskil tussen windgat en selfversekerd of arrogant en selfversekerd, maar ons ouers het ons dit nie geleer nie. Ons ouers het ons geleer moenie so voor op die wa wees nie en moenie so arrogant wees nie. Nie, dis eintlik goed as jy selfvertroue het maar jy is nederig, nie.(Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

My era was daar nie so ding... 'n Kind was gesien maar nie gehoor nie, jy't mos nou al daai dinge gehoor van die ou mense. Nou dit was ook so; ons was geleer jy respekteer 'n ouer persoon of dalk nou alternatiewelik, jy respekteer jou meerdere. Jy moet sê "ja baas, nee baas" en dit was altyd 'n man. (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager)

Dis maar hoe 'n mens as kind grootgeword het, want pa was die hoof van die huis gewees en wat hy gesê het, was reg gewees. Of dit nou rêrig reg was of nou nie, jy moes luister wat pa sê.

En ek dink ook as ek terug kyk na hoe ek groot geword het, jy weet ons het nog groot geword met daai ding van "kinders word gesien en nie gehoor nie", jy weet daai... So ek dink dit het baie met jou selfvertroue te doen gehad. En 'n mens kry ook die gevoel jy het nie selfvertroue as jy na Engelse mense kyk nie. Ek dink Engelse mense het baie meer selfvertroue. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Ja, ek dink daar is 'n verskil tussen Afrikaanse en Engelse mense, en Engelse mans en vrouens. Ek dink hulle word oor die algemeen minder inheberend groot, en doen



en sê wat jy wil, *highly* uitgesproke en baie selfvertroue. Waar ons is geleer kinders word gesien en nie gehoor nie. Dis half 'n *mindset* van Afrikaanse mense. Partykeer is hierdie Engelse ook maar windgat, en dis irriterend hoor.

Dan is ek eerder maar ek op my plek en ek doen my werk, hou jou bek sit in die hoek as wat ek... (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Kyk blanke mans in ons omgewing word nou bietjie... hulle kan nie net sommer aansoek doen vir 'n pos nie, want 'n pos is dalk nie geallokeer vir 'n blanke man nie, dis dalk vir 'n swart man of 'n swart vrou of 'n Indiër persoon geïdentifiseer. So jy kan nie...Dan het ons vrouens dalk so 'n bietjie van 'n voorsprong bo hulle gekry. Veral in ons professie is daar minder as 'n duisend swart CA's in die land, so dis baie min. En ek dink in totaal is daar soos drie-en-twintig-duisend CA's, so as mens dit in verhouding vat dan is dit maar 'n klein groepie en vrouens maak nie eers die helfte van die groot totaal op nie. So ek dink ons is wel bevoordeel. (Leoni, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm)

[SINTECHÉ: Sal jy nou sê selfs as jy nou voordeel getrek het as 'n blanke persoon in SA, was jy nogsteeds in 'n swakker posisie as 'n blanke man of 'n blanke seun?

Ja...ek dink definitief in daai tyd was dit so, ek dink dit was nog meer...ek het nog mense wat saam met my op skool was, my suster se vriendin byvoorbeeld, wou gevlieg het. En in daai tyd mag 'n vrou nie gevlieg het nie. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)]

Daar was nooit nie...my pa se beste vriend toe hy ook 'n kind was, was 'n swart man gewees want op die plaas werk dit nou maar so, jy is te vêr van die ander maatjies af so julle speel met mekaar. En ek dink dit was 'n baie goeie ding. As jy hoor hoe ander mense praat dan maak dit jou half bang, want dit is lelik. ( Sonja, 49, divorced, financial advisor)

Die mense van die sestigs, soos my skoonma, is baie rassisties. En ek hou niks daarvan nie want ek is nie 'n rassis nie, ek het nie my kinders so grootgemaak nie, maar sy is definitief rassisties. En daar was ook so 'n...omdat sy Engels was, 'n *superior* teenoor die Afrikaners. En jy mag niks van die Engelse verkeerd sê nie, sy het baie snaakse idees. (Jeanne, 43, Married, Senior manager of audit department)

Wat vir my snaaks was toe ek van Zimbabwe afgekom het, was die bankies in die park... ons het daai tyd saam in die bus gery, saamgeëet, jy weet dit was nie... hulle het nie gestem nie maar andersins was dit soos vandag is. Toe ek nou hier kom en ek sien op die parke se banke het gestaan “whites only” toe het ek gedink hulle verwys na klere (laughs). Dit was maar hoe dit gewerk het, hulle het hulle eie ingang gehad... (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager)

Ek sal sê nee en daarvoor is ek baie dankbaar vir my ouers, ons was net ’n Afrikaanse gesin. Daar was nie ’n ding soos daai ou is swart en jy is blank en daar moet diskriminasie wees nie. Nooit nie. Hy was op sy plek gewees en jy op jou plek, maar daar was glad nooit ’n diskriminasie gewees nie. (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager)

## Chapter 4

### Gender and Workplace dynamics

#### Women in the financial/corporate industries

Ek voel alle mans is *chauvinisties* hulle steek dit net weg, van hulle. Maar ’n mens *deal* daarmee, vir my is dit nie ’n *issue* nie, ek weet dit. So baie vrouens is vreeslik geskok as ’n man dan nou kommentaar maak, mens moet dit weet en *you learn to live with it*. Dis nie vir my ’n *issue* nie, een van die CEO’s en dit is van ’n groot *multi national* maatskappy het eenkeer, toe sit ons daar en ons praat van resultate en dis net ek en die vennoot wat natuurlik ’n man is en dis natuurlik die CEO van die maatskappy. En sy sekretaresse bring toe tee in en seker na so vyf minute kyk hy na my en hy sê vir my vrouens gooi die tee in. Ek het vir hom gekyk, en ek het vir hom gelag, en hy het dit nooit weer gedoen nie. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek was in N-manufacturing company die *cost and risk manager* gewees vir die *supply chain* en dan het ek *negotiations* bygewoon vir groot *suppliers* vir vierhonderd miljoen en met die laaste een het ek die *cost negotiation* gedoen. Wat altyd interessant was ek was gewoonlik die enigste vrou, want *supply chain* is mans en hulle kommunikasie is mans. So die *actual* bedryf van tele kommunikasie is ’n

manlike bedryf en dan sal Suid-Afrikaanse mans, Japanese mans, Duitse mans sal instap, hulle sal almal met die hand groet maar nie my nie. Die een het sommer eendag gesê: "hi, are you going to take the notes of the minutes of this meeting?" Toe sê ek "I'm the negotiator". En dit was altyd vir my interessant dat hulle half my, nie lelik met my is nie, dis asof ek nie daar is nie, ek is die PA. Jy *assume* die feit dat ek daar is en ek is 'n vrou, *assume* hulle ek moet die tee maak en die *minutes* neem. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek hou ook dop as die tee en koffie arriveer, daar's al vir my gesê om die koffie te skink. Dan sê ek nee, ek gaan nie. Ek hou baie keer dop, dan skink hulle tee en dan skink ek vir myself, want almal moet hulle self mos help. En baie keer dan lees ek die mans en dan kyk ek wie verwag ek moet nou vir hom tee ingooi. Hulle doen dit omdat jy die vrou is. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Ek weet byvoorbeeld as ek kliënte gaan sien het, dan het ons nou baie keer by kliënte aangekom, hulle was so half *taken aback* dat 'n vrou daar aankom, en 'n vrou is die prokureur. Ek het baie keer blanke mans saam met my gevat dan is hulle onder opleiding, en dan doen ek al die praat-werk, hy het vrae, en ek antwoord die vrae, maar hy het oogkontak met die man. Hulle sal nie eers vir jou kyk nie. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

Daar's nou nog mense, nie net mans nie wat my as 'n sekretaresse behandel. Hulle vra nie vir jou...as ek 'n kliënt sien...daai ou het gedink ek is die sekretaresse, hy het nooit daaraan gedink dat ek iets meer kon wees nie. Dit was 'n ouerige man. Maar dit gebeur baie, hulle sal instap, selfs toe ek jonger was... dis nou beter, maar vroeër het hulle gedink dit is wat jy is as jy saam met 'n man daar is. (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm)

### **Obstacles that women face in the financial/corporate industries: Changing structure of previously male-dominated industries**

En dis niks van die generasie nie, in ons firma, die ouer vennote is laat veertigs, vroeë vyftigs. Een van ons *expertpartners* in ons area, nou is ek en 'n man in ons area, ons is twee vrouens en een man. Nou nooi hulle vir my en R uit, dan sit ons in die vergadering. R dit en R dat, en ek het my ingehou, maar op die punt waar ek nou tien-vyftien minute van die gesprek my handsakkie wou vat en sê "kyk blykbaar is ek

nie nodig in julle vergadering nie, julle wil in elk geval nie met my praat nie want jy spreek net vir R aan, so hoekom het jy my genooi, ek loop nou hieruit. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

En dit was besonder moeilik want ek het vier swart ouens gehad wat aan my gerapporteer het was koste klerke was. Hulle was nie bereid om my leiding te aanvaar nie, en die mans is blou *collar* werkers as ek dit nou so kan stel. En hulle het of my ge-“poppie” of hulle het my soortvan ge-*downtalk*. En dit was half vir my rêrig moeilik, die swart ouens was passief aggressief. So hulle sou nie sê ek gaan dit nie doen nie, hulle het dit net nie gedoen nie. Of hulle vat drie dae om die ding te doen. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

So ek dink in daai opsig kon jy wel agter kom hulle het ook die houding omdat jy met die arbeidsreg werk en omdat jy met unies werk, en swart mans met wie jy werk dat jy dit nie kan doen nie. En daar moes baie keer by 'n kliënt, byvoorbeeld eers 'n situasie plaasgevind het waar jy 'n vakbond op sy plek sit, of teenoor hom optree dat hulle kan sien jy kan dit doen, voordat hulle aanvaar jy kan dit doen. En ek dink nie mans het daai oorbrugging, mans het nie... mans dink mans kan die werk doen. En as jy by besighede aankom dink ek hulle dink altyd jy kan nie die werk doen nie want jy is 'n vrou. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

Ek moet vir jou sê die mans wat dit doen het ek geen respek voor nie, want dis baie keer mans wat self nie weet wat aangaan nie. My mentor by die werk is 'n fantastiese man, dis hoekom ek in hierdie werk wil wees, ek wil soos hy wees. Wat hy baie keer sal doen as hy so situasie sien, want hy weet ek word vennoot, hy help my nogal daarmee. As die kliënt vir hom 'n vraag sal vra dan sal hy na my toe draai en sê “I'll ask my colleague, she knows best”. So dan dadelik die vertroue wat hy in my stel, dan het die kliënt dadelik die vertroue in my. As hierdie man waarin hulle so baie vertroue het sê nee kyk eerder na 'n vrou toe vir 'n vraag, dadelik is die situasie omgedraai. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Die vrouens *withdraw* so as jy nou moet *vote* dan is daai vrouens nie in die sosiale netwerk nie, so hulle is nie in die sosiale netwerk nie, ons sien mekaar nie almal nie, ek ken nie eers almal van die vennote nie, jy sien mekaar nie. So jy gaan nie *vote* vir iemand wat jy nie ken nie. So die vrouens op die *party*...ek was al hoeveel keer, dan

gaan ek na die *party* dan staan die mans in 'n kringetjie en sulke goed. Jy voel half uit en *stupid* daar. So wat doen jy, volgende keer bly jy weg. Nou hoe meer jy wegbly, hoe minder is jy in die sosiale kring, en hoe minder *votes* kry jy. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Ek dink so, ek dink mens het vriendinne by die werk, dieselfde rol as jy, dieselfde alles maar ek dink ook wat jy sê is waar dit kan gebeur dat vrouens half teen die vriendskap in moet gaan om 'n werk te kry. Dit is moontlik. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Nee, ek ervaar baie keer, ek werk nou met baie vrouens in hoë posisies en baie keer hou ek nie van daai vrouens nie. Hulle is baie keer katterig, hulle is uit om 'n punt te bewys en veral teenoor 'n ander vrou. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek hou amper meer daarvan om met mans te werk. Mans bring nie die emosionele kant na die werk toe nie, waar vrouens baie keer hulle emosionele kant na die werk toe bring. En dit is totaal en al ongehoord. As ek 'n slegte oggend by die huis gehad het, bring ek dit nie kantoor toe nie, jy los dit in die kar en vanaand kan jy daarmee *deal*. Baie vrouens weet nie hoe om daai twee kante te skei nie. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

en vrouens is nou maar emosioneel. En dan baie keer...ek dink jy moet beheer in beheer wees van jou emosies in 'n werksplek, en nie emosioneel voorkom nie, want jy verloor bietjie kredietwaardigheid as jy te emosioneel voorkom. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Jy moet of in *survival mode* wees, of jy moet onttrek, dis die twee opsies. Die *median way* is nie beskikbaar op hierdie stadium van die realiteit nie. En dan is daar nog die ander ding rondom die, vrouens reageer anderste op goed as mans. En mans verstaan dit nie. As ek in trane uitbars by die werk, dit gebeur bitter min, maar as ek op daai punt is waar ek in trane uitbars en ek uit daai kantoor uit loop en daai deur toe moer, en uit loop want ek kan net nie meer nie. Dan is dit woede, en dis my woede wat my laat huil, en dan is ek nog kwater vir myself, want ek huil van hierdie woede. Maar dis omdat jou frustrasie so erg is, jy kan nie meer nie, so jy reageer

emosioneel. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Kliënte het al kommentaar gemaak, want ek het eenkeer gesê watter kar ek wil koop maar as ek by EY werk sal ek dit nooit kan bekostig nie en toe het die kliënt gesê “wel miskien moet jy by Teasers gaan werk, ek sal kom en sorg dat jy die kar kan koop”. Jy lag maar en goed maar volgende keer weet ek, ek kan dit gebruik want daar is iets van my wat iets vir jou doen so ek sal jou druk daar. Mens gebruik dit. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek het nou die dag in ‘n *meeting* gesit, voor die een ou, en toe sê hy “ja, dis soos ‘n man wat kom”. Ek sit daar, en ek dog... die een ou sê “hey, we’ve got a lady in the room”. Maar jy weet, verstaan nou dis hoe hulle *operate*, en hulle doen dit nie opsetlik nie, maar net per ongeluk. Maar wat ‘n ongevraagde aanmerking!! En toe sit ek nou daar en sê “*well I don’t appreciate it*”. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Ons het byvoorbeeld nou ‘n baas, wat ek dink *totally* okay is. Hy is die een wat eendag vir my gesê het jy moet vir jou ‘n ander rolmodel kry, nie net A nie. Toe sê ek wat bedoel jy, toe sê hy as my vrou sê en gil en skree en *nag* en emosioneel is en sy sê vir my ek moet die kar gaan was, dink jy ek gaan? Al wat ek doen, ek klap net toe, al wat ek doen, is ek *isolate* myself. Maar as sy nou op my skoot kom sit en sê “liefie” die daai en dit, kan ek nie gou genoeg daai kar gaan was nie. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

### **The ‘old boys’ club’**

So in die besluitnemingsbevoegdheid, waar daar besluit word op *politics*, en die besluitnemingsbevoegdheid waar daar besluit oor hoe hardloop ons dinge, ek noem hulle die *boys club*. Nee, glad nie, jy word nie uitgenooi na sosiale funksies waar mans is nie, hulle gaan speel gholff. Ek is ‘n golfer maar ek word nie uitgenooi nie. Dit is nou maar net, jy word nie uitgenooi want jy kan nie *participate* in daai goed nie. As hulle vir my sê kom speel saam met ons gholff, dan sal ek. Maar niemand nooi my nie. Niemand nooi die vrouens nie. Sosiaal *bond* hulle so, hulle gaan saam op gholff toere, en hulle gaan speel gholff eenmaal ‘n week, hulle gaan saam vir *lunches*, hulle gaan saam en drink bier. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Daar kan dalk 'n moontlikheid wees, ek sal dit nie uit die prentjie uit sit nie, want soort soek maar soort en jy gaan jou beste *buddy* bevoordeel voordat jy iemand anders bevoordeel. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ja, ek sal sê eintlik... die probleem is maar as jy by 'n firma kom soos die een waar ek nou werk, was daar maar blanke mans... En ons het nogsteeds in die firma die probleem dat blanke mans is maar nou net dominant in die firma, jy weet en dis 'n vennootskap, so op 'n stadium voel jy maar of jy bietjie uitgestoot word. En selfs nou, ek dink ons het so bietjie gere-struktureer verlede jaar, en nogsteeds met daai *restructuring* het al die mans omtrent die hoë posisies gekry. Maar sy is ook in my eenheid, en sy is 'n vroue direkteur, en sy word definitief nie bevoordeel nie. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

*Come to think of it*, in my artikels dink ek regtig daar was *actually genderdiscrimination*, ek het my artikels gedoen by GM, die moeilikste mense wat ek dink om voor te werk, ek wil nou nie sê middeljarige wit mans nie, maar jy weet. Maar ek dink soos wat ek sê my ouers was redelik *progressive thinking* was, maar ek dink daar is 'n helse generasiegaping tussen wit mans van daai ouderdom en hulle hou nie daarvan as 'n jong wit vrou half op hulle regte kan staan en hul mond kan oopmaak en goed kan sê. Ek dink die *managing partner* daar het net glad nie van my gehou nie, maar ek sal nie stilbly as iets nie reg is nie. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Kfirm was vir baie 'n Robben Island vir *old boys*' wat hulle geforseer het om te verander was die feit dat ons nie BEE punte kon gekry het nie. En vir jare was dit 'n *male organisation* en mans was die *senior management*, baie min vrouens was *partners*, omtrent geen swart *partners*. Dit was 'n manlike organisasie. Ons praat baie keer van die '*old boys*' club' en dan word hulle vreeslik kwaad. In 'n *big way* het hulle begin verander, maar dit is 'n geforseerde verandering dis nie 'n "ons glo vrouens en swart vrouens en swart mans en Indiërs kan *value add* nie". Dis "ons moet punte kry anders kry ons nie die werk nie". (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

O ja, dit bestaan, dit bestaan absoluut. Want as daar iets gereël word dan gaan die "*boys*". Gholf...moenie *worry* ek kan of wil speel nie ek word nie genooi nie. Ek dink

gholf is die algemene ding, en dan ander sport aktiwiteite soos rugby *games* en so aan. Ja nee, kyk die mans kry voorkeur as dit by sport kom. Jeanne, 43, Married, Senior manager of audit department. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

Die jong mans word in die binnekring ingelaat, en hulle word *ge-push* en *ge-push*, en hulle gaan deur die *ranks*, want hulle is deel van daai binnekring. En omdat hulle nie wil geassosieer word as die een wat gelyk is met die vrou nie, en dat hul deel van die *boys' club* is, want dis vir hulle belangriker *career wise*. Hulle word *ge-mould*, almal word *ge-mould*. Van die vrouens en die mans word *ge-mold* in 'n samelewing verwagting, en dit gaan nie verander nie. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

En ek dink in 'n groot mate verstaan hulle hoe vroulike professionele vrou se kop werk en hulle speel daarop. So hulle weet ons is *driven*, hulle weet ons wil heelyd presteer en hulle weet eintlik dat vrouens se morele waardes is baie meer *solid* as man s'n. Daar is baie meer swart op wit oor wat is reg en wat is verkeerd in die werksomgewing, ons is ook baie meer *caring*. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Daar is ander *barriers*, jou waarde sisteem. Is jy bereid om jou waardes te verkrag, is jy bereid om mense...politiek te speel, en ander mense af te kraak om te kom waar jy wil wees, of gaan jy die pad reguit loop. Nou weereens is jy by daai kruispad, nou ek kan vorentoe gaan deur my kollegas af te breek, of gaan ek die reguit pad loop en ordentlik wees en by my waarde sisteem hou. Nou my gevoel is, as jy by jou waarde sisteem hou dan word jy die *victim* van hierdie politiese spele. So as jy nie die politiek speel nie, dan gaan jy nie vorentoe kom nie. Die waarskynlikheid dat ek my lewensdoelwit gaan bereik is nie so groot soos wat ek dit graag sou wou gehad het nie, maar dis as gevolg van dat ek nie politiek wil speel nie. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

En ek het 'n *conscious decision* gemaak, ek gaan nie toelaat dat hulle met my doen soos wat hulle met die ander doen nie. Maar nou as jy die uitgesproke een is dan word jy die 'probleem kind', die oproerder. En dis hoe jy *perceive* word, nou ek *worry* nie daarvoor nie, maar baie vrouens *worry* daarvoor en dan onttrek hulle. En dan word



hulle leierseienskappe, wat baie sterk is, ge-onderdruk en hulle gee dit op en sê *you know what* dis 'n *eight-to-five job*. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Ek dink hoe ek nou maar al geleer het, veral in die besigheidswêreld as jy iets wil sê moet jy voorbereid wees. Ek dink een van my tegnieke, veral as ek in 'n vergadering ingaan met 'n klomp mans, is om te wys jy is voorbereid en jy ken jou feite. En ek dink dis nou ietsie, veral as jy spesialiseer en oplees, jy weet, jy kan feite op die tafel sit, en dan luister hulle. So as jy 'n standpunt wil maak dan moet jy jou goed agter mekaar hê en jou feite agter mekaar hê. So dit is een van die tegnieke om te kry dat mans na jou luister, en so aan. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Ek dink voorbereiding...ek is nie 'n baie goeie spreker nie, een; my Engels is pateties en alles gebeur in Engels so ek probeer so min as moontlik sê. So ek probeer om dit wat ek sê moet die regte ding op die regte tyd wees. Ek is nie daai tipe wat die heelyd praat nie. Ek dink dit is my tegniek om voor te berei, en te weet wat ek wil sê voor die tyd en dan op die regte oomblik dit dan te sê. Ek gaan nie op die ingewing van die oomblik praat, want ek sukkel om in Engels te kommunikeer, ek kan maklik skryf...ek kom nie...jy weet mos party Afrikaanse mense kom *stupid* voor, ek is een van hulle. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Ek sorg nogal dat ek voorbereid is, want as jy weet waarvan jy praat dan luister hulle. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Daar is sulke situasies, ja, maar ek dink dit hang maar van jou eie selfvertroue af. As jy *inferior* voel dan gaan jy 'n *inferior* houding in die vergadering hê. As jy *equal* voel dan sal jy op 'n *equal* basis met hulle deel. So ek het nog nooit regtig in 'n posisie waar ek gevoel het ek is nie iemand se *equal* nie, maar dis omdat ek my vakgebied ken. As ek nie my vakgebied geken het nie, sou dit dalk anders gewees het. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

### **Opportunities and long term goals for the participants in the financial/corporate industries**

Ek het 'n twintig jaar plan en dit is om uiteindelik 'n vennoot hier te wees. Ek is baie

*competitive* en baie ambisieus. As daar iemand in my groep is wat beter as ek doen, ek sal tien keer harder werk maar ek sal beter as daai een doen. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek sien *actually* myself met my eie besigheid. Ek dink regtig so, ek dink nie eers dit sal enige iets *related* wees met wat ek nou doen nie. Ek dink nie my persoonlike toekomsplannie, soos ek gesê het ek dink nie ek sal kan aanhou om vir 'n baas te werk nie. Ek is nie die soort persoon wat my pensioen gaan *gather* nie, *whatever* ek gaan begin moet iets wees wat my kan *sustain*, dat jy nie op sestig hoef op te hou werk of... Ek is nog nie eenhonderd persent seker oor wat en wAnnieer en hoe dit gaan gebeur nie. Ek wil graag L.L.B gaan studeer, maar ek weet nie of ek nou kans sien daarvoor nie. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Maar as ek nou moet vir jou sê, dan hou maar aan goed doen wat jy doen. En ek hoef nie noodwendig die CEO waar ek nou is se werk by hom oor te neem nie in die volgende vyf of tien jaar nie. As ek nogsteeds die *chief audit executive* daar is, en ek het die funksie uitgebrei en ons loop goed, en die maatskappy sien hulle kry waarde uit die interne oudit funksie uit sal ek bly wees. Maar my kinders moet darem nog weet wie is ek, en ek moet weet wat in hulle lewens aangaan. Vir my is dit my *goal* om daai balans die heelyd te hou. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Ek wil definitief maar, soos ek sê, ek wil maar werk. En ek sien op hierdie stadium voel ek gaan my kinders skool toe, maar ek sien dit as 'n hierdie vyfjaar-/sesjaar ding net om hulle deur die laerskool te kry. En ek dink as hulle daar klaar is, sal ek graag bietjie verder gaan, ek dink daaraan ek wil rêrig graag regte gaan swot. So dit is definitief iets wat ek sal wil doen in die toekoms. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Ek het 'n tien jaar plan, ek het 'n lewensplan voor ek sestig is, wat nie baie ver af is nie, wil ek baie graag die CEO van die bank wees, maar of dit moontlik is dit weet ek nie. Maar dit gaan my nie stop om te probeer nie. Dis waarvoor ek werk. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

Wat loopbaan aanbetref wil ek graag die MD van die *company* word, ek dink daai geleentheid sal homself voordoer... Ek dink as dit daai dag daarop neerkom, sal dit

half moeilik wees om posisies om te ruil. Maar ek sal graag die MD van die *company* wil wees, ek dink wat dit aanbetref, ek wil graag iemand wees. Ek dink nogal ek het dit maar ek moet nog daaraan werk. Ek wil by 'n plek instap en ek wil *presence* hê, mense moet weet hierdie is die mens wie jy is. Ek sal eintlik nou dat ek klaar is met die MBA gedoen het eintlik *nice* wees om 'n groter *career* vrou in Suid Afrika te wees. Ek sal graag myself wil ontwikkel tot op so plek waar iemand sal sê “kom ons kry vir Ursuladie MD van hierdie *company*”. Ek weet nog nie lekker hoe om myself daar te kry nie. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

My spesialis area is in *procurement*. Ek wil 'n *chief procurement officer* vir 'n groot company wees. Ek dink dis wat ek wil wees oor drie of vier jaar. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

## Chapter 5

### Gender and negotiating the present and future

#### Work/life balance

##### *Society's expectations*

Met my man, gelukkig, hy het seker so vier jaar gelede sy eie besigheid begin en dis lang ure. So gelukkig is ons in 'n verhouding waar hy werk lang ure en ek werk lang ure, dit help gelukkig. Maar 'n man is maar 'n man en as hulle by die huis kom wil hulle hê hulle vrou moet daar wees. Baie keer voel ek, ek werk harder as hy en as ek by die huis kom verwag hy nogsteeds dat ek kos moet maak. Maar dit is maar iets waaraan hy gewoond was. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek dink dit is stresvol, en ek weet nou nie maar as jy nou 'n ma is, is dit nou maar 'n bietjie anderste, maar jy sal maar altyd glo niemand kan dit beter doen as jy nie. Ek voel maar altyd as daar huiswerk gedoen word sal ek die een wees wat dit moet doen, want my man kan dit nie doen nie. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Intieme verhoudings is 'n groot probleem, vir verskeie redes. Die een is, ek is nie

elke dag *available* nie, ek het nie elke aand krag vir *nice* wees nie en ek is nie altyd hier nie. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek het 'n voltydse bediende gehad en die skool was naby genoeg dat hulle kon huis toe stap smiddae/smiddags. Maar as daar 'n krisis is, sal hy nie van die werk afvat nie en dan moet ek hulle gaan haal. Nou nog. Maak nie saak waar hulle is nie, die krisis is my krisis. Hy kan nie afvat by die werk nie, maar ek kan (sarcasm). Dokter toe en tandarts, dit was alles my goed. (Marlien, 54, married, senior partner at a law firm)

Maar jy moet vanaand by die huis kom en jy moet sorg dat die kos op die stoof kom, jy moet sorg dat almal kos kry, jy moet sorg dat die kinders gebad word, jy moet sorg dat die huiswerk gedoen is. Waar die man dit nie gedoen het nie, ons het altyd so gespot en gesê as jy van jou dag-werk af kom dan begin jou nag-skof. Wat baie erger is as jou dagskof. In die oggende jaag om die kinders by die kleuterskole en skole af te laai, vanmiddag weer jaag om hulle op te tel en dan moet jy teruggaan werk toe want die werk is agter. Dan vat jy maar die kinders saam werk toe en dan sit hulle maar daar en speel terwyl jy werk. (Magda, 65, widowed, bank branch manager)

Ja, dit is my grootste *challenge*, elke dag is dit. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Maandag, dan word daar vir my gesê ons moet nou kyk na die *ratings* van die vrouens op die *maternity leave*, want hulle *contribution* vir die jaar is nie dieselfde nie. En toe kom die een man, die een van die vennoot mans, kom sommer en sê hoekom betaal ons hulle, hulle kos ons net geld. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Ek weet baie van ons wat ook kinders het dan werk jy nou verminderde ure ook, en dit word ook half teen jou gediskrimineer. Ek voel natuurlik ons is baie meer effektief, want ek doen nou presies dieselfde werk as toe ek honderd persent gewerk het as met die tagtig persent. Die persepsie is nou, ja jy kan nie 'n vennoot word nie want jy werk nie voldag nie, maar jy doen nogsteeds 'n voldag se werk. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

### **There is no such thing as an “8 to 4” job in the financial sector**

Ek was so naby laat dit met my gebeur, want dis 'n kwessie van jy werk by mense by 'n plek en jy raak geheg aan die mense saam met wie jy werk want jy werk baie lang ure. Jy is saam en jy raak gemaklik met mekaar. So dit het amper op 'n stadium gelei na iets toe by die werk, maar dank Vader dit is net genade het dit betyds nie gebeur nie. Ek sê nou vir die vriendin van my, sy is die enigste een wat weet van alles en my man, dit is so maklik en wat ek dalk daaruit sou geleer is dat geen persoon...ek het altyd gedink ek is immuun daarteen, daar sal nooit eers sprake van *affairs* wees nie. Ek bedoel mens sien jou man nou in die aande en die kinders, en dan gaan werk jy weer daarna. En deur die dag sien jy jou man nooit. In die oggend trek jou gou aan, dan kom jy by die werk en dan sê al die mans “jitte, maar jy lyk mooi...dis goed om jou te sien!” Dit voel vir jou *great*, obviously is jy 'n *easy target*. En dan kom jy nou weer by die huis, en dan dink jy weer hoekom sê hy nie vir my ek lyk mooi of dit of dit nie? (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Daar is nie so baie vrouens hierso nie, in hoë posisies hier nie, want hierdie *job* is 'n 24/7 *job*. Ek sien myself nie om kinders te hê met hierdie *job* nie, dit is onmoontlik. Ek is baie weg van die huis af... gisteraand moes ek nege uur eers Menlyn toe gaan dat ek kan kos koop want toe kom ek eers van die werk af, want anders het ons niks in die huis nie. So as jy wil *kids* hê en daai tipe van...ja, ek is *all for* 'n gebalanseerde lewe maar dan moet jy nie hierdie *job* wil doen nie. Dan moet jy 'n ander *job* doen. (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ek sou in die verlede maklik hier gesit het tot twee uur in die oggend as dit beteken het ek sal die volgende oggend hier instap en die vorige dag is afgehandel. Jy kan dit net nie doen nie. Daar is party vrouens wat dit doen, maar dan verloor jy die familie. Ek bedoel, *if you can't maintain some form of a balance*, moet mens dan maar *compromise*. Ek is met haar van hier kwart oor vier af dan sal ek met haar wees tot sy gaan slaap en gaan bad en dan twee uur in die oggend in die bed klim en weer van vooraf begin, want dis hoe jy dit doen. Maar ek dink nie eers dit is genoeg vir party...dis 'n *classic example*, gelukkig het ek nog 'n *supportive husband*, maar ek dink nie almal het nie. Ek dink dis 'n kwessie van as daar 'n *board*

*meetingaan* die gang is en dit raak al sesuur die middag en daar is niemand om jou kind te gaan haal nie. Wat gaan jy doen? *You are going to have to excuse yourself...* (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Daar is vrouens direkteure wat kinders het , maar dan... ek dink dit is dalk 'n persoonlike keuse, jy weet, of jy besluit iemand anders maak jou kind groot omdat jy werk tot agtuur-nege uur in die aand. So ek dink dis maar die manier wat jy dit bestuur wat vir jou 'n prioriteit is. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Die ding is met EY hulle verkoop tyd, sy jy moet kliënte gelukkig hou, jy moet die werkgewer verkoop, so dit is 'n heeltemal ander *ballgame*. Dit is seker tot 'n sekere mate *flexible*, dis nie dat hulle jou wil sien daar tot vyfuur nie, maar dan werk jy maar in die aand as die kinders slaap en op naweke. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

O, en kyk 'n vrou doen altyd meer. Ek sou nie so vinnig bevordering gekry het as ek nie die tyd en die *effort* ingesit het nie. As ek nie seker gemaak het my kwaliteit werk is van 'n baie hoë gehalte nie. En ek werk nie van agt tot vier nie, ek werk van agt tot sewe, agt, nege in die aand. Om seker te maak my werk is van so gehalte, dat hulle my nie kan...hulle het nie 'n rede om my af te wys nie. Jy werk twaalf ure plus, dis nie die standaard agt ure nie. (Jeanne, 43, married, senior manager of audit department)

Jy gaan nie op my vlak kom deur half nege (AM) by die werk aan te kom en half vyf (PM) te loop nie. En dis al wat jy doen, want almal doen dit, en jy gaan nie jouself op 'n ander plek bevind nie. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

Dis harde werk, moenie uit die skool uitkom, of uit die universiteit uitkom, klaar jou artikels gedoen het, by THE COMPANY kom aan loop en dink jy gaan nou van half nege tot half vyf werk, en jy's *dedicated* tot die *company* en jy vertel vir almal hoe *dedicated* jy is tot die *company*, en dan dink jy het op 'n sekere vlak gekom nie. Dit irriteer my so bietjie. Ek het 'n langer pad gestap, jy weet, jy kan nou met jou ma praat, ek dink en sy het *pretty much* dieselfde gedoen om te kom tot waar ons is, en dit gedoen terwyl jy kinders het, terwyl jy getroud is, gedoen terwyl daar ander

*demands* op jou gemaak is en dat jy nogsteeds daarby uitgekom het. Sonder om te sê ek het 'n verskoning, ek het kinders, ek het dit en dit...so. (Engela, 43, divorced, director at a consulting firm)

En ek sien dit soveel keer, en wat ons baie... dit het darem nou al verbeter, dis nou 'n plus-punt. In die verlede omdat hier hoofsaaklik mans vennote is in die omgewing, dan sê hulle kom ons ontmoet nou vanaand sesuur, en dan het hulle 'n *meeting* van ses tot agt. 'n Vrou moet haar kind help met huiswerk, ek het nie kinders nie, maar dis hoe die ander vrouens voel. Hulle het kinders wat hulle moet gaan help met huiswerk. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

Geen vennoot se vrou werk nie en hulle almal is "poppies". (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Die meerderheid van die mans in hierdie omgewing het *trophy wives* en hulle verkies *trophy wives*. Hulle vrouens bly by die huis, ek praat nou van die senior mans, hulle maak die kinders groot, hulle ry die kinders rond, hulle lyk mooi en hulle onthaal jou gaste. Hulle *question* jou nie en hulle vertel vir jou hoe wonderlik jy is en alhoewel hulle sterk mans is en sterk is by die werk verkies hulle so 'n vrou by die huis. (Mari, 42, single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

### **The issue of spending "quality" time with children and loved ones and society's expectations of women**

Ek gaan vroeg in die oggende in, en ek sien nie my kinders in die oggend nie, maar ek het 'n bewustelike besluit geneem en gesê; in die oggende is dit in elk geval *rush* tyd, waar in die middag as ek bietjie vroeër terug kom het ek bietjie meer "kwaliteit" tyd wat ek met my kinders kan spandeer. (Katrien, 36, married, chief audit executive)

Ek voel nou nog partykeer baie skuldig, want as ek hom in die middag gaan kry dan gaan ons huis toe en dan doen ons huiswerk en sulke tipe goed. En dan is ek moeg, dan is daar nie rêrig kwaliteit tyd nie. Ek voel skuldig daarvoor, ja.(Leonie, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Die een ding waaroor ons *adamant* oor is, is ons het nie 'n *nanny* of so iets nie. Ons werk, so as ons by die huis is doen ons alles self met haar. Persoonlik voel ek nie dit hoef haar skade aan te doen nie, ek probeer regtig om kwaliteit tyd met haar te

spandeer. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Finansieel het dit sleg gegaan, ek moes rêrig my sent omdraai. Ek het eintlik van kleintyd af so vêr moontlik waar ek kon, het ek tyd gemaak om regtig kwaliteit tyd aan haar te spandeer. En selfs nou wat sy al 'n groot meisiekind is spandeer ons nogsteeds tyd saam. (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator)

### **The choices around having children, nannies and feelings of guilt**

Maar soos ek sê, ek dink dit het 'n veral, veral nou met my vlak is dit nou waar ek gaan bly, jy sal nie sommer 'n direkteur word omdat jy nog jou kinders het. (Claudia, 38, married, associate director at an auditing firm)

Ek dink net as mens praat van die top *executivemanagement*, *directors* van *companies*, ek dink dis op die ou end die *family life* wat jou daaruit elimineer en dit is 'n vorm van diskriminasie, ek het dit gesien. (Karmen, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Ag nee, wat ek dink hy besef ook ons kan dit nie nou *manage* nie. Ek gaan nie dat my kind grootgemaak word deur 'n ousie en 'n *nanny* en sulke goed nie. Maar mens betaal maar 'n prys. Ek dink alle besluite in jou lewe betaal jy 'n prys voor. My ma sê altyd vir my wat van my oudag, ag asseblief, wat gaan my kind vir my doen in my oudag! (Natasha, 31, married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

En soos ek sê, ek het 'n besluit geneem om nie kinders te hê nie, want ek is nie 'n *nanny* "ma" nie, ek wil nie 'n kind hê en die *nanny* as 'n ma te hê nie, want hoekom het ek dan 'n kind? Ek wou nog nooit, ek het nog nooit daai behoefte gehad nie. Maar in my persoonlike verhoudings is dit 'n groot probleem, die man met wie ek nou getroud is, hy is baie suksesvol, hy't sy eie besigheid. Ek is die soort persoon as hulle sê *travel* more, dan pak ek my tas en gaan. Ek voel baie sterk as jy in 'n manswêreld is, en dit is wat die *job* verwag, en jy wil daai werk doen dan moet jy dit doen. (Annie, 40, married recently, director of an auditing firm)

### **Feelings of guilt**

Ek voel nogal ek het my kind afgeskeep, want soos ek vir jou sê ek moes hom baie keer by mense laat bly dat ek net kan swot en dan het ek hom weer gaan haal saans. (Leonie, 36, widowed, engaged, senior manager at an auditing firm)



My werk het 'n geweldige groot invloed op my kind, want ek werk in Swaziland baie van die tyd, sy bly by my bediende, sy is die enigste kind en ek is 'n enkelma. Sy het al gesê ek is liever vir die firma as vir haar. Sy het ook geleer dat ek moet werk anders kan ek nie vir haar sorg nie. Ek is daar in my lewe waar ek dink dat die voordeel wat ek trek van die *career women* en werk hard en *being driven* is nie *worth* die *sacrifice* nie. Ek is daar waar ek dit dink. (Mari, 42, Single, never married, senior manager at an auditing firm)

Die werk by die bank sit baie stres op hulle mense. Jy moet meer as een pos vul en jy moet eintlik baie oortyd insit as jy jou werk reg wil doen. Dan moet jy maar oortyd insit. Om jou kind groot te maak... jy is nie daar vir sportaktiwiteite nie, jy kom laat by die huis... Ure en werklading *wise*, jy word nou nie vreeslik betaal nie maar jy moet vreeslik *effort* insit. Ek sou sê ek was nie altyd daar vir my kind nie, daar is baie dae wat ek dit besef. (René, 57, remarried, bank branch manager)

My werk het my huwelik beïnvloed. Deel van my egskeiding is toegeskryf aan my werk, nie so groot deel nie, maar hy is. Want daar was tye waar daar nie genoeg personeel was nie wat ons moes laat werk en dinge moes doen en dan was ek nie by die huis gewees nie. (Baps, 61, divorced, bank branch administrator)