



**An analysis of the career of a top female Chief Executive: the implications
for female leadership**

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“The ability that each one of us has as human beings is a great talent that we often leave unexplored and that is the ability to think, to explore, to challenge each other as we challenge ourselves and to innovate and to change”

Maria Ramos

Abstract

Globally, and within South Africa women are not well represented in the top echelons of leadership. Maria Ramos, the current Group Chief Executive of Absa Group Limited, is ranked the 11th most powerful woman and the only South African in the top 50 most powerful woman internationally as rated by Fortune magazine.

A need exists to empower women. By obtaining insights into one woman's success, it may be able to be replicated, to fast track an equitable female representation at executive management levels much sooner than the 40 years currently envisioned. The research methodology is a case study, whilst adopting a qualitative approach through the use of semi structured interview questions.

An analysis of Maria Ramos's career within the context of career anchors, gender barriers and enablers that helped her overcome the career barriers were performed.

This study has contributed to literature by highlighting that there is no single driver for the ascendance to the top leadership position. There is evidence to suggest that there is a link between career anchors, specifically challenge incorporating the love of complexity and a rise to prominence. Androgynous leadership, positive self perception, social capital and mentoring provided a good foundation.

Keywords

1. Career Anchors
2. Glass ceiling
3. Gender barriers
4. Maria Ramos

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Tamara Chetty

Date

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1 Introduction to the Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

The small number of female Chief Executive Officers (“CEO’s”) is a global phenomenon. There are only fifteen female CEO’s from the companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (“JSE”) in South Africa. Females represent 4.5% of all CEO’s and this figure has remained relatively stable over the last three years. The United States is on par with South Africa with fifteen female CEO’s despite a population in excess of five times the size of South Africa. This is a surprising statistic emanating from the United States, as there is a strong perception that feminism is more militant there (Belle, 2002). Canada has twenty six female CEO’s whilst Australia has four (Businesswomen’s Association of South Africa, 2010).

According to the Businesswomen’s Association of South Africa (2010), the definition of CEO includes Chief Executives (“CE”) and Managing Directors.

Women make up 51.6% of the adult population and 44.6% of employed South Africans. As at 30 September 2009, South Africa’s female executive managers held 19.3% of executive manager positions and 16.6% of all director positions in the country which supports the premise that it is difficult for women to climb the corporate ladder (Businesswomen’s Association of South Africa, 2010).

Maria Ramos, the current Group CE of Absa Group Limited, is rated the 11th most powerful woman and the only South African in the top 50 most powerful woman internationally as rated by Fortune magazine (Fortune 500, 2010). She

was acknowledged for her exemplary contributions when she received the 2009 outstanding business woman of the year award by the Commonwealth Business Council and African Business magazine (Biography of Maria Ramos, 2009).

During her 5 year tenure as the Group CE of Transnet Limited, she was responsible for it's turnaround from a loss of R6,3 billion in 2004 to a profit of R4,3 billion for the year ending March 2008. She initiated a cultural transformation within this organisation that had in excess of 70,000 employees (Duncan, 2008).

1.2 Research Scope

The scope of the research will revolve around one subject, namely Maria Da Conceicao Ramos, the current Group CE of Absa Group Limited, one of largest financial groups in South Africa that has a market capitalisation of approximately R92,3 billion and assets of R717,7 billion (Absa, 2010). The scope will be further limited to the understanding of the underlying drivers that helped shape her career and resulted in her becoming the only representative from South Africa to be rated as one of the 50 most powerful women in the world as ranked by Fortune 500 (2010).

1.3 Research Motivation

Globally, and within South Africa women are not well represented in the top echelons of leadership as is evidenced by the 2010 census conducted by the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2010). It is expected to take

another 40 years to achieve a 50% female representation at executive management levels (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa, 2010). Frankforter (1996) stresses that the inclusion of women among the organizations executives will have a positive impact on the firm's performance, their management of diversity and the provision of role models for other high performing women in the organization.

This research aims to empower women by obtaining insight into one woman's success which may be able to be replicated to fast track an equitable female representation at executive management levels much sooner than the 40 years currently envisioned.

1.4 Research Problem

The study will analyse the career of a female CE within the context of career anchors, barriers faced and how it was overcome in her ascent to the top leadership position.

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the themes and patterns that emerged from the respondent's career history.
2. To identify the prominent career anchor.
3. To understand the barriers faced by a female CE and how she overcame it.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Simons (2009) finds that using theory as a guide to data collection and analysis has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that it will provide security, focus and take less time. The disadvantages are that one may not take notice of the unexpected, may lead to false consensus and takes much longer to complete. It is with this in mind that a blended approach was taken. An initial literature review was performed which was expanded upon as the case study evolved to obtain a meaningful appreciation of the areas of relevance.

Women's careers are generally construed as different from men for reasons such as differing family responsibilities, women's under representation at higher organisational levels and their developmental psychology suggests that "their primary experience of self is relational" which permeates their career development (Bilimoria & O'Neil, 2005, p.169). Career theory has two broad areas of thought, namely psychological and sociological categories. The psychological category encompasses concepts such as "career choice, career orientation, multiple life roles, self efficacy and psychological well being" (Bilimoria *et al*, 2005, p.169). The sociological category includes areas such as "career patterns, career paths and the environmental influences on careers" (Bilimoria *et al*, p.169, 2005).

This paper is based on the career analysis of a top female Chief Executive and will touch on elements within both the psychological and sociological categories.

The psychological concepts of career choices will be covered by the career anchor theory. The sociological concepts of career patterns and the influence of the environment will be covered under gender barriers and career anchors. To summarise, the career analysis will be performed within the context of career anchors, gender barriers and enablers overcoming these barriers.

2.2 Definition of Career

Bilimoria *et al.* (2005) defines career “as a lifelong process of work related activities that includes both objective and subjective aspects” (p.168). Granrose (1995) defines career as “the entire work life of a single person, including every job and every occupation held in that lifetime” (p.5). Another definition of career is “your whole work life no matter if it goes up, down, sideways or on hold for a while, example giving children or taking a year long sabbatical to sail around the world” (Poulsen, 2006, p251).

In summary, a career can be viewed as every experience the individual has from the time he commenced his first job until his ultimate retirement from the working world.

2.3 Career Anchors

A career anchor is defined as “a combination of perceived areas of competence, motives, and values that you would not give up; it represents your real self” (Schein, 1990, p.1). A person’s job may not reflect their career anchor because of factors outside of his / her control, for example, transport constraints may restrict one to find a job closest to home; a recessionary economy may

result in one having a job out of necessity rather than preference (Schein, 1990).

A study undertaken by Danziger and Valency (2006) found that if there is a correlation between a person's job and their career anchor, it will have a positive impact on their job satisfaction. Potosky and Ramakrishna (2003) postulates that clusters of career anchors should be considered rather than a single dominant anchor. Schein (1990) argues that if no dominant anchor emerges, the person may have insufficient life experience to make those choices.

Subsequent research by Suutari and Taka (2004) revealed that managers that have global careers have more than one dominant career anchor. The most common anchors were pure challenge and managerial competence. The internationalism anchor also featured among the few major anchors (Sukari and Taka, 2004, p.833).

Schein (1990) finds that career anchors are segmented into eight categories.

1. Technical / Functional competence
2. General management competence
3. Autonomy / Independence
4. Security / Stability
5. Entrepreneurial creativity
6. Sense of service / dedication to a cause
7. Pure challenge
8. Lifestyle

(Schein, 1990, p20)

2.3.1 Technical / Functional anchor

People who are technically / functionally competent find specialisation more rewarding than general management. They derive satisfaction from being known as experts. They are defined by the content of their work and the area of specialisation. The continual development of their skills is a given (Schein, 1990, p20-21).

The content of the assignment needs to be challenging. Autonomy is a preference in the execution of tasks. Administration and management is viewed as an unfortunate necessity in the performance of their duty. The level of soft skills required in the management of a team varies from person to person (Schein, 1990, p21).

Finding challenging work as one progressed along their career path was difficult. Some of the options included becoming a mentor and a generalist in their area of expertise that could provide a broader perspective to a problem (Schein, 1990, p21).

Incentives should be market related and aligned to their educational qualifications. Short term incentives are preferred because they do not want to feel trapped in unchallenging work. Recognition from professional peers, continuous learning and development in the area of expertise, prizes, awards and publicity are more valued than increases in remuneration (Schein, 1990, p22).

Promotions can take any or a combination of the following forms:

1. Increased salary in line with the market;
2. Broaden the scope of their work ;
3. Increased responsibility;
4. Allocation of more resources;
5. Involvement in high level decision making.

(Schein, 1990, p22)

2.3.2 General management anchor

Some people have a passion for ascending the organisational ranks and have the autonomy in making major policy decisions. People who are competent in this category understand that they need to be proficient in the business or the industry to succeed in the general manager role. They need to think cross functionally, integratively, resolve problems with partial information and be able to manage the decision making process (Schein, 1990, p23).

Schein (1990) postulates that the skills required is “the ability to influence, supervise, lead, handle and control people at all levels of the organisation towards organisational goal achievement”. Competence in group skills is desired to optimise the intergroup sharing of information to be effective in problem solving. Furthermore, a general manager must be enthused by interpersonal issues and be able to make tough decisions (Schein, 1990, p23-24).

Career roles include leadership with high levels of responsibility. The attractiveness of the position is correlated with its importance to the success of

the organisation (Schein, 1990, p25). General managers prefer to be tangibly remunerated via short term benefits such as bonuses and long term benefits like share options. It is more important for them to earn more than the level below them than to be remunerated in line with the market. The ability to obtain results should be the key driver for promotions. Promotions are expected to occur frequently and to the right position (Schein, 1990, p25-26).

2.3.3 Autonomy / Independence anchor

People who have the autonomy anchor prefer roles that give them the freedom to obtain the desired results and goals. How these results or goals are achieved, should not be considered. What is important is whether the goals and results were achieved within the stipulated timeframe. They detest supervision and prefer contract or project work (Schein, 1990, p27).

Remuneration should be based on performance, and not on retention. Portable benefits such as awards, certificates, medals are more appreciated than financial bonuses or even title changes. Promotion is synonymous with more autonomy rather than increased benefits or responsibility (Schein, 1990, p27).

2.3.4 Security / Stability anchor

Jobs that provide security, stability are welcomed by some people who want to feel safe, secure and have predictability in their lives. They appreciate golden handcuff incentives, companies that avoid retrenchments, stable companies that encourage long tenure and good benefits such as retirement plans (Schein, 1990, p28).

Security is preferred over the job level in the organisation. Promotion and recognition based on rank, seniority, loyalty and steady performance is preferred (Schein, 1990, p28-29).

2.3.5 Entrepreneurial creativity anchor

The characteristics of a person with this anchor include the following:

1. Pursues the creation of businesses from a very early age;
2. The creation of entities are aligned with the person's skills and talents;
3. Fixation to demonstrate that they can create businesses;
4. Willingness to leave their job, security and stability to focus on the business.

(Schein, 1990, p29)

These people get bored easily and are often looking for new challenges. Ownership and control via shares is important. They prefer roles that give them the flexibility to positions where creativity is exercised. They enjoy public attention and their recognition is derived by the building of fortunes and or substantial entities (Schein, 1990, p30).

2.3.6 Sense of service / Dedication to a cause anchor

A desire to improve the world combined with the exercise of the central values of a person represents the key criteria of the sense of service or dedication to a cause anchor. People with this value enjoy influencing their work in accordance with their values. Fair pay with portable benefits is expected. Recognition of

their contribution and positions with influence and autonomy is a motivator. Peer and management recognition is sought (Schein, 1990, p30-31).

2.3.7 Pure challenge

Some people anchor their careers in the perception that they can conquer anything or anyone. They define success as overcoming impossible obstacles, solving unsolvable problems, or winning over extremely tough opponents. As they progress they seek ever tougher challenges. For some this takes the form of seeking jobs in which they face more and more difficult problems. However, these people are not technically / functionally anchored because they do not seem to care what area the problem occurs (Schein, 1990, p31).

The features of the pure challenge anchor include:

1. “Overcoming impossible obstacles, solving unsolvable problems, or winning out over extremely tough opponents (Schein, 1990, p31).”
2. To be challenged is critical irrespective of what the challenge is;
3. Variety is preferred in their career;
4. General Management is attractive because of the variety, and the complexity involved in motivating and developing people;
5. High motivation to develop themselves.

(Schein, 1990, p31)

2.3.8 Lifestyle

Some people have a preference for their careers to be integrated into their lifestyles. Flexibility is important provided that they have “the right options at the

right time” (Schein, 1990, p32). Examples of these options include working from home during normal office hours, day care options, paternity / maternity leave and sabbaticals. They find organisations that have a culture of respect for personal and family concerns attractive. The lifestyle anchor is a growing trend because of the dual career families. There is also evidence of an increase in this anchor amongst males (Schein, 1990, p32).

2.4 Barriers preventing women from ascending to senior leadership roles

Ibrahim and Ismail (2008) define barriers as “a factor, event, or phenomenon that prevents or controls access to individuals from making progress” (p.54). The barriers that prevent women from progressing to senior management positions can be grouped into two categories (Oakley, 2000, p.322). Oakley (2000) identifies the first category as “barriers created by corporate practices” (p.322), which supports the “recruitment, retention and promotion of males over females” (p.322). The second category is created by behavioural and cultural causes that are entrenched “around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male / female relations” (Oakley, 2000, p.322).

Each of the categories will be examined to obtain further insight into the drivers of these barriers.

2.4.1 Barriers created by corporate practices

These barriers are easier to overcome by changing the policies of organisations (Oakley, 2000, p.323). Belle (2002) finds that the organisational culture influences women's advancement opportunities.

2.4.1.1 Experience and career development

Oakley (2000) argues that line experience in areas such as marketing and operations are a prerequisite to be in line for the CEO position. Furthermore, these positions must be offered to women by the latest in their mid career to be in line for the executive positions (Oakley, 2000, p.323).

2.4.1.2 Remuneration

Oakley (2000) finds that female managers earn substantially less than their male counterparts, which is an inhibitor to promotions, because below par earnings delay the climb up the corporate ladder (p.324). Lopes, Lyons and Murtagh (2007), find that limited financial resources and lack of access to education is a career barrier.

2.4.1.3 Promotion of males over females

A lack of performance based feedback, effective policies and a general understanding of all employees that the promotion of women is required to facilitate diversity are the reasons attributed to the promotions of males over females (Oakley, 2000, p.323).

2.4.2 Barriers created by behavioural and cultural causes

2.4.2.1 Behavioural double binds

A behavioural double bind refers to a “no win” situation. The example used by Oakley (2000) is that women in leadership positions “must be tough and authoritative (like men) to be taken seriously, but they will be perceived as “bitches” if they act too aggressively” (p.324). The world (2008) supports Oakley (2000) and finds that women’s leadership is perceived differently even if they demonstrate the same behaviour as men (p.28). Another example used is the femininity competence bind whereby feminine traits are associated with incompetence which leads to the assertion that to be competent one must not be feminine (Oakley, 2005, p.325).

2.4.2.2 Stereotypes

Oakley (2000) argues that leadership is based on masculine attributes. Women are stereotyped and compared to men. As a result women tend to downplay their femininity to enhance their credibility at the risk of being seen as unauthentic. Some of the techniques used to overcome stereotypes include having short hair, lower pitch voice, masculine dress style and looking less attractive (Oakley, 2000 p.326).

Hopfl and Matilal (2007) find that in terms of perceptions masculine values make an effective leader (p.200) and that women have to set aside their feminine qualities to achieve success as a leader. McKean, McTavish and

Ogden (2006) view is that both men and women have the perception that a good manager has masculine traits.

2.4.2.3 Communication styles

Socialisation is seen to be the driver of female communication skills, the attributes resulting in modesty being chosen over self praise and requesting tasks rather than commanding tasks. At the risk of being seen as aggressive, women are changing their communication to a “command orientated” (p.325) style to be perceived as competent (Oakley, 2000).

2.4.2.4 Preferred leadership styles

Oakley (2000) finds that women have a participatory, inclusive leadership style which may not be the required attribute of a CEO (p.327). Furthermore the socialisation process of females results in them having sensitivities to feelings which are not viewed as a positive trait of a CEO (Oakley, 2000, p.327).

2.4.2.5 Motherhood

A study undertaken on women engineers and scientists revealed that their biggest barrier to career advancement was balancing their career with their family (Ibrahim *et al*, 2008). Societal norms require women to be the caregivers of the family, to spend more time with their children by arriving home early and taking time off when the child is ill, whilst simultaneously juggling their professional responsibilities (Bilimoria *et al*, 2005; Ibrahim *et al*, 2008; Lopes *et*

al, 2007, McKean *et al*, 2006). Some women are delaying motherhood until they reach certain levels in their career (The world, 2008, p.28). Whilst women with dependent children did not have ambitious career expectations, they had more thoughts of quitting (Scandura, 1994).

2.4.2.6 Old boys networks

McKean *et al* (2006) findings revealed that networking was important as a business skill when interacting with customers and as a means of creating visibility with senior management, known as internal networking. Promotional opportunities were more dependent on the internal networks (McKean *et al*, 2006).

(The world, 2008) suggests that women are less inclined to social relationships that can enhance corporate or political opportunities, especially when it is centred on traditional male activities such as fishing and golf. Women are seen as disruptors to the old boys networks, where it is feared that the male cultural norms will be challenged whilst the average compensation of CEO's will decrease as it is attributed to the significantly lower pay of female CEO's (Oakley, 2000, p329).

2.4.2.7 Tokenism

Oakley (2000), Bilimoria *et al* (2005) and Frankforter (1996) find that when women are in the minority in top management positions they are viewed as tokens. It creates an unequal playing field for advancement. This makes it

difficult for them to obtain information from informal networks, which is an inhibitor to further promotion (Oakley, 2000, McKean, *et al*, 2006).

2.4.2.8 Self perception

Self perceptions of capable women who feel that they are not ready and are confused about the characteristics of a leader is highlighted as another stumbling block (The world, 2008, p.29). Scandura (1994) and Lopes *et al* (2007) find that women may impose psychological limitations on their opportunities by having negative perceptions of their upward mobility.

McKean *et al* (2006) highlights numerous perceptions namely:

- Women do not want to make the sacrifices required for a senior role;
- Women do not apply for senior positions due to their inhibitions;
- Women who combine career and motherhood have limited career aspirations;

In a study by De Pater, Fischer, Van Ginkel and Van Vianen (2009), it was found that women prefer less challenging roles than men as they were concerned more about failure than the potential success.

2.4.2.9 Legislation

Mathur-Helm (2005) finds that despite having the Republic of South Africa Employment Equity Act, No.55 of 1998 which promotes equality in employment, it is still a challenge for women to reach top level positions. There are other factors including “social constructs, attitudes, norms, values and stereotypes

determined by the corporate culture” that impede the transformation of these policies into reality (Mathur-Helm, 2005, p.68).

2.5 Enablers to overcome the Barriers

2.5.1 Social Capital

There are two categories of social capital namely hard social capital and soft social capital. Hard social capital refers to the bonding that occurs during the course of your career which may result in the exchange of work related resources, example contacts, coaching, advice, and obtaining challenging assignments. Soft social capital refers to the emotional support provided via friendship, counselling, closeness and trust which helps to develop self esteem and professional identity (Van Emmerik, 2006).

Van Emmerik (2006) finds that men were more effective at using emotional intensity and team related resources to develop hard social capital. It was found that since women were relatively new to the environment (academia) the stability of their relationships were lower and that the differences in the career outcome of both genders can be explained by the effectiveness of their social capital (Van Emmerik, 2006).

2.5.2 Flexibility

Organisations offering family supporting policies were more likely to have more loyal female employees (Scandura, 1994). McKean *et al* (2006) find that

flexibility encompassing policies such as telecommuting from home, job sharing, flexi time were correlated to the increase in females in senior positions.

However, a study undertaken by Straub (2007), when comparing companies work life balance policies in fourteen European countries revealed that except for increased maternity pay, there generally was no correlation between work life balance policies and the seniority of women. Flexibility or better work life balance policies alone will not improve the ascendance of women to top leadership positions.

2.5.3 Tokenism

A study undertaken by Frankforter (1996) revealed that tokenism, although viewed negatively was another reason how women broke through the glass ceiling in middle management (p. 10).

2.5.4 Mentoring

Many companies encourage informal mentoring and coaching relationships between junior and senior executives. A friendship normally develops from this process. A senior executive may help advance their mentee's career progression whilst peer mentors help guide women through the corporate labyrinth during their careers (Scandura, 1994).

Scandura (1994) stresses that "the mentor relationship is one of the most successful methods for women to achieve upward mobility and career

satisfaction. It is probably the best way for them to fight the "old boys' network" and sexual bias still prevalent in many companies today" (Scandura, 1994, p68). McKean, *et al* (2006), suggest that senior women can become role models and mentors to other women to facilitate the development of their mentees careers.

2.5.5 Younger firms

The study performed by Frankforter (1996) found that younger and smaller firms were more likely to provide career progression opportunities to females because it is more difficult for larger organisations to effect change to make the glass ceiling more permeable (p. 10).

2.5.6 Legislation

The legislation promoting equal opportunities for women in the workplace in South Africa is addressed under the Republic of South Africa Employment Equity Act, No.55 of 1998 which promotes equality in employment and eliminates unfair discrimination. Section 15 of the aforesaid Act, states that "Affirmative action measures are measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer". Designated groups include women (Republic of South Africa, Department of Labour, 1998).

2.5.7 Androgynous leadership skills

In the research undertaken by Belle (2002), it was found that some women preferred to be recognised first and foremost as a specialist in the role rather than their gender being considered.

Korabik (1990), postulates that both men and women have masculine and feminine characteristics. An androgynous female is just as feminine as her female counterparts, but also has more masculine personality characteristics than them. Whilst masculinity is associated with task leadership style, the feminine personality is associated with the socio emotional role.

An androgynous individual is competent in both the task leadership style and the social emotional role, and can tap into either of these qualities whenever the need arises. Considering that both these traits are required in an effective leader, an androgynous individual is perceived to be more competent and likeable (Korabik, 1990).

In a study by Singh and Vinnicombe (2002) 34% of women from the sample group rated their leadership style as androgynous and feminine. The study further revealed that women managers ranked themselves lower on the instrumentality or task orientated functions and stronger on the social emotional role. The study found that women managers lacked confidence about their success (Singh *et al*, 2002).

2.6 Conclusion

The literature review highlights possible stumbling blocks the respondent may have faced and managed on her way to the top. It further provides a variety of reasons for Maria Ramos's success as a top female CE.

3 Research Propositions

The following research propositions will address the research objectives identified in chapter one.

1. What patterns and themes emerge from the respondent's career experience?
2. What is the prominent career anchor?
3. The identification of barriers faced.
4. How were these barriers overcome?

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Research Method

The research methodology is a case study that attempts to understand how the underlying drivers helped shape the subject's career in her ascendance to a top leadership position. The rationale for this research with just one subject is the access to the 11th most powerful women in international business (Fortune 500, 2010).

Simons (2009) defines a case study as “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a real life context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led” (p.21).

Another definition of case study as stated by Gillham (2000) is the investigation of “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world which can only be studied or understood in context which exists in the here and now that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw” which is required to answer specific research questions” (p.1). In addition there would be multiple sources of evidence (Gillham, 2000, p.1).

The research design will be qualitative which in actual fact is descriptive. Qualitative methods enables the researcher to understand what is happening by focussing on how the respondents are behaving and what they are telling you.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, all evidence is of some value and needs to be considered (Gillham, 2000, p.9-10).

Gillham (2000) stresses that what people believe and what people do is different. To expect them to be the same is to misunderstand how people function. And it means that theory has to cope with this complexity” (p.14). Simons (2009) recommends that case study designs are “emergent rather than pre-ordinate” with issues being refined whilst the case is reframed (p.38).

4.2 Proposed Population and Unit of Analysis

The population consists of all women striving for top leadership positions. The size of the population is unknown. The unit of analysis is the management of one woman’s career.

4.3 Size and Nature of the Sample

The sampling technique used will be non probability which is described by Zikmund (2003) as a “sampling technique in which units of the sample are selected on the basis of personal judgement or convenience (p. 380). Purposive or judgement sampling is “a non probability sampling technique in which an experienced individual selects the sample based upon some appropriate characteristic of the sample members” (Zikmund, 2003, p.282). The sample procedure will be purposive based on the researcher’s experience and accessibility to the subject.

4.4 Data Collection, Management and Analysis

There are many types of evidence, including but not limited to documents, records, interviews using open ended questions, participant observation, informal comments made in passing. The evidence needs to be interwoven to present the case in a narrative manner following the logic and chronology of the research. Data analysis must be appropriate for the evidence obtained, therefore creativity may be required to authentically reflect in a logical order the evidence uncovered (Gillham, 2000).

Gillham (2000) recommends the following methods to analyse the data:

- Absorbing the culture:- One needs to understand what it is like to be involved in that particular setting.
- Looking for discrepant data:- Look for data that does not fit your understanding or theory, to obtain further insight into the reality.
- Triangulation:- Straight forward triangulation occurs when different sources of data correlate. If the information obtained is contradictory, it means that the presumed relationship may be understood differently.
- Representativeness of data:- One needs to be aware of the unsaid and whether one has obtained different perspectives of the data.
- Asking yourself how you know the information. If it is based on intuition one must try to obtain the relevant evidence. All information obtained needs to be investigated and explored to establish if it has any relevance.
- Peer consultation: - One can obtain informal guidance on the research project from ones peers.

Two interviews were held with the respondent. The interviews were exploratory and semi structured in nature to allow the respondent to talk freely about her experiences and events which facilitates the triangulation of data.

The first was for an hour and fifteen minutes on the 29 July 2010, and the second was for an hour and a half on the 13 September 2010. At the first interview the career orientation interview questionnaire, as reflected in Appendix one, was presented. Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this questionnaire will be completed after the interview. Both the interviews were structured around the career anchor interview questionnaire as reflected in Appendix two, which provides an in depth insight into the career history of Maria Ramos. The interviews addressed research proposition one and two.

Thereafter, a list of questions to address research proposition three and four, and missing information for research proposition one and two was sent to the respondent via e-mail on the 22 October 2010. Refer to Appendix three for these questions.

4.5 Data Validity and Reliability

Perry (2001) stresses that a quality research includes valid and reliable data.

The four tests proposed to test the quality of the research are:

- Test of the construct validity: - Literature reviews prior to the exploratory interviews combined with the triangulation of evidence will add rigour to the data. "Triangulation is using several sources of information about a phenomenon, to try to get a clearer picture through convergence (Perry, 2001, p. 319).

- Test of external validity: - External validity is concerned with the application of the research findings to the population. Unfortunately, the sample size of one is also identified as a limitation in the research. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, case research is primarily theory building which will be confirmed / disconfirmed rather than testing the applicability thereof to the population (Perry, 2001, p. 319 - 320).
- Test of internal validity: - Internal validity refers to the cause and effect of relationships, although it is difficult to establish. The use of “prior theory, probe questions and the in-depth listening techniques” supports the robustness of the internal validity (Perry, 2001, p. 320).
- Test of reliability: - Perry (2001) states that reliability refers to the extent that the data can be tested. There are standard processes for obtaining data and combined with the provision of the case study database, one can take comfort that the reliability thereof is accomplished (Perry, 2001, p. 320).

4.6 Research Limitations

- The sample size of one is not representative of the population and therefore no inferences can be made.
- Factors other than career anchors and gender that influence career management were not considered. Therefore no conclusion can be made outside this sample.
- The information provided by the respondent was based on her perception and views with limited collaboration with external parties.

- The interviewer is biased because the interviewer is an employee of the company that the respondent leads.

5 Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter incorporates the data obtained from the two interviews held with the respondent, correspondence received from her and some collaboration with Maritha Appelgryn from her office. The information is clustered around the research propositions.

5.2 Career experience

Maria Da Conceicao Ramos was born on the 22nd February 1959 in Portugal. The eldest of four daughters, she emigrated to Vereeniging, South Africa with her family as a young girl.

Education, learning and reading were valued in her family. Her mother, a house wife was an avid reader whilst her dad was a brick layer by profession and retired as a construction foreman. On a regular basis, after her school work was completed, she immersed herself into books. Her family had a competition going to establish who could add up the longest list of numbers without using a piece of paper. These activities were interesting ways of being entertained with limited financial resources.

She attended a public school in her home town and did not find the environment challenging or exciting. Her awareness of her family's low ranking status in

society, as an immigrant Portuguese working class family, was reinforced when her efforts at school were not taken seriously. Even though the school that she attended was not far from Sharpeville, she was oblivious of the political situation until the police tanks started moving into Sharpeville. Refer to Appendix 9.4 for the map of Sharpeville and Vereeniging and Appendix 9.5 for a background on the Sharpeville massacre.

Although law and social sciences were her passion, her desire to attend University was thwarted due to a lack of financial support. She entered the job market as a Waste Clerk for Barclays Bank (“Barclays”) in 1978.

A Waste Clerk’s main responsibility was to process cheques picked up from the back of the tellers. These cheques were entered into large computers, which in those days were not easily accessible resources, where they were reconciled at the end of the day. Whilst she appreciated the job as a Waste Clerk, she knew that she was not going to be in that position for the rest of her life. In her hunger to continue learning she discovered very quickly that Barclays provided scholarships.

After applying for the scholarship, it was made abundantly clear that it was not open to women. It resulted in a protracted four year debate on the unscrupulous discrimination against women. Eventually the Bank conceded on the premise that she passes the Bankers exam in order to be considered for a scholarship. Despite her perception that the Bankers exam was uninteresting and unchallenging, she persevered for the sake of the scholarship. After comfortably passing the Bankers exam she called the Human Resource Director and asked him to uphold his part of the bargain. Although he tried to encourage her to

study part-time via the University of South Africa, her tenacity resulted in the Bank conceding to pay for a Bachelor of Commerce degree through the University of the Witwatersrand (“Wits”). This degree was not what she set her heart on. However, being pragmatic she believed that “You take whatever opportunity there is in life and I only had one opportunity at the time and that opportunity was to do the Bachelor of Commerce” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

Whilst pursuing the Bachelor of Commerce degree at Wits she discovered her passion for Economics, more so than Law. The attraction was to the analytical technical side of economics combined with the behavioural psychology, and the leeway it presented to make assumptions. While here she did manage to study some law courses for non degree purposes.

During her time at Wits her awareness of the political discrimination in South Africa was heightened. She found like minded people, who shared her similar beliefs about how wrong apartheid was, with whom she could communicate with. Her belief was a natural feeling, which she felt in her heart and her gut, that racism and discrimination was humanly fundamentally wrong. At Wits, she felt that she had come home.

The Bank, thereafter allowed her to pursue her Honours in Economics. Subsequently she returned to Barclays and worked back her scholarship in the Economics department as an International Economist and thereafter in the dealing room.

In 1989, she left the business world and joined academia as she felt that it was the right thing to do. A reduction in salary was a natural spin-off from her decision to pursue her desire to learn. She lectured Economics at the University of South Africa until 1991. Maria enjoyed the teaching, the interaction whilst being challenged by the students and the mental stretch that came along with it while exploring the theoretical boundaries of the subject matter. Academia provided her with the liberty to pursue her politics more vigorously.

“To me what has always been fascinating was the exploration of ideas. I always say to people that the ability that each one of us has as human beings is a great talent that we often leave unexplored and that is the ability to think, to explore, to challenge each other as we challenge ourselves and to innovate and to change. Change is very seldom negative. It is only negative if you convert it into a force against progress” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

From 1991 until 1994, she lectured at Wits. During this period she had embarked on numerous responsibilities and activities which included obtaining a Master of Science in Economics from London in 1992, was the Project Leader for the inflation project at the African National Congress between 1992 and 1993. In 1994 she commenced duties as a Research Officer for the London school of Economics until 1995.

During 1995, she assumed duties as the Deputy Director General in the Department of Finance which later became the National Treasury, after the merger with the Department of State Expenditure and the exclusion of the South African Revenue Service. This role was one of her most challenging

roles. She considered it a privilege and an honour to go into the first government of the democratic South Africa with President Nelson Mandela. She always felt that to be in civil service was an absolute privilege.

National Treasury came along with its own set of challenges. Most of the employees had no experience in government. They were guided by their belief that they wanted to do things differently based on the expectations from the majority of the South Africans. The approach that she adopted at National Treasury was to have the same standards as the private sector thus ensuring that it became an employer of choice.

Hence they brought in the skill and retained them. Once the initial goals were achieved, it was used as the base for the next set of goals. Goals were continuously stretched. The culture became performance driven which started to attract more talent. Maria Ramos subscribed to the notion that if you do something, you must do it with complete commitment, passion, integrity and hard work. By being performance driven and dynamic, one could have access to the best economists and policy makers in the world.

Despite being offered quite a few jobs in the financial services sector, she felt it inappropriate to leave National Treasury as a Director General and then head up a Financial Institution. She was offered the job as Group Chief Executive of Transnet in 2004. The challenge of taking on a job outside of her comfort zone of banking and finance appealed to her. Furthermore, the Transnet job was challenging in both scale and industry. Refer to Appendix 9.7 for the history of Transnet.

Transnet at the time employed 92,000 people. At that stage, it still included South African Airways (“SAA”) and was a diverse company incorporating rail, ports, pipelines, some telecoms. Although she felt Transnet was a “hard engineering environment”, she enjoyed it tremendously. “I really enjoyed the science, just physical science and engineering the hard project management, getting on site with engineers and working through hard steel construction problems. It is easy to say that you are comfortable. It is not easy to be comfortable. I have learned that over the year” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

Having no experience or formal training as an engineer she asked obvious and important questions that others were afraid to ask as they were afraid that they were at risk of exposing themselves. Her belief is that it is important to ask these questions as it went to the crux of the matter. It takes a skill to explain complexities in simple language without using technical jargon.

She used the same approach with train drivers when she explained to them that they were carrying Rx million of cargo (depending on the commodity price on the day) from Sishen to the Port of Saldahna on a +/- R50 million train which meant that they are responsible for a substantial portion of the revenue. The challenges that came along with Transnet were about people, technology, having a healthy balance sheet and the maintaining of operational efficiency. Her strategy was to keep things simple, set clear targets, become operationally efficient whilst steering the business to a sound financial footing.

To overcome the challenges she continuously learnt through experience, be it taking the executive team to the Durban port to climb up the loading cranes, or

spending time at a camp on a rail shut down, whilst major revamps were underway. She kept an open mind, and made no promises that could not be delivered.

Her view is that “irrespective of where you sit in an organisation you need to understand what your role is, what your contribution is, what your responsibilities are and what your accountability is” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, September 13, 2010). The leadership at Transnet were challenged to lead by example.

Maria’s key learning’s at Transnet included:

- Learning about people from all walks of life
- Understanding tough strikes
- The importance of communicating with people through the good and bad times

Although she frequented camp sites and was for the most part the only woman there, she did not personally experience much gender barriers. However, she was aware that these barriers did exist for other women in the organisation. She was conscious on occasion when things were specifically prepared for her, and consequently endeavoured to ensure that the same consistent standards for all females were maintained.

Even though she did not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination, she was aware that many incidences go unreported. If she became aware of any discrimination or harassment, whether intentional or unintentional, she brought

it to the attention of the responsible parties, whilst taking the necessary actions to deal with the perpetrators.

On the 01 March 2009, in the midst of the global financial crisis, Maria Ramos was appointed as the Group Chief Executive of the Absa Group after undergoing an intensive recruitment process where she also evaluated whether the organisational values were aligned with hers. The challenges that she faces at Absa are:

1. To envisage the future despite being in the midst of the global financial crisis whilst commencing to live that future immediately;
2. How to evolve Absa into a smart nimble thinking organisation;
3. How to connect people's heart and mind, individually and as a team.

To understand and get a sense of the culture, the people and the business at Absa, she embarked on a road show in 2009, where she met approximately five thousand employees. As a firm believer of experiential learning and insight, she enjoys keeping her hand on the pulse of the organisation. Hence she often goes to a branch dressed in casual wear and stands in the queue with the customers to understand what it feels like to be serviced by Absa. She speaks to customers and has responded to their complaints in order to better understand what their issues are.

Maria Ramos did not set any career goals. Her goal in life was to “keep growing, keep developing and improving myself from an education and a growth point of view. It's about knowledge, personal development and it's about acquiring new skills as you go along, rather than a specific position” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, September 13, 2010).

The transition points in her life include the following:

- a) Going to University: in terms of learning and politics;
- b) Working within government;
- c) Working at Transnet;
- d) Leaving Transnet and moving back into Banking

Maria firmly believes in setting the same standards for every-one in the organisation. Whilst it is important to get the employment equity right she expects that employment equity candidates are appointed based on their skills, competencies and the ability to do the job. Accordingly, she feels that there should be no special gender based training for women, in roles in the financial services industry, example accountant, branch manger, and trader.

Over her thirty year career the aspects of her career that she really enjoyed was the challenge, the opportunity to grow and to develop people and asserts that the jobs that she had refused were because she was either not ready for it or that it was not the right job at the right time. Maria is not focussed in looking out for the next career opportunity. She is fully immersed in her role at Absa and describes herself as a Banker and “being in the business of providing financial services to a wide spectrum of sectors and products” (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, September 13, 2010). Consequently she tries to take full advantage of opportunities for the benefit if the organisation while at the same time improving service excellence; and focusing on people, systems and customers.

During her reflections of her career path, she is consciously aware that the country is continuously suffering from the waste of talent that was wreaked by apartheid. She is impatient that it is taking so long to develop a sizeable and appropriate pool of talent and resources. This small, diminutive woman with an infectious laugh is more concerned about what a person brings to the table, rather than their title or position. She feels strongly about the xenophobic attacks because as an immigrant into the country, she personally felt the effects of discrimination. She describes this as "... a fate that you have to continuously feel that you have to prove to others that you are capable of doing things for people to take notice of you" (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

She believes that South Africa has vast potential and is in awe that, in the midst of apartheid and its cruel practices, the people rose above the circumstances and developed the Freedom Charter. Her view is that leaders must learn from the environment and the past to be effective. As a leader there are a lot of things that you could get wrong. The greatest challenge of leadership is "for people to see change as a force for the positive and growth and development" (T. S. Chetty, personal communication, September 13, 2010). She prefers to be surrounded by people and situations that constantly challenge her. She believes that you have surrounded yourself with the wrong people if they keep reminding you how fantastic you are.

5.3 The prominent career anchor

Schein's career anchor questionnaire comprises of 40 questions, with 5 questions per anchor. For each question, the respondent must rate their response on a scale from 1 to 6 to indicate their views on each question.

Table reflecting scale and description

Scale / Meaning	Description
1	Never true for me
2	Never true for me
3	Occasionally true for me
4	Often true for me
5	Always true for me
6	Always true for me

Once the scoring was completed, the respondent was expected to look over the questions and select the three items that are the truest for them. The three items selected much each be given an additional four points.

Questions 7, 10 and 31 were provided with the maximum points, namely 10.

Table reflecting high scores

Number	Question	Score
7	I dream of a career in which I can solve problems or win out in situations that are extremely challenging.	10
10	I dream of being in charge of a complex organisation and making decisions that affect many people.	10
31	I seek out work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem solving and / or competitive skills.	10

Questions 7 and 31 are items classified within the pure challenge competence, whilst question 10 falls with the general management competence.

The questions that were rated 1 and 2, which were never true for the respondent are questions 4, 5, 8, 13, 17, 20, 36, 37, 38 and 40. They mainly fell within the security / stability, entrepreneurial creativity and lifestyle competencies.

Table reflecting low scores

Number	Question	Score
4	Security and stability are more important to me than freedom and autonomy.	2
5	I am always on the lookout for ideas that permit me to start my own enterprise.	2
8	I would rather leave my organisation than to be put into a job that will compromise my ability to pursue personal and family concerns.	1
13	Building my own business is more important to me than achieving a high level managerial position in someone else's organisation.	1
17	Becoming a senior functional manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.	2
20	I seek jobs in organisations that will give me a sense of security and stability.	2
36	I dream of having a career that would allow me to feel a sense of security and stability.	2
37	I dream of starting and building my own business.	1
38	I would rather leave my organisation than accept an assignment that would undermine my ability to be of service to others.	2
40	I have always sought out work opportunities that would minimise interference with personal or family concerns.	2

The completion of Schein's career anchor questionnaire revealed the scores as reflected in the table.

Table reflecting the scores from the career anchor questionnaire

Career Anchor	Score
Technical / Functional Competence	4.0
General Management Competence	5.6
Autonomy / Independence Competence	3.4
Security / Stability Competence	2.6
Entrepreneurial Creativity Competence	2.2
Service / Dedication to a cause Competence	3.8
Pure Challenge Competence	6.8
Life Style Competence	2.6

The prominent career anchor is Challenge at 6.8, followed by general management at 5.6 and technical/functional at 4.2.

Table reflecting the prominent career anchor, namely pure challenge questions and scores

Number	Question	Rating
7	I dream of a career in which I can solve problems or win out in situations that are extremely challenging.	10
15	I will feel successful in my career only if I face and overcome very difficult challenges.	5
23	I have been most fulfilled in my career when I have solved seemingly unsolvable problems or won out over seemingly impossible odds.	5
31	I seek out work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem solving and / or competitive skills.	10
39	Working on problems that are almost unsolvable is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	4

5.4 The identification of barriers faced

At first glance, it appears that there were no barriers faced by the respondent.

Upon deeper introspection, some of the barriers that she encountered were:

1. Family's rank in society and economic status combined with the discrimination experienced has an impact on one's self perception.

Examples of these experiences include:

- a. The working class immigrant family background. Her father was a bricklayer by profession and retired as a construction foreman. Her mother was a housewife who took care of the family.
 - b. Discriminated for being an Immigrant in South Africa. She became conscious that she was treated differently at school because she was an immigrant. She was also conscious of her family's rank in society based on their Portuguese background.
 - c. Limited financial resources resulted in her not following her passion, which at the time was Law.
 - d. Discriminated for being a woman: In her first job, she found out that scholarships were not open to female candidates.
2. A behavioural double bind as explained by Oakley (2000) refers to a no win situation. An example used is that although masculine traits are viewed as competent, if a woman exhibits these traits, like toughness, she is viewed in an unfavourable light. Maria's toughness can be construed as unnecessarily assertive.
 3. Maria's participatory style combined with her emotional awareness is not viewed as a positive trait of a CEO as postulated by Oakley (2000).

5.5 How were these barriers overcome?

There were many barriers that she did not face, for example, remuneration was not an issue for her, she has no offspring and she overcame any inhibiting self perceptions. Other aspects that helped her in her career, and may have eliminated barriers faced includes:

- Networking via professional bodies, affiliations and forums and the ability to tap into social capital.
- Having numerous mentors throughout her career.
- Androgynous leadership style
- Positive and enabling self perceptions
- The prominent career anchor being challenge, which according to Schein (1990) the features of this anchor include “overcoming impossible obstacles, solving unsolvable problems, or winning out extremely tough opponents” (p 31). The challenge anchor appears to be a mechanism to combat career barriers.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings obtained from the various methods of data collection are largely supportive of the literature reviewed in chapter two. In the next chapter these results are analysed in terms of the literature review to obtain further insights.

6 Discussion of results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research findings in terms of the literature review.

The qualitative information is analysed to address the research objectives and is structured into four sections in accordance with the research propositions.

6.2 Patterns that emerge from the respondent's career experience

There are numerous patterns that emerge during Maria's lifetime that extends into her professional life. These insights provide us with a deeper understanding of the career anchors and some of the contributors to her success.

Desire for personal growth, development and the acquisition of new skills

From a young age she was influenced by a mother who was a bookworm and a family that engaged in creative ways to entertain themselves. During her school years, she spent a substantial portion of her free time immersed in books.

Her desire to seek new knowledge led to the prompt understanding of her first employer's policy on education. She pursued her passion for knowledge by studying a Diploma that was not challenging in order to have the opportunity of having her University studies sponsored by her employer.

She enjoyed academia immensely, to the extent that she:

- Obtained an undergraduate degree, namely Bachelor of Commerce, within a 3 year period;
- Obtained a Honours in the Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) with a first class pass from the University of Witwatersrand.
- Obtained a Masters degree from a London University

Her drive for personal growth resulted in her taking on challenging roles where she consistently tried to understand the technicalities in order to get to the bottom of any issue.

The desire for development extends to her fellow South Africans. A pay cut to lecture full time at the University was not an issue when presented with the opportunity to interact with challenging mindsets. She felt it a privilege to be in civil service. In a way, it was one of the approaches she utilised when contributing towards helping society redress the apartheid legacy. Validation of this trait is clearly demonstrated in her willingness to make time to provide information for this study despite her hectic schedule which encompasses local and global responsibilities.

Distinction between right and wrong and social consciousness

The ideological belief to distinguish between right and wrong made her politically aware of the discrimination against humans in South Africa. It has led to the intolerance of discrimination in any form. She has given up opportunities when she felt that it was inappropriate for her, and taken up positions that

allowed her to put into effect her ideological beliefs as can be evidenced from the work she had done for the African National Congress and the National Treasury. Further examples of how she embraces this mindset is ensuring that her employer shares her values and discrimination in any form not be tolerated.

Pragmatism

Being a practical person, she viewed everything in its simplest form. She embraced all opportunities when she felt that it was on the path of knowledge and development, despite it not being what she truly craved for. The experiential method of understanding her corporate responsibilities facilitated her connectedness with her staff, the customers, the understanding of the business and the issues at hand.

Challenging trait and the pursuit of complexity

Challenges stimulated her, be it personally or professionally. She prefers challenging, complex tasks whilst surrounding herself with people that challenge her. All the roles she occupied had characteristics of being a challenge which is consistent with her prominent career anchor.

Forthright

Her candidness was clearly evident when she challenged the Human Resources Director at FNB to uphold his part of the agreement to fund her tertiary studies, whilst fulfilling her role as a Waste Clerk. Discriminatory situations are tackled head on. Her candour in asking obvious questions to get

to the crux of issues and simplify technical issues can be considered brave. She prides herself on being performance driven. The forthrightness trait can be viewed as a natural outcome of the characteristics of challenge and distinguishing between right and wrong.

Humbleness

The conscious memory of her upbringing and the appreciation of people facilitated her respectful treatment of everyone. She has a practice of trying to be accessible to many people under her employ. She makes a concerted effort, to make people feel valued, which was evidenced by the interaction with the tea lady, who was known by her first name. The time spent in the field and specifically with train drivers during her tenure at Transnet allowed for the understanding and appreciation of their work. Her concern for society as a whole, and the pain felt over the xenophobic attacks keeps her grounded and in touch with marginalised communities.

Big Picture View

Her impoverished background, did not limit her ambition. She knew that she had to sacrifice the enjoyment of certain tasks, for experience, knowledge and further opportunities. Despite the clutter of complexity she often faced in the working world, she was able to see through it and identify the core issues. In a way one can see that she was the creator of her own destiny, who used the challenges of her upbringing as a catalyst to drive her forward and to shape her into a powerful woman.

Persistence

The consistent following of her ideologies is evident throughout her life. The goal of self development was steadfastly pursued irrespective of the opportunity or limitation in resources. Her stance against discrimination manifests frequently in her career whether it is taking on FNB to ensure that women were also given bursaries or ensuring that perpetrators of sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination were made aware of their actions.

Passion and commitment

Perhaps it is because she has made choices in her life based on what is right for her and what fits into her belief systems, she has been able to pursue all endeavours with passion and commitment. A natural by product of her passion and commitment is her ability to focus on the task at hand and not be distracted. Consequently she is able to make inroads into seemingly challenging situations by making sacrifices to obtain a set goal, going the extra mile to understand the dynamics of her work even if it meant her asking difficult questions. This in turn has resulted in her excelling in her endeavours. Examples of this include the results obtained from the academic pursuits, reputation of National Treasury, turnaround of Transnet and the fact that she is the only South African women that was ranked in the 50 most powerful women, globally since 2004.

6.3 The prominent career anchor

Career Anchor	Score
Technical / Functional Competence	4.0
General Management Competence	5.6
Autonomy / Independence Competence	3.4
Security / Stability Competence	2.6
Entrepreneurial Creativity Competence	2.2
Service / Dedication to a cause Competence	3.8
Pure Challenge Competence	6.8
Life Style Competence	2.6

The prominent career anchor is challenge at 6.8, followed by general management at 5.6 and technical/functional at 4.2.

Despite literature revealing that a person can have more than one prominent career anchor, based on the career orientation inventory questionnaire and what has come out quite strongly in the career anchor interviews, Maria has only one prominent career anchor, namely the pure challenge anchor.

Although Maria has one prominent career anchor, it interesting to note that the general management anchor was the second highest score which ties in well with the research by Suutari and Taka (2004) which revealed that managers that have global careers have pure challenge and managerial competence as their dominant career anchors.

To recapitulate chapter two's definition of the challenge anchor, the features include:

1. "Overcoming impossible obstacles, solving unsolvable problems, or winning out over extremely tough opponents (Schein, 1990, p31)."
2. To be challenged is critical irrespective of what the challenge is;
3. Variety is preferred in their career;
4. General Management is attractive because of the variety, and the complexity involved in motivating and developing people;
5. High motivation to develop themselves.

(Schein, 1990, p31)

Maria thrives on challenge and complexity. She is passionate about it. Whilst her initial start in her career was a bit rough, with limited opportunity, financial resources and networks, this one particular attribute was consistent throughout her career. It appears to be an effective mechanism to combat career barriers, and to obtain senior roles. A study undertaken by Danziger and Valency (2006) found that if there is a correlation between a person's job and their career anchor, it will have a positive impact on their job satisfaction, which is further evidence supporting her passion and enjoyment of the roles at University, Treasury, Transnet and the Absa Group Ltd.

Her love for the challenge of complexity resulted in her being successful in complex roles including the Director General role at National Treasury, and CE of Transnet. She has the ability to reduce the most complex concern or task to simplicity to resolve the issue. Her love for challenge is not just restricted to the task at hand but also people that can challenge her, as she views this as opportunities where she can constantly learn and grow.

Variety is her preference. From working in the back and middle office at the Bank, to lecturing at a University, being involved in research, heading up a department at National Treasury, becoming a CE of a large parastatal involving terminology that she did not even hear of before to her current position as the Group C E of the Absa Bank group, is a reflection of her preference for variety. Her leadership qualities were enhanced through her study of psychology during her undergraduate degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. It made her understand people better, by being sensitive to the conscious, the unconscious and how people dynamics played out.

6.4 The identification of barriers faced

Whilst literature reveals that to be in line for a CEO position a female needed to have experience in marketing and operations. This was not a pre-requisite for Maria. Her job experiences as reflected in her curriculum vitae attached as Appendix 9.6 revealed that variety was the common denominator in her career rather than line experience. One of the reasons why this factor was a non issue is that she regularly changed jobs, and obtained cross functional experience through the variety of roles that she undertook.

Another barrier, identified by the literature review was that due to females earning substantially less than their male counterparts, their below par earnings delayed their climb up the corporate ladder. Again this barrier did not feature. It was highlighted through the interviews that remuneration was not a key driver in her career choices as she was willing to take a salary cut and forgo company

benefits to follow her passion. Again a contributory factor to this barrier not being an issue is her frequent career changes that allow her to follow her passions. Lopes, Lyons and Murtagh (2007), find that limited financial resources and lack of access to education is a career barrier.

Oakley (2000) finds that males are promoted over females due to a lack of performance based feedback, effective policies and a lack of understanding of all employees that the promotion of women is required for diversity. Again, Maria did not stay too long with any private employer to allow corporate policies that are skewed towards the promotion of males over females to materially impact her career. Her long tenures with entities were mainly in the public sector with government or government affiliated organisation such as Transnet that are perceived to promote diversity.

A barrier faced is a behavioural double bind which according to Oakley (2000) is a no win situation. According to The world (2008), women's leadership is perceived differently even if they demonstrate the same behaviour as men. Maria comes across as her own person. Despite her competence being well established and globally acknowledged, she still feels that she has to continuously prove herself. This stems from her acute awareness of her family's low social status within the community as a child which she internalised. This awareness drives her to continually perform and excel. Her toughness can be viewed as unnecessarily assertive.

Leadership is based on masculine attributes, resulting in women downplaying their femininity to enhance their credibility (Oakley, 2000). A conservative, yet stylish dresser, her dress sense is influenced by what is appropriate for the

situation. She is well groomed, with short hair, attractive and definitely feminine. Whilst soft spoken, she is articulate with a clear emphasis on the important aspects of her speech. Her conservative dress style, combined with her short hair can be construed as a weak form of masculine attributes and is therefore not viewed as a career barrier.

Women are choosing a “command orientated” communication style to be perceived as competent (Oakley, 2000, p325). When communicating, Maria prefers to listen, whilst being clear and appropriate in the delivery of the message. Although her tough stance may be misconstrued as being of a commanding nature, it is softened when she chooses to listen. Therefore her communication style is perceived as competent and is not viewed as a barrier.

The literature review indicates that females generally have a participatory leadership style, which is not viewed as a positive trait of a CEO (Oakley, 2000). Listening, experiential learning from activities like road shows and field trips, provides her with a hands on insight into the well being of the organisation. Her interest in psychology and people’s conscious and unconscious behaviour adds to her sensitivity of peoples feelings. Considering that she is appreciative of being challenged is indicative that her leadership style includes some participatory elements which is viewed as a barrier.

Maria does not have any biological children; therefore motherhood was not a barrier that was faced.

The world (2008) finds that women are less inclined to social networks to enhance corporate or political opportunities. Maria found networking to remain

connected an important trait. She prefers networking via professional associations and forums rather than the traditional male activities like fishing and golf. Therefore, her networking approach is viewed as an enabler rather than a barrier.

Oakley (2000) suggests that when women are in the minority in top management positions they are viewed as tokens. Maria thrives on being competent, and being recognised for her competence. Her stance is that it is a great disservice to women, if they are hired as tokens. She holds firm that women are competent and do not need different training or development from men. There is a pool of competent women out there who are not being tapped into. She would not have accepted any job, if she thought that she was being hired as a token because it is in contravention of her values. Tokenism is another barrier that she did not encounter because of her ideological beliefs.

The world (2008), Scandura (1994) and Lopes *et al* find that women may impose psychological limitations on their opportunities by having negative perceptions of their upward mobility. Maria, whilst humble, exudes confidence. Her intellect combined with ambitiousness and her continual search for challenges provide her with a high self esteem. Her resolve to constantly prove herself, got rid of any negative perceptions of her upward mobility. She was aware at a very young age that she wanted more. However, her passion and her drive to learn and grow resulted in the achievement of senior roles rather than a focus on becoming a CEO. Negative self perceptions were not a barrier for her.

The Republic of South Africa Employment Equity Act, No.55 of 1998 which promotes equality in employment, whilst providing a platform for women to achieve top positions, did not remove barriers such as attitudes, stereotypes, etc. Maria's personality of being a challenger, following her passion and searching for stretch was more of a driving force in her career than the legislation which did not feature as a barrier.

6.5 How were these barriers overcome?

She had five main enablers that facilitated the surmounting of the career barriers. They are:

1. Social Capital and networks
2. Mentors
3. Androgynous leadership style
4. Prominent career anchor being challenge
5. Positive self perception

Social Capital and Networks

Hard social capital refers to the bonding that occurs during the course of your career which may result in the exchange of work related resources; examples include contacts, coaching, advice, and obtaining challenging assignments. Soft social capital refers to the emotional support provided via friendship, counselling, closeness and trust which helps to develop self esteem and professional identity (Van Emmerik, 2006).

Van Emmerik (2006) finds that men were more effective at using emotional intensity and team related resources to develop hard social capital. It was found that since women were relatively new to the environment (academia) the stability of their relationships were lower and that the differences in the career outcome of both genders can be explained by the effectiveness of their social capital (Van Emmerik, 2006).

Although Maria has had an interestingly diverse career path, she made use of both hard and soft social capital. The hard social capital which she developed from her work experience consisted of people who “are driven by excellence, have the same values and integrity and who one trusts and respects” (T.S. Chetty, personal communication, October 31, 2010). This is augmented by networking primarily by becoming involved in a number of professional bodies and forums. Interestingly, she does not feel the need to pursue what is considered to be traditionally male forms of networking and claims that her career has not suffered negatively from her choice.

The soft social capital complements the hard capital. Maria believes that is important in order to succeed and gets her emotional and social support from other relationships and networks.

Flexibility

Organisations offering family supporting policies were more likely to have more loyal female employees (Scandura, 1994). In an analysis of Maria’s career, there is a limited pool of information on how Maria juggles work life balance.

While flexibility was not an option for her, it appears that she has managed to work around it and made it work for her.

According to Schein (1990) people that have a prominent lifestyle anchor find organisations that have a respect for family concerns attractive. Maria's lifestyle anchor received the lowest score at 2.6. Therefore, flexibility was not used as an enabler.

As she did not have children of her own and married relatively late in life, it would have been interesting to see what impact having and raising a family would have had on her career.

Tokenism

A study undertaken by Frankforter (1996) revealed that tokenism, although viewed negatively was another reason how women broke through the glass ceiling in middle management (p. 10).

Maria Ramos is a woman who found the mere idea of women being viewed as tokens or appointed just to comply with equity targets an unacceptable practice that was offensive and demeaning to women in general. While she acknowledges that women in top management positions are a minority, she is still of the opinion that women should be employed based on competencies, skills and value that they bring into organisation. Her career and raise to prominence bears evidence of her belief and is testimony of her competence and talent. Tokenism was not used as an enabler to overcome gender barriers in her career.

Mentoring

Scandura (1994) stresses that “the mentor relationship is one of the most successful methods for women to achieve upward mobility and career satisfaction. While her credibility and power as a professional woman has progressively grown both nationally and internationally, she did not build her career by remaining for a long period of time within a particular organisation. What has emerged very clearly is that Maria did not follow a traditionally linear career path. With the many changes in career choices it would have being difficult for her to engage in career specific mentoring. Accordingly she chose to be mentored by people she held in high esteem and were from a diverse background. This form of organic of mentoring seems to have helped her within the different occupational contexts she found herself in.

Younger firms

The study performed by Frankforter (1996) found that younger and smaller firms were more likely to provide career progression opportunities to females because it is more difficult for larger organisations to effect change to make the glass ceiling more permeable (p. 10). It is interesting to note that Maria has never worked in smaller or younger firms and has broken through the proverbial glass ceiling while working for larger organisations.

Legislation

The legislation promoting equal opportunities for women in the workplace in South Africa is addressed under the Republic of South Africa Employment

Equity Act, No.55 of 1998 which promotes equality in employment and eliminates unfair discrimination (Republic of South Africa, Department of Labour, 1998).

Maria strongly believes that if employment equity is used to achieve a target, it is a “major disservice” to women’s equality and progression (T.S. Chetty, personal communication, October 31, 2010). Instead, she feels that talented and competent women should be hired. Organisations should create a culture that removes gender barriers and promotes women’s advancement opportunities. Hence she has never used the opportunities presented by employment equity to further her career, her sole reliance being her innate skills and talents.

Androgynous leadership style

An androgynous female is just as feminine as her female counterparts, but also has more masculine personality attributes than them. Whilst masculinity is associated with task leadership style, the feminine personality is associated with the socio emotional role (Korabik, 1990).

An androgynous individual is competent in both the task leadership style and the social emotional role, and can tap into either of these qualities whenever the need arises. Considering that both these traits are required in an effective leader, an androgynous individual is perceived to be more competent and likeable (Korabik, 1990).

Recognition for competencies, skills and talent, rather than gender or race, is more important to Maria. She believes that it would be undermining and discriminatory to have different standards for different people. Women should be afforded equal treatment to men. She holds to this belief firmly and has never accepted a post that would have meant that she was an affirmative action or token appointee. Hard work and perseverance is what helped her progress in her career. This is underscored by her need for excellence both in herself and the people around her.

Although she can be tough when required, she does not use her toughness to consciously emulate any gender. She continues to utilise soft skills such as listening and understanding the underlying dynamics of a situation by tapping into her psychology training. She is also focussed on delivery and getting the results. Clearly she does not fall into either the traditionally masculine or feminine categories of leadership. Rather she draws on both sources to create a leadership style that is uniquely hers and flies in the face of what is traditionally thought of as good CEO leadership characteristics.

Prominent career anchor being challenge

Maria is passionate about being challenged. Her need for challenge is so great, she has in the past accepted a position in a field she had little experience in (Transnet) and prefers to be surrounded by people who challenge her, even if it means she disagrees with them. The need for challenge also meant that she did not stay in one job or post for a long time. The traditional career path did not shape her career as she was able to chart her own way to get to where she is. Her love for challenge is not just restricted to the task at hand but also people

that can challenge her which appears to be an effective mechanism to combat career barriers, and to obtain senior roles.

Positive self perception

A clear picture emerges of Maria Ramos as an ambitious woman who is intrinsically motivated. Each career choice had to be aligned to her personal values of hard work, determination, persistence, integrity, passion and included in it a large degree of challenge.

Despite being discriminated for being a woman she pursued her passion to study and was eventually awarded a scholarship that was previously reserved for men. Rather than allow her economic background and social status to get in the way, her self esteem, drive to learn and develop and determination allowed her to pursue her ambitions. Her attitude and pragmatism allowed her to focus on the big picture rather than becoming bitter and distressed when she was not able follow her passion due to limited resources. She prefers to be acknowledged for her competencies and skills rather than her gender. Her innate ability to make difficult decisions is tempered with her compassion for others.

6.6 Conclusion

From the evidence obtained via interviews and other means of correspondence there is reason to believe that there were many drivers that helped the respondent achieve a top leadership position. There were barriers that were

surmounted, and interestingly her challenging nature, which came out quite strongly as the prominent career anchor, is one of the enablers that overcame the barriers. The sample size of one is not a representation of the population and therefore, no inferences can be made.

The research objectives as defined by the research propositions in chapter one and three respectively have been met.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the final section of the research. It links the findings from chapter six to the objectives identified in chapter one. The study was aimed to provide a deeper understanding on how one woman became successful with her career within the context of career anchors and gender barriers. The insights obtained may be used to empower women that have aspirations for senior leadership roles.

7.2 Research Approach

Literature on career anchors, gender barriers and enablers to overcome the gender barriers was reviewed. Thereafter interviews, followed by questionnaires with the respondent were undertaken. Finally the findings from the interviews, questionnaires and other collaborating information were analysed in relation to the research objectives identified in chapter one.

7.3 Research Findings

The research findings that were presented in chapter six are based on the literature review

The evidence obtained indicates that there were many attributes that, collectively, helped propel the respondent's career forward. Whilst she lacked some barriers, her enablers proved to be a powerful combination. What also came out quite strongly was that her challenging attribute combined with her positive self perception were additional enablers that contributed to her rise in prominence.

The numerous patterns that emerged from the respondent's career experience include:

- Desire for personal growth, development and the acquisition of new skills
- Distinction between right and wrong and being socially conscious
- Pragmatic nature
- Challenging trait in the pursuit of complexity
- Being forthright
- Being humble
- Having a big picture view
- Persistence in the following of her ideologies
- Being passionate and committed in all her endeavours

One of the patterns identified was her challenging nature which is consistent with her prominent career anchor.

The strong enablers of social capital, networks, mentors, challenge career anchor, androgynous leadership style and her positive self perception helped her overcome the barriers identified namely behavioural double binds, participatory leadership style, family background and the experience of discrimination on her self esteem.

7.4 Recommendations

There is no single driver or silver bullet that helped the respondent achieve a top leadership position. Despite her career starting with limited resources and networks she built herself up using her intellect, passion, embrace of challenge and positive self perception whilst being pragmatic, humble and being socially aware.

Her view of herself, as a person, rather than a female with limitations, made her take advantage of opportunities without the shackles of gender. The study reveals that if you want to achieve a top leadership position, take cognisance of the following:

1. Be passionate about what you do. Be passionate about challenge and overcoming complexity.
2. Be pragmatic and humble. Remember and appreciate your past.
3. Hard work, perseverance, integrity and determination will help you go a long way.
4. Follow your dream, and do not let experiences or situations hold you back.
5. Have confidence in yourself and your abilities.
6. Social capital and networking is an important enabler in your career.
7. Understand the role of androgynous leadership and try to tap into both your masculine and feminine personality traits to lead a situation.
8. Two way communication, incorporating listening, and clear concise dialogue is an advantage.

9. Define yourself. Do not let organisations or people label you.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The case study research methodology on one candidate provides an in depth understanding of the drivers influencing the respondent's career, within the context of gender barriers and career anchors. The sample size of one is not representative of the population, and therefore it cannot be inferred that all top female CEO's have similar characteristics.

Therefore future research should be undertaken on a sample representing the population of top female Chief Executive Officers to explore the following themes:

1. The relationship between androgynous leadership and top leadership positions;
2. Relationship of the prominent career anchors and top leadership positions;
3. Enablers to overcome gender barriers;

7.6 Conclusion

This study has contributed to literature by highlighting that there is no single driver for the ascendance to the top leadership position. There is evidence to suggest that there is a link between career anchors, specifically challenge incorporating the love of complexity and a rise to prominence which is

recommended for future research. Androgynous leadership, positive self perception, social capital and mentoring provided a good foundation.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Career Orientation Inventory questionnaire

(Shein, 1990, p3-28)

Use the following scale to rate how true each of the items is for you.

Never true for me		Occasionally true for me	Often True for me	Always true for me	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Number	Question	Rating
1	I dream of being so good at what I do that my expert advice will be sought continually.	5
2	I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate and manage the efforts of others.	5
3	I dream of having a career that will allow me the freedom to do a job my own way and on my own schedule.	3
4	Security and stability are more important to me than freedom and autonomy.	2
5	I am always on the lookout for ideas that permit me to start my own enterprise.	2
6	I will feel successful in my career only if I have a feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society.	4
7	I dream of a career in which I can solve problems or win out	10



	in situations that are extremely challenging.	
8	I would rather leave my organisation than to be put into a job that will compromise my ability to pursue personal and family concerns.	1
9	I will feel successful in my career only if I can develop my technical or functional skills to a very high level of competence.	5
10	I dream of being in charge of a complex organisation and making decisions that affect many people.	10
11	I am most fulfilled in my work when I am completely free to define my own tasks, schedules, and procedures.	3
12	I will rather leave my organisation altogether than accept an assignment that would jeopardise my security in that organisation.	4
13	Building my own business is more important to me than achieving a high level managerial position in someone else's organisation.	1
14	I am most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.	5
15	I will feel successful in my career only if I face and overcome very difficult challenges.	5
16	I dream of a career that will permit me to integrate my personal, family, and work needs.	3
17	Becoming a senior functional manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.	2

18	I will feel successful in my career only if I become a general manager in some organisation.	4
19	I will feel successful in my career only if I achieve complete autonomy and freedom.	3
20	I seek jobs in organisations that will give me a sense of security and stability.	2
21	I am most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to build something that is entirely the result of my own ideas and efforts.	4
22	Using my skills to make the world a better place to live and work is more important to me than achieving a high-level of managerial position.	4
23	I have been most fulfilled in my career when I have solved seemingly unsolvable problems or won out over seemingly impossible odds.	5
24	I feel successful in life only if I have been able to balance my personal, family, and career requirements.	4
25	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise.	3
26	Becoming a general manager is more attractive to me than becoming a senior functional manager in my current area of expertise.	5
27	The chance to do a job my own way, free of rules and constraints, is more important to me than security.	4
28	I am most fulfilled in my work when I feel that I have	3

	complete financial and employment security.	
29	I will feel successful in my career only if I have succeeded in creating or building something that is entirely my own product or idea.	3
30	I dream of having a career that makes a real contribution to humanity and society.	4
31	I seek out work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem solving and / or competitive skills.	10
32	Balancing the demands of personal and professional life is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	3
33	I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to use my special skills and talents.	5
34	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a job that would take me away from the general managerial track.	4
35	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a job that would reduce my autonomy and freedom.	4
36	I dream of having a career that would allow me to feel a sense of security and stability.	2
37	I dream of starting and building my own business.	1
38	I would rather leave my organisation than accept an assignment that would undermine my ability to be of service to others.	2
39	Working on problems that are almost unsolvable is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	4



40	I have always sought out work opportunities that would minimise interference with personal or family concerns.	2
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9.2 Career Anchor Interview questionnaire

(Shein, 1990, p37-58)

1. Education.

- a. What did you concentrate on in school? (Explore especially university and postgraduate education).
- b. Why did you choose those areas?
- c. How do you feel now about having chosen those areas?

2. First job.

- a. What was your first real job after your education? (If you did not start out working, what was your first major life event after your education?).
- b. What were you looking for in your first job or life event?
- c. Why did you make that choice?

3. Goals.

- a. What were your ambitions or long-range goals when you started your career?
- b. How did the first job work out in terms of your goals?

4. Next job or major life event.

- a. What was your first major change in job or employing organisation?
- b. How did this come about?
- c. Who initiated the change?
- d. What were the reasons for the change?

- e. How did you feel about the change?
- f. How did it relate to your goals?

Continue to analyse what you consider to be the major changes in your job, organisation, career, or life until the present. List each change and analyse the reasons as well as the consequences.

- 5. As you look back over your career and life so far, do you see any major transition points, times when the change seemed more than routine?
 - a. Please describe each of these times.
 - b. What was the transition?
 - c. How did this come about?
 - d. Who initiated it?
 - e. How did you feel about it?
 - f. How was it related to your goals?

- 6. Using the same format, describe other major transitions.

- 7. As you look back over your career and life so far,
 - a. Can you describe sometimes that you especially enjoy?
 - b. What was it about those times that made them enjoyable?

- 8. Were there times that you especially did not enjoy?
 - a. What was it about those times that made them not enjoyable?

- 9. Have you ever refused a job or promotion?
 - a. If yes, can you describe it?

- b. Why did you refuse it?
- c. As you look ahead in your career, are there things you would like especially to avoid?
- d. Are there things that you are afraid of?
- e. What about these things make you want to avoid them or make you afraid?

10. Have your ambitions or long range goals changed since you started your career?

- a. When? Why?
- b. How would you now describe your long range goals?

11. As you look ahead in your career what are the things you are especially looking forward to?

- a. Why are you looking forward to these things?
- b. What do you think your next job will be?
- c. After that, what do you think your next job will be?

Continue until you elicit the answer to what the person would “ultimately” like to be.

12. What do you think would actually happen in the next ten years of your career?

- a. Why do you think this?

13. How would you describe your occupation to others?

- a. What are you really good at?

- b. What do you most want out of your career?
- c. What values do you especially try to uphold in your career?
- d. Do you have any other comments about yourself that you would like to make at this point?

14. As you think over the answers you have given, what patterns or themes do you see?

- a. What inconsistencies, contradictions, or conflicts do you see in what you have identified?
- b. What hypothetical situations might resolve those conflicts or inconsistencies?

9.3 Questions submitted via e-mail

1. What is your view on your parents' role in your personal and professional development?
2. What were your parents' careers?
3. For what reasons did your family emigrate to SA?
4. Are your parents still alive?
5. Considering that you struggled for many years to motivate Barclays to fund your studies, why do you think the Bank funded your postgraduate studies (namely Honours), without giving you too many "hassles"?
6. Did you work at Barclays whilst you were studying at Wits?
7. What helped / facilitated you having such opportunities during your lifetime?
8. What was the role of networks in obtaining challenging and prominent positions?
9. What was the role of remuneration when you were selecting jobs?
10. At any time during your career history, did you feel that you got a promotion instead of a male to supplement diversity?
11. What are your views on women being hired to supplement diversity in an organisation?
12. At any time during your career, did you feel that you must be tough and authoritative (behave like a man) or dress less femininely, to be taken seriously?
13. If you did change your behaviour as per point 12, above, what do you think was the perception that it created?

14. Did you find during your career that you would get a better response if you communicated via directives / instructions rather than request?
15. Societal norms require women to be the caregivers of the family. What is your view on the challenges facing women and mothers in the context of a work life balance?
16. How has societal norms as alluded to in point 15, impacted your work life balance?
17. Was a flexible career an option for you, so that you can spend more time with your family?
18. What are your views on golf, fishing and traditional male activities as a networking tool?
19. Are there other activities that will help you with your networking within an organisation? Which ones do you enjoy?
20. At any time during your career, did you find yourself, as a woman, in the minority in the top management role?
21. Do you think that if women are in the minority in top management positions, it is difficult to obtain information from informal networks?
22. How did the Employment equity act, influence your career?
23. There are two categories of social capital namely hard social capital and soft social capital. Hard social capital refers to the bonding that occurs during the course of your career which may result in the exchange of work related resources, example contacts, coaching, advice, and obtaining challenging assignments. Soft social capital refers to the emotional support provided via friendship, counselling, closeness and trust which helps to develop self esteem and professional identity.

Based on the definition, what type/s of social capital did you use over your career?

24. Provide insight into your perceptions of the social capital influencing your career.

25. What are views on having women as tokens?

26. Has tokenism impacted your career in any way?

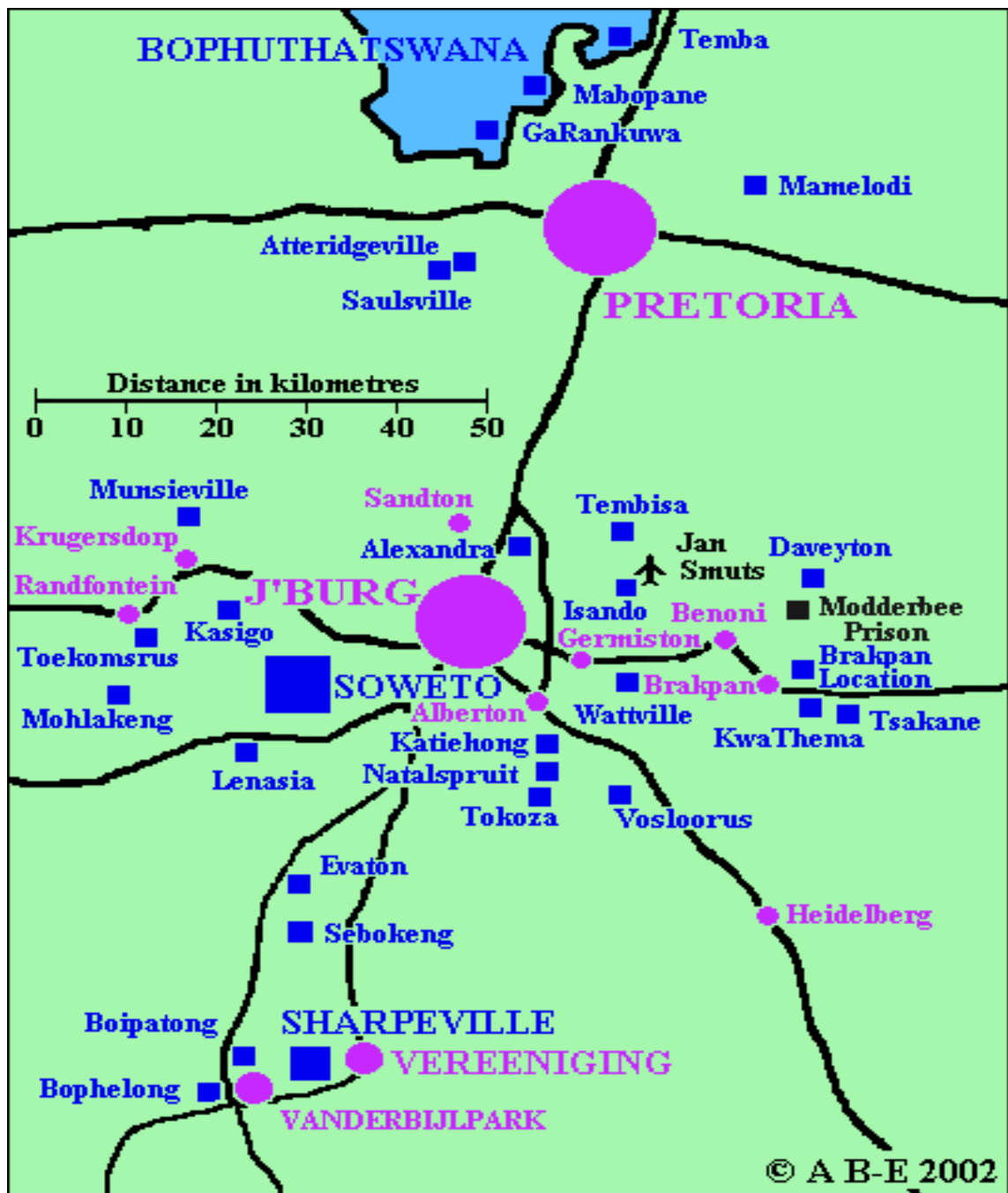
27. A mentor has a deep personal interest, who cares about you and your long term development. A coach develops specific skills for the task, challenges and performance expectations at work.

Based on the above, distinction between a mentor and a coach, have you had mentors, be it formal and or informal?

28. What is your view on the role of your mentor on your career progression?

29. Were you ever employed by a small firm? If yes, did you feel that your promotional opportunities was better because the pond was smaller?

9.4 Map of Vereeniging and Sharpeville



9.5 Background on the Sharpeville massacre

South Africa was born out of a history of conflict, discrimination and ultimately apartheid. Boddy-Evans, (2010) asserted that blacks living in Southern Africa were denied rights and resources that English and Afrikaner whites living in Southern Africa enjoyed.

By the time South Africa (then known as the Republic of South Africa) gained its independence from Great Britain, apartheid was firmly entrenched. Black South Africans were tired of living under the oppressive government and more concerted efforts were made to gain equality for all. Protest action was becoming more widespread by people who opposed apartheid within the country. One such protest action was planned for the 21 March 1960 by the Pan African Congress, an illegal political party, to protest against the pass laws that restricted the movements of blacks within the country, in Sharpeville [a township], near Vereeniging in the Transvaal. What started off as a peaceful march ended in violence and bloodshed when the South African Police opened fire on demonstrators.

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Republic of South Africa, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 1998) found that "The Commission finds the former state and the minister of police directly responsible for the commission of gross human rights violations in that excessive force was unnecessarily used to stop a gathering of unarmed people. Police failed to give an order to disperse and/or adequate time to disperse,

relied on live ammunition rather than alternative methods of crowd dispersal and fired in a sustained manner into the back of the crowd, resulting in the death of sixty-nine people and the injury of more than 300. The Commission finds that many of the participants in the march were apolitical, women and unarmed, and had attended the march because they were opposed to the pass laws. The Commission finds, therefore, that many of the people fired upon and injured in the march were not politicised members of any political party, but merely persons opposed to carrying a pass (Republic of South Africa, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 1998).

9.6 Curriculum Vitae of Maria Da Conceicao Ramos

(T.S. Chetty, personal communication, September 22 & November 10, 2010)



Nationality

South African

Qualifications

- MSc [Economics], 1992, University of London.
- BCom Honours, [Economics], 1987, University of Witwatersrand: First Class Pass.
- BCom, 1986, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Institute of Bankers Diploma [CAIB], 1983, institute of Bankers.

Professional Experience

- ABSA Group Ltd, Group Chief Executive, March 2009 – present.
- Transnet, Group Chief Executive, January 2004 – February 2009.
- Transnet, Group Chief Executive [designate], November 2003 – December 2003.
- National Treasury [former Departments of Finance and State Expenditure], Director – General, July 1996- October 2003.
- National Department of Finance, Deputy Director – General, Financial Planning, May 1995 – June 1996.
- London School of Economics, Centre for Research into Economics and Finance: Research Officer, September 1994 – April 1995.
- University of Witwatersrand, Lecturer in Economics, 1992 – 1994.
- University of South Africa, Lecturer in Economics, 1989 – 1991.
- First National Bank Ltd. 1978 – 1988. Various positions held.
- London School of Economics: Centre for the study of the South African Economy and International Finance: 1990 – 1994.

- African National Congress: Department of Economic Planning: Economist:
1990 – 1994.

Trustee / Directorships

- Transnet Ltd. Appointed 1 January 2004 – Resigned 28 February 2009.
- Sanlam Ltd. Appointed 2 June 2004 – Resigned 28 February 2009.
- Remgro Ltd. Appointed 26 March 2007 – Resigned 28 February 2009.
- SABMiller. Appointed 15 May 2008 – Resigned 28 February 2009.
- Executive Member of Business Leadership SA.
- A member of the Chief Economist Advisory Council of the World Bank.
- A member of the World Economic Forum's International Business Council.
- A member of the Banking Association of South Africa.
- Patron of Yabonga Project [Women living with HIV/AIDS, Children].

Awards

- Sunday Times Business Leader of the Year: 2005.
- University of Stellenbosch: Honorary Doctorate: December 2005.
- University of Free State: Honorary Doctorate: April 2005.
- University of Stellenbosch: Honorary Professor in Economics: 1 April 2005 –
31 March 2008 and re-appointed on 15 Jun 2007 for the period: 1 January
2008 – 31 December 2010.
- University of Pretoria: Honorary Professor in the Department of Economics,
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences for the period 1 May 2004 –
30 April 2007.

- Business Woman of the Year, 2001.
- Professor Extraordinaire, Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch, 2000 to present.
- Global Leader for tomorrow: World Economic Forum, 1998.
- British Council Scholarship [Helen Suzman Award], 1992.
- British Council Scholarship [Helen Suzman Award], 1991.
- First National Bank Ltd Scholarship [1984 -1987].
- Successive Rankings in Fortune's "World's 50 Most Powerful Women in Business" [Ranked 9th in 2009].
- Nedbank / Old Mutual Budget Competition, 1989.
- Economic Society's Senbank Prize for Honours Dissertation, 1988. Title: "Clower's Dual Decision Hypothesis and Keynes's Theory".
- Barclays Bank Graduate Scholarship, 1983.
- Santambank Marketing Prize, 1982.
- Institute of Bankers Marketing Prize, 1982

Other

- 1999 – 2001: Member of task team on Reform of Global Financial Architecture of Financial Stability Forum.
- Member of the Group of Thirty.

9.7 History of Transnet

The following are extracts from the Transnet and Kleingeld's websites.

Looking back towards the future

“Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises.” – Demosthenes (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“The roots of Transnet can be traced back to humble beginnings in the late 1850s, when railway transport was proposed for the harbours in the Cape and Natal. The real catalyst for the country's railway and harbour expansion however, can be attributed to the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in 1867” (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“South Africa's state railway system began when the two pioneer railway systems situated in the Cape and Natal became government property in 1872 and 1877 respectively, thus completing the relatively primitive harbours in Durban and Cape Town. Scarcely nine years after the founding of the government railways, both which were rapidly pushed to Kimberly, rumours of massive gold deposits in the Transvaal Republic were confirmed. Almost overnight, economic power had shifted from the colonial south to the republican north. In 1910 Union was achieved, with the country's leaders adamant that the railways and harbours should be used to unify and develop South Africa's economy. The result – the South African Railways and Harbours administration (SAR&H) becoming a proud established arm of the government” (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“A mere 20 years after the establishment of Union, in 1930, South Africa had established itself as a proud and mobile nation. This achievement can be accredited to the opening of efficient mainline passenger links and an impressive network of urban and metropolitan train services” (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“During the 1970s it was agreed upon by the government that the SAR&H should restructure itself along defined business lines. Integral to the process was a change in the name and image of the organisation, which would appropriately reflect its new vision and mission as a successful state business enterprise. In 1981, the country’s railway, harbour, road transport, aviation and pipeline operations became known as South African Transport Services (SATS). At the same time, the enterprise was restructured into units and divisions, with a strong emphasis on localized management” (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“By the end of 1989, the goal of managing SATS as a private entity was well within reach, and on 1 April 1990, after 80 years of government and parliamentary control, SATS was given company status. A new, limited liability company, representing a vast transport network, was finally born”. (Transnet Limited, 2010).

In his research, Kleingeld (2003) states “that a new company representing a vast transportation network was born, and appropriately named TRANSNET. Transnet Limited is a public company of which the South African Government is the sole shareholder. It is the holding company behind South Africa's largest transport businesses and consists of eight major divisions - Spoornet, the Ports

Authority, Port Operations, Freight Dynamics, Petronet, Metrorail, Propnet, Transtel, as well as a number of related as well as a number of related and support businesses” (Kleingeld, 2003).

“Since 1994, Transnet has kept pace with a fast-changing society, dealing with a multitude of challenges in an emerging democracy. Transnet, realising these challenges, has met them head-on by investing heavily in infrastructure and integrating and coordinating programmes within the country” (Transnet Limited, 2010).

“The South African transport system has come a long way from its humble beginnings in the 1800s. This can be attributed to Transnet playing a vital role not only in everyday life, but in the national economy and economics of several other African states that use the networks and harbours within South African to transfer their imports and exports. Transnet Limited is proud to be playing such a pivotal role in the future of the country and the sub-continent” (Transnet Limited, 2010).