



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**An exploration of the experiences of White Women Workers
in the Coal Mining Industry of South Africa**

by

Charté Pretorius

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Masters in Industrial Sociology and Labour Studies**

**in the Department of Sociology at the
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**SUPERVISOR: Prof Sakhela Buhlungu
CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Andries Bezuidenhout**

2016

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of university policy and implications in this regard.



Charté Pretorius

July 2016

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the commencement of this study I would never have thought that I would learn so much from the participants, my supervisors or the research process itself. This was a lesson in humility and personal growth, which I am now forever grateful for.

I would firstly like to thank my supervisors, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu and Professor Andries Bezuidenhout for all of their time, effort, support, encouragement, knowledge and expertise that they so selflessly shared with me. I do not have the words to express my gratitude towards you. This has been a wonderful learning experience, both of you have taught me so much.

To my family, thank you for always understanding my commitment to my work. Jane, thank you for loving me unconditionally. Estherna, your hard work and dedication to your own studies served as a constant inspiration. Isanne, thank you for always believing in me and for all of your assistance with the editing and proof reading. Peet, thank you for every caring phone call and the financial assistance you gave in support of my studies. Jp, thank you for pushing me to continue when I was tired and demotivated, but more than that for loving me.

To my friends and colleagues, I would like to thank each and every one of you, but especially Gerda for all of her guidance, time, wisdom and support throughout the study. Odette, thank you for all of the words of encouragement. Farina and Eunice, thank you for all of your help and the time you spent helping me with the transcriptions, editing and moral support.

Lastly, I would like to thank the participants of this study. Thank you for your time. Thank you for sharing your stories with me. Thank you for trusting me with your stories. This research would not have been possible without you. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

ABSTRACT

An Exploration of the Experiences of White Women Workers in the Coal Mining Industry of South Africa

The presence of growing numbers of women working in South African underground mines provides an opportunity to explore changing identities in the workplace, especially given the fact that South African mines were dominated by men and characterised by what has been called ‘contending racialized masculinities’. The focus of this study is on the experiences of white women working in coal mining. This research is conducted through a qualitative research design, using mainly ethnography as a research method that is grounded in a feminist paradigm. Drawing on four life histories and a number of additional interviews, the study identifies three distinct notions of ‘white’ femininities that have emerged in post-Apartheid South Africa. The key arguments are: firstly, that the working conditions of women in mining in South Africa are quite unique; and secondly, white women in coal mining form part of a larger contested continuum of female workers in the country. Moreover, women in South African mining are not and cannot be seen as a homogenous group of workers. Through the use of intersectionality the various social divisions that are at play are examined. This study will show that these social divisions like gender; class; and race are the constructed experience of these white women workers. Furthermore, it will highlight how all of these social divisions in conjunction with institutionalised white supremacy, caused by the Apartheid workplace regime, affords them power and protection. This in return have launched them to the top of a female hierarchy in coal mining.

KEY WORDS: **women; mining; coal; gender; femininity; masculinity; race; class; whiteness and intersectionality.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	vii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1	Introduction	1
2	Orientation and Problem Statement	3
3	Background	4
4	Methodology and Research Design	9
5	Research Questions	10
6.	Research Aims and Objectives	11
6	Central Theoretical Statement	11
7	Structure of the Study	12
8	Conclusion	12

CHAPTER 2: A NEW CONFIGURATION OF SOCIAL DIVISIONS

1	Introduction	14
2	Intersections of Social Divisions	14
2.1	Class: a Selection of Key Literature	18
2.2	Gender: a Selection of Key Literature	19
2.3	Race: a Selection of Key Literature	22
3	The Problem of Intersectionality	24
4	The Case of (Black) Women in Mining in South Africa	27
5	Who are the Women in Mining?	31
6	Conclusion	33

CHAPTER 3 LOCAL AND GLOBAL: WOMEN IN (COAL) MINING

1	Introduction	36
2	The Experiences of Women in Coal Mining in Developing Countries	37
3	The Experiences of Women in Coal Mining in Developed Countries	38
4	The Feminisation of Labour	41
5	Coal Mining in South Africa	43
6	Witbank Colliery Life: a Social Space from a Historical Point of View	45
7	The absence of Women in South African Coal Mining	48
8	Conclusion	49

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1	Introduction	50
2	Behind the Research Design	50
3	The Measurement: Conceptualisation	55
4	Selection of Participants and Access	55
5	Data Collection and Fieldwork	58
6	Data Capturing and Analysis	61
7	Strengths, Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	62
8	Ethical Considerations	63
9	Conclusion	64

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE HISTORIES 65

CHAPTER 5: MARINDA: THE PIONEER 66

CHAPTER 6: CAROLA: FROM ELECTRICIAN TO ENGINEER 89

CHAPTER 7: CELIA: THE RELUCTANT WALLFLOWER 95

CHAPTER 8: ANNETTE: HITLER'S DAUGHTER 109

CHAPTER 9: THE INTERSECTIONS AT PLAY

1	Introduction	126
2	The categories of White Women	126
2.1	The “City Girls”	128
2.2	The ‘Compound Women’	131
2.3	The ‘ <i>Poppe</i> ’	134
3	The Mine, Labour Process and the Actual Job	137
4	Being a White Woman in Mining: The interplay of gender, race and class	138
4.1	Sexual Harassment	140
4.2	Motherhood and Family Life	142
4.3	Sisterhood and White Women in Coal Mining	142
4.4	Race: The issue of Whiteness on the Coal Mines	144
4.5	Masculinity: the Relevance and Implication on White Women	150
4.6	Speaking Afrikaans: a Tool to Simplify your World	151
4.7	Classifying Class	152
5	The Intersections of Social Divisions based on the Findings	154
6	Conclusion	155

CHAPTER 10: REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

1	Introduction	156
2	Summary of the Main Findings	156
3	Recommendations	158
4	Overall Conclusion	159

LIST OF SOURCES	161
------------------------	------------

APPENDIX	177
-----------------	------------

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
ANGLO	Anglo American
BHP Billiton	Broken Hill Proprietary Billiton (merged with Billiton mining company in 2001)
GS	General Surveyor
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MPRDA	Minerals and Petroleum
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
SASOL	South Africa Synthetic Oil Liquid
SAWIMA	South African Women in Mining Authority
SWOP	Society, Work and Development Institute
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WIM	Women in Mining
WIM UK	Women in Mining United Kingdom
WISER	WITS Institute for Social and Economic Research
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Occupational Gender Distribution of Workers in Mining & Quarrying South Africa	31
Table 2:	Categories of White Women in Coal Mining	127

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“The introduction of women in mining challenges and undermines, in a fundamental way, how things have always worked in mines. In fact, the inclusion of women challenges the very core of mining, the gender part of it – that it is for men and not for women”.

(Benya, 2009:33)

1 Introduction

To begin to understand South African mining, one has to understand the deliberate way through which it was structured and the role that race, masculinity and violence played in that process. This created what is now called ‘contending racialized masculinities’ (Benya, 2013; Breckenridge, 1998a; Breckenridge, 1998b; Morell, 1998; Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994). This historical formation has been disrupted by women in mines and in fact, is challenging the very nature of mining (Benya, 2009). However, most research has focused on gold and platinum mining, very little on coal. Also, it is assumed that women in mines are black women. How does the story of white women working on coal mines complicate the issue?

In 2002 South African mining legislation changed, allowing women to legally work underground for the first time in history. This marked a new era in mining and subsequently changed this sector in South Africa forever. The Mining Charter (Department of Mineral Resources, 2002), however, posed a number of challenges to the mining sector and their stakeholders. Women have their own unique problems and challenges which are different from those of men. One of the differences is that men in mining have a number of support networks inside and outside the mines, which mostly relate to being male. White women have also entered the industry’s workforce, although it should be noted that they

entered the industry earlier, albeit at a variety of occupational and skill levels. Benya (2009) found that black women have to employ various strategies and often dangerous coping mechanisms in order to work underground. Women constitute a marginalised minority group within the industry and white women are a minority group within this already marginalised group of workers. Not only have they been largely excluded from literature on South African mining history, but they are also being excluded from contemporary local research on women in mining. The dire lack of research on white women in mining (in South Africa) proves the necessity to conduct research and document their experiences, lives and realities. Although very important, the existing literature on women miners vaguely refers to race¹ and creates the impression that when reference is made to women in mining, it includes women of all races and the same skill levels, but it does not (Alexander, 2007; Benya, 2009; Benya 2011; Burtenshaw, 2005; Calitz 2004; McCulloch, 2003; Ralushai, 2003). The reality is that this literature is about the conditions of black women only. Women in mining cannot be seen as a homogenous group, and therefore one cannot assume that experiences of all women are the same. The aim of this study is therefore to explore the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry in a sociological way.

This chapter outlines the research by firstly stating the research problem and contextualising and contrasting the unique post-Apartheid South African context to the rest of the mining world. The second and third chapter will focus on the available literature on women in mining and in addition, will review key text in mining literature and the various intersections of social divisions which all contribute to the understanding of women in mining. This will be followed by the fourth chapter that will explain the methodology and research design of the study. Chapter five to eight includes the life histories of some of the participants.

¹ The term race is used to refer to the perceived social differences between people of different races. Race is understood as a process and a structure which is used in this study to illustrate the racial nature of mining.

Chapter nine will deal with the analyses and findings of the study. The last chapter will conclude the dissertation with a summary of the key findings, a brief reflection as well as recommendations for further studies.

2 Orientation and Problem Statement

The Mining Charter (Department of Mineral Resources, 2010) paved the road for women to join the ranks of the underground mining workforce, but it has also raised a number of key issues not only for the mining industry, but for the broader society as well. The introduction of women in mining has exposed the problems of post-Apartheid mining in South Africa (Benya, 2011). These problems will be discussed in-depth in sections to follow.

The values that are espoused throughout South Africa's constitution include equality, diversity, respect and freedom. However, the existing literature on women in mining in South Africa indicates a contradiction. The existing literature in fact confirms that women in mining are experiencing everything but equality, respect and freedom. Traditionally, South African mines have a male macho organisational culture which makes it so much harder for women to fit into the mining culture, or to create a new culture within the existing one (Benya, 2009). Authors such as Benya (2009); Burtenshaw (2005); Calitz (2004); McCulloch (2003) and Humphrey (1987) have highlighted the animosity men in mining feel towards women that work underground. There is a general perception among male miners that women do not belong on the mines and this is mainly because of social, cultural, ethnic or religious beliefs (Benya, 2009). The challenges that women in mining face are different from those of men, particularly because women within the mining community do not share the support network that men do. There is no 'brotherhood' to turn to; no wife to take care of the children when the woman is at work (Benya, 2009).

After attending a symposium by the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP) and the WITS Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) at

the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in 2011 on the history and future of the mining industry in South Africa, and again at the 9th International Mining History Congress in 2012 it was clear to me that there is a need for literature on white women in South African mining. Although the numbers of white women are small, they are however, still there. This presented an opportunity to explore the experiences of these women in the industry, including issues such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender², femininity, masculinity, whiteness, sisterhood, racism and power.

3 Background

To sketch the background of this study, one should understand the history of (coal) mining in South Africa. This is vital in order to gain a preliminary understanding of the contemporary situation of mining and the occupational culture of this industry.

Commercial coal mining is estimated to have started in 1864 in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa, near the town of Molteno. This was largely due to economic development caused by the discovery of diamonds and later gold. These mines rapidly expanded and the sudden demand for coal powered engines was what subsequently led to coal mining. Coal mining in KwaZulu-Natal and the Witwatersrand commenced in the 1880's. This sudden demand for energy was caused by the expansion of other industries such as steel, manganese, chromium, vanadium, platinum and also urbanization across the country. Coal mining started in Witbank in 1895 where they at first supplied exclusively to the Kimberley and Witwatersrand mines (AFRICOAL, 2015). South Africa is the 5th largest producer of coal in the world and has the 7th largest coal reserves globally. This should point to the importance of research in

² The term gender is used to refer to the perceived social differences between men and women regarding various issues in society. Gender is understood as a structure and a process which is used in this study to illustrate the gendered nature of mining.

this specific mineral sector. Coal which is largely being exported, is contributing to the economic wealth of the country. South Africa will be able to mine coal for at least another 50 years, allowing for much longer exploitation than other minerals currently being mined. The fact that South Africa itself is largely dependent on coal for energy makes this research invaluable (Anglo American, 2011). All of the above should indicate the importance of coal to the economy of South Africa and therefore the relevance of social research in this mining sector.

One of the most influential researchers in gold mining history is Dunbar Moodie. In his influential book '*Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration*' with Ndatshe they describe how the mining culture were shaped by racist ideologies, brute violence, capitalism and the drive for extreme profit (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994). They discuss the unintended effects of the hostel system in the sense that it fuelled the spread of HIV/AIDS on the compounds and the absolute labour control that was exercised during the Apartheid years. The majority of mine workers were migrants, mainly from neighbouring countries. Working conditions were horrible and many barely earned a living wage. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) being the largest and most powerful black mining trade union at the time, fought for higher wages and decent working conditions. All of this happened in a time of great social and political unrest in South Africa. This off course contributed to the macho culture that is now synonymous with South African mining. I would argue from my own research that not much has changed in post-Apartheid mining, even in coal mining.

Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2010:256) examined the new mining landscape of South Africa by focussing specifically on the changing nature of the compound system and the influence of the NUM which they argue have led to a fragmented labour force. They focus on black women (unskilled) briefly and the emergence of a "non-racial masculine solidarity" in the post-Apartheid mining industry.

Although the above mentioned research is factually correct, it does however fail to mention anything about coal mining. It is also once again evident that white women are completely ignored in contemporary research regarding all mining sectors in South Africa.

Women have been part of mining since the discovery of minerals in South Africa, in a variety of ways; their cardinal role has totally been ignored in the literature. Interestingly it is noted that women initially made better workers in 19th century Britain. This was for the most part because they were considered to be a source of cheap labour, either by themselves or as part of a ‘family labour unit’ (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006; McCulloch, 2003). The same can be said about asbestos mining in South Africa where women were utilised from 1893 till 1980 and they “comprised up to half of the asbestos mine workers” (McCulloch, 2003:414). There is evidence that point to women being at the meetings of the Witwatersrand Strike (Alexander, 1999), in solidarity with their husbands, although not formal workers, they formed part of mining communities. They were part of the stakeholders of the industry. It was only later in time when that legislation challenged the masculine culture of the industry. This slowly led to the feminisation of mining. Now, although authors vary on this topic, Standing (1999:583) argues that the feminisation of the labour market has a number of unintended effects but that the prevalence of feminisation speaks to the following:

Gender outcomes in labour markets do not reflect natural or objective differences between men and women, but rather reflect the outcomes of discrimination and disadvantage, and the behavioural reactions by workers and employers. This means that even if the thesis of feminisation were supported empirically, a reversal of the trends could still be possible.

Standing (1999) here asserts that which is evident in all the literature about women and work, that the gender segregation is not natural, but that it can be turned around. This is exactly what legislation attempted to do.

The search for mineral wealth spurred the industrialisation of many countries world-wide and South Africa was no different. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:13) state that British colonialism brought with it the “knowledge of systems of mining and control of mineworkers to Africa”.

Moodie with Ndatshe (1994) argue that the mining culture that developed during Apartheid South Africa was deliberately created. It was that context that developed the ideal conditions for this culture to come into existence. The violence and brute force, to which the men were exposed and used to, created and sustained the occupational culture that is still visible today. Moodie (2005:550) has also argued in response to Breckenridge (1998a) that it is not just merely because of cultural factors that the violence occurred, but mainly because of the maximum average system.

[...] the maximum average system made it impossible for mine management to offer monetary incentives to black workers. While mine managers might condemn violence in moral terms, in practice white supervisors were inspected to insure that black workers moved rock underground, but as result, for decades, assault was entrenched in the structure of production itself.

Therefore, it could be argued then that race and violence underlined the industry from the very beginning. Moodie (2005) declares that it is necessary to look the cultural, social, political and spatial factors that contributed to the violent mining culture. Therefore, it is vital to look at production relations in order to fully explain the mining culture. This is exactly what this research is arguing for: to consider all the entire cultural, social, political and spatial factors that contribute to the experience of women in mining. One cannot ignore the crucial

role that these factors, but more importantly: race; class; and gender play in terms of (white) women in mining. I will provide evidence that masculinity is still being used as a source of power on the coal mines.

As stated before, progressive legislation such as the Mining Charter (Department of Mineral Resources, 2010) challenged and proposed to change the mining industry of South Africa. There are a number of legislation and policies in the history of mining world-wide, including South Africa, which forbade women from working underground. The next section will elaborate on specific legislation that prohibited women from working underground world-wide.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 45 of 1935, Article 2, stipulated that “no female, whatever her age, shall be employed on underground work in any mine”. The convention thus prohibited any form of manual labour for women underground but this excluded women “holding positions of management and who do not perform manual work”, or “females employed in health and welfare services”, and “females who, in the course of their studies, spend a period of training in the underground parts of a mine”, and “any other females who may occasionally have to enter the underground parts of a mine for the purpose of a non-manual occupation” (ILO, 1935). The South African Mineral Act 50 of 1991 stipulated under section 32, sub-section 2 that “no female shall work underground in a mine, and nobody shall cause or permit such female so to work” (South Africa, 1991). There are, as with the ILO Convention 45 of 1935, certain exceptions such as female engineers, surveyors or health and safety workers who are not permanently employed underground. It should however be noted that this type of legislation was used and implemented in order to “protect” women against exploitation, although in effect some could argue that it had unintentionally caused exactly that. This law can be seen as discriminatory to women in the sense that it excludes them from employment in this industry. The introduction of the Mineral & Petroleum Resource Development Act (MPRDA) of 2002 which replaced the Mineral Act of

1991 declared to “substantially and meaningfully expand opportunities for historically disadvantage persons, including women, to enter the mineral and petroleum industries and to benefit from the exploitation of the nation’s mineral and petroleum resources” (South Africa, 1991; South Africa, 2002).

Then, in 2002 South African mining legislation changed, for the first time in history legally permitting women to work underground, without the previous legal exclusions. The first Mining Charter was subsequently replaced in 2010 with an updated version called the Amendment of the Broad Based Socio-Economic Charter for the South African Mining Industry (Department of Mineral Resources, 2010). It should be noted here that there has been an internal policy shift on the mines. There are now policies on pregnancy, sexual harassment, infrastructure and housing, to name but a few, and their most important effect is that they challenge the “macho culture” of the mines. The implementation of these policies is confronting men with the reality of women on the mines (Benya, 2011). Although the charter gave women an entry point into the industry, it did not assure the much needed transformation of the mining culture and as a result research indicates that the industry is still a very male dominated one (Benya, 2009; Benya 2011; Mphokane, 2008; Burtenshaw, 2005; Calitz 2004; McCulloch, 2003; McCulloch, 2002; Ralushai 2003). The mining industry does not work in isolation, especially from the stakeholders.

Derived from the above mentioned background, the main research question that this study sought to answer is: **What are the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa?** By asking this question, the study aims to meet the objectives of the study, which will be outlined in the next section.

4 Methodology and Research Design

Phoenix & Pattynama (2006:188) states that social researchers should be “asking the other questions”, and that there is more than one facet that

contributes to various social problems or conditions. They argue that one needs to uncover what is actually maintaining a system or issue in order to discover what the other contributing factors is. Social researchers should not stare blindly at a problem, but must uncover what all the other issues are.

This is a qualitative research study, done from a feminist perspective. There are two research approaches used in the study, ethnography and feminism. The reason for choosing two approaches is because of the lack of scholarly work on the topic; this study required an approach that allow for maximum exploration of the data and to add to the richness of the data, in order to contribute to the literature on women in mining in South Africa and abroad.

The research methods included: semi-structured interviews; field notes; photographs (where it was permitted) and observations. During the fieldwork, 20 white women working at different skill levels (excluding administrative workers) were interviewed. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

5 Research Questions

The following section of the study will deal with the research questions that can be derived from the above background. The subsidiary research questions of this study include:

- What are the implications for white women working in the mining industry?
- What are the primary challenges they face?
- How does the fact that they are white women affect their everyday social relations?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a white woman in mining?
- How are their husbands, boyfriends or partners dealing with the fact that they work in a predominantly male industry?
- Is there a sisterhood amongst all the women?

- What are the coping mechanisms of white women in coal mining?
- What does femininity and masculinity mean to them?
- Do these women feel disadvantaged by virtue of their gender or their race?
- How do they negotiate their race and/or gender with other women and/or men of the same or other races?

6 Research Aims and Objectives

First and most importantly this study is explorative and descriptive in nature. It aims firstly to uncover the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry, this is done to lay the groundwork and to create a basis for the analyses that will follow in the consecutive chapters. The second aim of the study is to consider the implications of the findings for existing theory on women, work and mining and to contribute to the literature on South African women in (coal) mining. This research would as Burke (2006:48) state: “provide the opportunity to relocate women back into the debate about mining”.

7 Central Theoretical Statement

The central theoretical statement of this study is that South African women in mining are not a homogenous group of workers. There are too many factors which differentiates women from each other. Contemporary literature on women in mining in South Africa paint a problematic and oversimplified picture, by ignoring the issue of race, ethnicity, class (skill level and occupational category) and to a certain degree nationhood (Alexander, 2007; Benya, 2009; Benya, 2011; Burtenshaw, 2005; Calitz 2004; McCulloch, 2003; Ralushai, 2003). All of which contribute to the idea of a heterogeneous group of women workers. I will use intersectionality to blend a variation of different literatures. This should point to a tension between different theoretical concepts and how assumptions about race, gender, and nationhood play out in everyday life and popular conceptions. This is especially true in the life histories from chapter five, six, seven and eight.

By exploring an under researched area in industrial sociology, one can begin to consider the implication on theories of women, work and mining.

8 Structure of the Study

The structure of this study is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and Background
- Chapter 2: A New Configuration of Social Divisions
- Chapter 3: Local and Global: Women in (Coal) Mining
- Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology
- Chapter 5: Marinda: A Pioneer for Women in Coal Mining
- Chapter 6: Carola: From Electrician to Engineer
- Chapter 7: Celia: The Reluctant Wallflower
- Chapter 8: Annette: Hitler's Daughter
- Chapter 9: The Intersections at Play
- Chapter 10: Reflection and Conclusion

9 Conclusion

The Mining Charter of 2002 (Department of Mineral Resources, 2002) changed mining not only for the industry but also for their stakeholders and the broader community. The implications and effect of this type of legislation is far reaching. These women are facing various difficulties at work and in their private lives because of their career choice. Benya (2009) proved that black women are left without a 'voice' and have to employ various strategies and often dangerous coping mechanisms in order to work underground.

This study specifically examines the experiences of white women, albeit at various skill levels and different relationships to the industry. The perhaps initially unintended effect is to give them a 'voice' in the literature but also to act

as a witness to their lives and experiences. Therefore the focus of this study is on white women in coal mining and not just broadly speaking 'women in mining'. Coal mining is not the most popular socially researched mineral, although, the majority of South Africans and South African industries depend on the energy generated from coal. Earlier in this chapter I have mentioned the vital importance of this mineral to the economy of South Africa.

Women now form part of the mining industry. They will forever be legitimately included in the mining sector. This research is therefore essential at this point in time and in the current context of post-Apartheid mining in South Africa. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:13) assert that "coal has been the backbone of modern development, truly the king among miners, and women mineworkers, largely unseen and unsung, were the 'queens' of coal". This research tells the stories of white women workers of the coal industry. Therefore, this research will not only build on the existing literature available on mining in South Africa, but also fill the gap in the literature on white women workers in the coal mining industry. Giving them a 'voice' will reposition them back into the debate about mining.

CHAPTER 2

A NEW CONFIGURATION OF SOCIAL DIVISIONS

“Yet, it would be a folly to construct a homogenous and universal category of ‘women in mining’ or ‘mining women’, [...] because of the multitude of identities of women in developing countries”.

(Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006:3)

1 Introduction

How do we make sense of the complicated interplay between class, race, gender and other identities? This chapter will begin to theoretically explain the position of white women in mining caused by discriminatory policies, practices and cultures. The thematic division of this study includes a fusion of literature that does not normally intersect. This is done to create a dialogue between the different literatures included in this and the succeeding chapters. I would like to make it clear here that some of the literature on class, race and gender will not be discussed in great detail, which would fall outside the scope of this study. What is included from that literature is used mainly to show my understanding and how it intersects and links with this research. At the end of this study it should be evident that the South African women in mining situation is quite unique, in that this area of research (white women in coal mining) is a new terrain for industrial sociology. White women workers in mining as a research area has not yet been uncovered. It is a part of mining history and contemporary mining research that has up until now been ignored in industrial sociology.

2 Intersections of Social Divisions

Combining a racial delineator – “white” – with a gender construct – “women” – already raises a number of theoretical challenges. Also, since the study is

conducted on coal mines, class relations come to the fore. How do we develop a theoretical language to consider these so-called variables? Furthermore, how do we understand the intersections between them? I draw here on a number of studies from South Africa and elsewhere to illustrate the contours of this theoretical and conceptual challenge.

Feminist writers have long argued for an alternative to the hegemonic, homogenous representation of the history workers in the various disciplines of the social sciences. These social constructions are more often than not as result of patriarchy and male dominance in various sectors of society. These social constructions in the social sciences relate (not only or exclusively) to gender and labour theories, but also relate to an economy of dominance in the workplace and beyond. Gibson (1992) proposes exactly this in her work based on the Australian coal mining towns and how women helped shape the economy of those towns. She points to how women are more than just passive agents. She begins to show how their participation, however seemingly limited, is vital to the labour market. Gibson (1992:29) states the following about gender and the labour market in relation to mining communities:

“Unlike the miner, whose class position defines for him a seemingly clear role in capitalist class struggles, the miner’s wife’s class position appears to involve a problematic relationship to working class politics. [...] The construction of women as unknowable or unpredictable political subjects is a politically debilitating result of theoretically locating women only in relationship to capitalist class processes (which in effect places them as spectators or, at best, research players in a game in which their husbands are actively involved)”.

Gibson (1992) is pointing to the fact that women (even only as stakeholders) should in fact be viewed as active agents that have a productive role within the labour market. This to a certain extent correlates to what Alexander (1999)

points to in his work on women's involvement in the Rand Revolt Strike of 1922. These women were active agents in the politics of their husbands work, not only through their domestic labour but also their involvement in the strike. Alexander's (1999) construction of these women shows that they were as much political subjects as the men were. Women should be regarded not only as social subjects, but economic and political agents as well. Thousands of women were part of, or is currently still directly or indirectly part of mining. Hipwell Mamen, Weitzner and Whiteman, (2002) also acknowledge this. They argue that even if women are just living in a mining community, the impact of mining operations is gendered in nature. The companies situated in mining communities seldom make it beneficial to both men and women, because mining is considered to be so 'masculine', only affecting the latter. I would argue here that even if there is no deliberate part on behalf of the mining companies to involve or consider women, their sense of agency will still prevail. I also agree with these authors that women are very much active agents in their various roles in mining.

Hooks (2000) argues from a North-American context that feminist writers' assumptions about women and work were quite different to what was happening in real life. Especially if one considers the reason why so many working class women entered the workforce in the first place. It was not for any emancipatory reasons, but purely monetary driven, to supplement their husbands income. Bird (1979:6) agrees to this by saying that:

“They had no idea they were creating a revolution and had no intention of doing so. Most of them drifted into jobs “to help out” at home, to save for the down payment on a house, buy clothes for the children or to meet the rising expenses of college”.

When considering the reason/s that South African women enter mining, this is exactly it. These women do not necessarily enter with any formal feminist agenda. It is purely to work, because they are sole providers or to supplement

the family's income. Hooks (2000:97) supports this by saying work for working class women is not about personal fulfilment or liberation, it is about survival. She does however states that for white educated women it was different, they had an "ideological motivation" to enter or re-enter the labour market. I would argue here that women in mining are not only a heterogeneous group of workers in terms of race, but that their reasons for entering are fundamentally different if you consider whether they are university graduates or whether they followed an artisan route into mining, therefore broadly linking it to class position.

Hooks (2000) continues to argue that educated white women held a very real threat for not only the working class white women, but also working class black people. Hooks (2000:98) states that "sexism exists with and not in the place of racism and economic exploitation." McIntosh (1995) argues that this type of sexism is unintended and unconscious. I would nonetheless argue with Hooks (2000) that it is very much deliberate and intended, to protect white supremacy, especially if you consider that white women were grouped with all people of colour as being previously disadvantaged in the previous economic reform policy of Black Economic Empowerment (South Africa, 2003). This system in effect institutionalised white supremacy in the workplace by allowing white employees to appoint white women and to still exclude and by implication discriminate against people of colour. Although Hooks' (2000) research is based on the United States of America (USA), I would argue that the same could be said about the South African situation, with a larger degree of complexity. This is evident when looking at annual labour reports and more specifically in the mining industry. The Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report for 2012-2013 (Department of Labour, 2013:46) states that:

"Race and gender are still the two major factors that determine where a person sits in the "hierarchy" in South Africa. White males come first and on top, even with respect to disability. They are followed, in monotonous and predictable fashion, by

White females and then Indian males. The country is rigidly locked into this paradigm. The gridlock into a racialized-male-dominated path has stubbornly reared its head to characterise the country's approach to disability.”

This affirms not only Hooks' (2000) argument on institutionalised racism in the workplace but the argument made in the first chapter of this study; that a racial hierarchy still exists within South African society. What has been argued up until now in this chapter and the previous one is that women in mining is not a homogenous group of workers, they differ based on race, ethnicity, class, level of education and job tenure to name but a few variables. I will begin to unpack some of these variables in this chapter. Furthermore, I will show how these social divisions intersect and overlap and how this contributes to the complexity of the term 'women in mining', especially in South African coal mining.

2.1 Class: a Selection of Key Literature

On reading and reviewing literature on class, I decided to only focus briefly on what speaks directly to this study. Social class is probably one of the hardest social variables to define, never mind to measure (Platt, 2011). This concept is associated with social stratification where people are grouped into a hierarchy of different categories of classes. Social class can refer to both your sociocultural background and/or social and economic status (Platt, 2011). A Marxist approach would favour the latter. I would argue with other authors that social class is something that is not stagnant, but able to change over time (Platt, 2011). The objective criteria used to measure an abstract concept such as class are: income; level of education or skills and access to healthcare and other public services (Platt, 2011). However, one could argue that race is a determining factor in a South African context especially if you consider the Apartheid workplace regime which was mentioned earlier (Benya, 2013; Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006; Buhlungu & Webster, 2006; Webster & Omar, 2003; Von Holdt, 2002). It played a pivotal

role in shaping South Africa's different classes (Groenewald, 2008). The Apartheid workplace regime could be categorised by five characteristics namely: a racial division of labour; racial segregation of facilities; a racial structure of power in the workplace; a system of migrant labour and the location of workplaces in a "bifurcated industrial geography" (Bezuidenhout, 2005:94). Again, the major influence of race in all of the mentioned characteristics is visible.

I would like to link something else to class in relation to this study, seeing as the focus is on white women, namely that the influence of Protestantism and Calvinism on them almost goes without saying. This research focusses predominantly on Afrikaans white working class women and their families, with the exception of two participants. It is important not to negate, as with the Apartheid workplace regime, the role and influence that religion, specifically Dutch Calvinism played in the lives of Afrikaners (Moodie, 1975; Moodie, 1981). I also think it's necessary to include Weber's (1930) classic ideas on the protestant work ethic and to link it to the Afrikaner working class and how they are socialised to work. Moodie (1975) characterised the Afrikaner by their Calvinistic work ethic, which required disciplined hard work. Afrikaner children are raised not to be idle. Weber (1930) argued that because the teachings of Calvin was used in such a manner to motivate the (religious) working class, they were left with no choice if they wanted to get to heaven. Bear in mind that the Dutch Calvinist influence affected more than just the Afrikaner work ethic, but also in the way which gender relations were shaped. This brings us to next argument of: gender.

2.2 Gender: a Selection of Key Literature

Literature on gender and the different aspects which constitute this abstract social construction is vast. I will however limit this review, as stated above, to what specifically applies to this study only. Throughout history the majority of (gendered) mining literature tended to focus only on masculinity and the effects

and implications it had on mining. Yet, as masculinity exists, so does femininity. The focus of this study is mainly on femininity, however, this is done in relation to masculinity, because mining is perceived to be so masculine (Alexander, 2007; Alexander, 1999; Benya, 2009; Benya 2011; Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006; Moodie, 1994; Morell, 1998;). In this section I would like to highlight a few works of key authors on gender namely: the work of Bradley (2013) on gender; Butler on 'gender performativity' and Connell (2005) on hegemonic masculinity.

Bradley (2013) covers a range of feminist research on various themes within gender. She looks at the effect of gender on class, production; reproduction; consumption and how modernity affects gender. What I will focus on is her work on reproduction and the division of labour because it can best be applied to this study and her own examples are so evident in this research. Bradley (2013:133) says that: "although these debates have largely fallen out of sight, the role of domestic labour in perpetuating gender inequality remains crucial". Perhaps the way in which Glucksmann (2005) theorises this is the answer. Glucksmann (2005) proposes a reconfiguration of the concepts work and labour, because work in all areas of life are interrelated, the private and public spheres, paid and unpaid labour. She describes this as: "a relational approach focusing on modes of linkages and connections, intersections, configurations, patterns, networks" (Glucksmann, 2005:21). This to a certain degree is what Hochschild & Machung (2003) refers to when they talk about the 'second shift'; the additional labour working women perform at home. They too argue that work and labour is seldom a separate activity for working mothers and that the amount of leisure time available to women is far less than that of men (Hochschild & Machung, 2003). This is especially visible in the life histories which will follow in subsequent chapters, where with most of the women in mining, their work and private lives, the paid and unpaid labour they perform continually overlap, intersect and connect with each other.

What I would like to furthermore highlight with regard to gender is the performativity thereof. Butler's (1993, 1990) seminal work on gender is key in

theorising how gender is performed in everyday life. Central to her theory is the way in which gender is constructed by being repeatedly performed. Gender for Butler (1990) is bodily and nonverbal, because people believe these constructions and believe that they must perform them. Butler (1993:7) believes that we are not even directly involved or aware of our gendered self, but that it “emerges only within the matrix of gender relations themselves”. In an interview, Butler said the following in relation to gender construction and the relation to biological sex:

“I think for a woman to identify as a woman is a culturally enforced effect. I don’t think that it’s a given that on the basis of a given anatomy, an identification will follow. I think that ‘coherent identification’ has to be cultivated, policed, and enforced; and that the violation of that has to be punished, usually through shame” (Kotz, 1992:88).

In the above she makes a profound point in terms of the performativity of gender and on the acceptance of one’s sex; she argues that the ‘culturally enforced effect’ is actively created, maintained and ‘policed’ by a society. This to Butler is evident in our everyday gender relations.

This brings me to another point. Within the broader scope of gender relations lies the concept of hegemonic masculinity, widely address in especially sociological gender literature that was initially coined by Connell (2005) in her earlier work on masculinity. She talks of masculinity as something not exclusively male, and believes that not only males contribute to the social construction thereof and to the gender order that exists. Connell (2005) theorises that the practices of (mainly) men that promoted them to a dominant position over women, but more than that, that hegemonic masculinity embodies a form of social organisation. Clearly this can be challenged and changed. In my own research and as visible in the life histories, this is done. Women in especially managerial positions in coal mining challenge hegemonic masculinity

and if they cannot change it, they embrace it and perform it. Again, this is why Connell (2005) argues that both men and women participate in the occurrence of hegemonic masculinity, because femininity is considered passive, weak and subordinate, perhaps even more so in mining.

Earlier in this chapter I touched on aspects of race, the next section will focus on specifically whiteness.

2.3 Whiteness: a Selection of Key Literature

Literature on whiteness is important to this study because it speaks to the racial division that has historically and still continues to exist in mining. This again links to the idea of the Apartheid workplace regime (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006; Buhlungu & Webster, 2006; Webster & Omar, 2003; Von Holdt, 2002).

Whiteness studies developed in the USA, more specifically during the latter part of the 20th century. It focusses on what authors describe as the cultural, historical and sociological aspects of people who identify as white, but more importantly the social construction of whiteness. This entails a certain ideology (Fishkin, 1995; Frankenberg, 1993; Fredrickson, 1981; Harris, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995; Jacobson, 1998; Lipsitz, 1998; Morrison, 1992; Roediger, 1991; Roediger, 1994; Steyn, 2004; Steyn, 2005; Steyn & Foster, 2008).

This review will predominantly focus on South African whiteness research, mainly because USA literature will not in this instance help with the analyses and understanding of the South African context. This is because South Africa has a minority of white citizens, whereas the situation in the USA is completely the opposite. Apartheid helped keep a white racial minority in power and the effects thereof is still very much engrained in white 'culture' (Steyn, 2004; Steyn, 2005; Steyn & Foster, 2008; West & Van Vuuren, 2007).

The first person to ever write academically on whiteness was Toni Morrison in 1992, writing about American whiteness. This seems to have spread and now whiteness studies is made up of a large body of work that intersects with a range of other disciplines. Dyer (1997:3) argued why this needed critical attention from the research community:

“For most of the time white people speak about nothing but white people, it's just that we couch it in terms of 'people' in general. Research shows that in Western representation whites are overwhelmingly and disproportionately predominant, have the central and elaborated roles, and above all are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the standard”.

Dyer (1997) with the above assertion called for a change in the way that racialisation was being explained: from the centre to the margins – the centre here being white and ‘normal’.

Steyn (2005) says that although white South Africans have always known that they were being racialized in terms of ‘others’, what they are not conscious of is how privileged it had made them. This to some extent was naturalised to white South Africans. This off course originated during colonial South Africa. Willoughby-Herard, (2007) therefore argues that: “critical whiteness studies must track the institutional and professional investments in the creation of white supremacy and white nationalism through various colonial relations across geographical and territorial space”. Steyn (2005) refers to something she calls ‘white talk’, ways in which white supremacy and the ‘naturalness’ thereof has linguistically manifested itself in the Afrikaans language.

The reason that I differentiate between white Afrikaans women and white English women, I believe is best articulated by Steyn (2004:144) who says: “differentiation is necessary, for while both English and Afrikaans white South Africans share many common identifications and assumptions of privilege, there

are also significant differences in how their whiteness is being reframed in post-Apartheid South Africa”. Steyn (2004:162) continues to say that: “Afrikaans white talk, by contrast, is engaged in a much more active and aggressive constitutive role” in comparison to white English people.

I will again draw on the above mentioned literature in later chapters. Again, I would like to note that I am aware that I deliberately did not include all the available literature on the above discussed points because that unfortunately falls outside the scope of this study. I am however emphasising the importance of the literature that I did include on class, gender and race (whiteness) because it will ultimately contribute to a better understanding of white women in post-Apartheid coal mining as evident in the later chapters.

From the above it should be clear by now that by no means are class, gender and race mutually exclusive social divisions. Their simultaneous use in analyses thereof are argued for by both Anderson and Collins (1995) and López (2005) together with other intersectionality and critical race theorists. It is for that reason that I decided to use intersectionality, which I will now discuss in more detail.

3 The Problem of Intersectionality

Crenshaw who coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989 says that it “enables us to recognise the fact that perceived group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of bias, yet we are simultaneously members of many groups, our complex identities can shape the specific way we each experience that bias” (Crenshaw, 1999; AAPF, 2010). Intersectionality thus concerns itself with the multitude of variables that has an effect on a person. Davis (2008:68) states that Crenshaw argued for the “need to take both gender and race on board and show how they interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s experience”. Although intersectionality was originally intended to explain black women’s experiences and the multiple dimensions of their

identity, it would in this case be reversed to explain white women's experiences and the multiple dimensions of their identity within the context of mining. Intersectionality speaks to the fact that there are key differences between women. Women are not a homogenous group. Race, age, social stature or class can alter how women view or experience their own social reality. Davis (2008:70) argues that "intersectionality brings together two of the most important strands of contemporary feminist thought that have been, in different ways concerned with the issue of difference". The issue of 'difference' is what is central to this study.

Yuval-Davis (2006) warn that narratives which essentialise any social division run the risk of reflecting hegemonic discourses by further marginalising members, because in effect what happens is a construction of the 'right way' to be a member. This will be completely counterproductive from a feminist point of view. Yuval-Davis (2006:195) continues to say that "what is known today as an intersectional analysis, except that in such identity politics constructions what takes place is actually fragmentations and multiplication of the wider categorical identities rather than more dynamic, shifting and multiplex constructions of intersectionality". Yuval-Davis (2006) continues to say that social divisions such as class or race tend to be naturalised, that there is a biological basis for difference. I would however argue that although this is the danger in using an intersectional approach to analysis, her concern is a methodological concern. The categorical attributes or social divisions used in this study are used to include more women previously left out of mining history and mining research. Yuval-Davis (2006:200) believes that social divisions should be seen as "intermeshed with each other, it is important to also note that they are not reducible to each other". Therefore, any social division used in this study can never be seen as more important than another. Class, race, ethnicity etcetera all continuously affect the experiences and reality of the agent. The focus should be on how a specific position is constructed and in turn affect other social divisions within that specific context.

Yuval-Davis (2006:201) stresses the importance of the ontological basis of social divisions by saying the following:

“[...] class divisions are grounded in relation to the economic processes of productions and consumption; gender should be understood not as a ‘real’ social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse that relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference [...]. Ethnic and racial divisions relate to discourses of collectivities constructed around exclusionary/inclusionary boundaries (Barth, 1969) that can be constructed as permeable and mutable to different extents and that divide people into ‘us’ and ‘them’”.

Yuval-Davis (2006) argues here that social divisions are in fact autonomous of each other. Every social division used should be seen as speaking to a different social relationship. Thus, social divisions are independent of each other and should not be seen as completely intersected in one another. The way they do interact lies in the constructed experience and reality of the agent.

Cock (1980), although not explicitly using the concept of intersections, found similar evidence of social divisions intersecting in her research on black domestic workers and the white women who employ them during the Apartheid years.

The next section on Benya’s (2009) research will indicate why it is necessary to use an analytical approach (intersectionality) that is sensitive to the multitude of social divisions that exists within mining.

4 The Case of (Black) Women in Mining in South Africa

One of the most recent sociological studies on (black) women in mining in South Africa was done by Asanda Benya in 2009. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews she documented the lives and struggles of black women in mining at an Impala Platinum Ltd mine near Rustenburg. As stated in the previous chapter, her work is viewed as key in understanding women in mining in South Africa, and by comparison (and implication) understanding the position of white women in mining. Benya (2009) however (unintentionally) focussed on black women in unskilled to semi-skilled jobs working underground. She explored how these women cope in response to the masculine occupational culture and physicality of the nature of underground platinum mining. She specifically looked at the challenges that women faced during their work, their private lives and the various coping strategies that these women employed. These coping strategies included: transactional sex; tolerating sexual harassment; manipulation and bribery. This risky and often dangerous behaviour is used as a survival mechanism by these women. She drew on various labour market theories to describe the working conditions of these women, more specifically the processes of labour incorporation, labour allocation, labour control and reproduction of labour. Benya (2009) attempted to go beyond just uncovering the challenges that these women face at work by integrating not only the process of entering the mining culture but in addition to that, how their work in return affects their individual households and private lives.

Although Benya (2009) did not intend to study only black women or exclude other races from her research, all her respondents were black women. This is problematic, and could be viewed as a valid point of critique because the implication of her work indirectly could lead to the assumption that women working in unskilled jobs on mines underground or on open cast are all black. It should be noted here that black women are by far the majority of women in mining, and this is statistically the case in South Africa, based on the racial

composition and socio-economic distribution of the country. My point here is that black women are not the only race of women working in and at mining. If the racial statistics of women in mining is examined, the majority of the workers are predominantly black. I would argue though, that it is because of the same structural exclusion, as the legislation that caused this in the first place.

The only mention of white women that Benya (2009:132) makes is this:

“I have touched on the absence of white women in underground occupations, since I have not dwelled much on this subject, it opens up rooms for more research around race and women in mining”.

This should be suggestive of the importance of this specific study. The following is documented by her in response to the absence of white women underground: “White and Indian women do not apply for underground jobs and the only two coloured women that applied changed their minds soon after they visited the underground” and “How can they [white women] be underground when their fathers are on the surface?” (Benya, 2009:49). These quotes speak directly not only to the history of mining but to the history of South Africa, specifically referring to Apartheid.

The following four assumptions can then be made from the views which Benya (2009) chose to highlight. Firstly, that there is racial tension and animosity which is unquestionably still evident on the mines. Secondly, the perceived racial profiling of women that do or do not apply for manual labour jobs underground. Thirdly, white women are perceived as being protected by their whiteness in combination with their gender and lastly, that white men are still perceived to be in control of the mines, and are visibly perceived as the people with power.

Benya (2009) argues that these (black) women are not a homogenous group of workers or women, but in fact, and rightly so, a heterogeneous group of women.

The problem that then exists is the implied view she ultimately leaves the reader with: the absence of white women who evidently exist within other sectors of mining, mining communities and other minerals. This can be deduced from the only two direct quotations relating to other races of women in her research. However, the point remains, that a construction of a homogenous group of women workers in mining is inaccurate. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:3) affirms the above with the following:

“Yet, it would be a folly to construct a homogenous and universal category of ‘women in mining’ or ‘mining women’, partly because the countries we are dealing with have experienced mining in different ways and also because of the multitude of identities of women in developing countries”.

From all the literature read and reviewed, internationally and locally there is nothing that singles out the experiences of white women. The available research in South Africa does not explicitly exclude white women, or any other races for that fact, but as stated before, tend to focus on black women because they are by far the female majority in mining. As feminism and gender studies have taught the research community, no two women’s experiences are the same. Women have diverse experiences, beliefs, religions, attitudes, education, social/economic status and problems that differentiate them from one another. Zaretsky (1976) also argues that factors such as the latter differentiates women from each other and causes them to be heterogeneous.

Benya (2009) highlights two aspects that is highly applicable to this study, race and power. Race played a crucial part in mining history, there has always been a clear power differentiation between white and black, a clear class difference between white and black and a clear differentiation between job titles and the hierarchy thereof (not necessarily skill level). During Apartheid mining, race meant something; it caused specific social constructions that were based on perceived social differences. These perceived differences lead to a difference in

ideologies in terms of rights and your value as a worker. It is for this reason that Benya's (2009) work inspired this study, in order to focus not only on the gendered nature of mining, but the implication of race (specifically whiteness) and class dynamics from the perspective of white women workers. Benya (2011) refers to a hierarchical shift that occurred post-Apartheid within the occupational culture of mines. She claims that during Apartheid, the (probably unspoken but evident) hierarchy which existed was influenced largely by race, as opposed to post-Apartheid, where the major influence is now gender. Thus, there was a shift from a racial hierarchy to a gender hierarchy. Following this argument then, during Apartheid mining, black men were at the bottom of this supposed racial hierarchy (as was evident in the social order throughout the rest of the country) and white men were at the top, whereas now, all men are on top of the supposed occupational hierarchy and women are at the bottom. This supposed 'new' occupational hierarchy is problematic. It would seem too simplistic and inaccurate to view the (unspoken) occupational hierarchy as simply being influenced mainly by either race or gender. A more accurate description would be if there are in fact multiple hierarchies co-existing and continuously overlapping with the legacy of the Apartheid mining culture and the contemporary "gender equal" culture, furthermore complicated by the latter. The overlapping hierarchies that are being argued for consist of: race; gender; class; ethnicity; occupational position; skill; and security/insecurity of tenure etcetera. These factors has always existed, but maybe not yet identified as influencing each other in terms of the occupational culture of mining.

It is exactly because of Benya's (2009; 2011) research that intersectionality is used to analyse the position of white women in coal mining. The above should point to the number of social divisions that exist not only in mining but inevitably in the people that form part of the industry. The social divisions referred to earlier co-exists with the 'new' occupational hierarchy and it is because of these social differences of divisions that an occupational hierarchy can exist.

5 Who are the Women in Mining?

The gender and racial breakdown for workers in coal mining in the country are as follows: 7.3% of the top management levels are occupied by white women. While only 3.2% of the top management levels by black women. These statistics are almost completely reversed when looking at lower occupational categories such as the skilled workers category. White women then comprise 4.3% of the total workforce and black women 40.8% I should however clarify that for the sake of this study Indian and Coloured racial categories were not included below (South Africa, 2013). The coal mining industry permanently employs roughly 80 000 people in South Africa. The number of permanently employed people are estimated at ±40 000 of which ±6400 are women. The number of contract employment in the industry is roughly estimated at 37 000 people of which ±2600 are women (South Africa, 2015).

Table 1: Occupational Gender Distribution of Workers in Mining & Quarrying South Africa.

(Department of Labour, 2013:30)

Occupational Category	Male		Female	
	Black	White	Black	White
Top Management	14.9%	66.1%	3.2%	7.3%
Top Management for Disability	8.3%	63.9%	2.8%	13.9%
Senior Management	15.4%	60.9%	3.4%	9.3%
Senior Management for Disability	14.3%	67.9%	1.8%	8.9%
Professionally Qualified	22.7%	48.8%	7.5%	11.2%
Professionally Qualified for Disability	23.3%	61.7%	2.6%	5.7%
Skilled Level	42.9%	31.6%	8.2%	6.7%
Skilled Level for Disability	40.8%	35.7%	4.0%	4.3%

The above confirms what Hermanus (2007) found: that the majority of white women do not form part of the permanent manual workforce (skilled) but that they are mainly in highly skilled (managerial) jobs, such as engineering, clerical and managerial jobs. Black women constitute the majority of manual jobs which mostly require no skills or being semi-skilled. It should be noted here that accurate statistics on the ethnic/racial profile of women in specific minerals in mining are not currently available.

If one would then follow the argument made by Hermanus (2007) that the type legislation that prevented women in the past from entering mining had in effect then not really affect white women to the extent that it did black women. Their position was to a certain degree secured by their level of education. This is very possible if one bears in mind the structural disadvantages, institutionalised racism, the Apartheid educational system and social exclusion of blacks from higher education facilities. For the sake of illustration, a female engineer in 1992 would not have been affected by the legislation in the first place, because she would have still had access to the industry, due to her educational level. She might have suffered under unspoken sexism and gender discrimination, but the mines would not have had a legal reason not to employ her. Therefore the argument being made is that if you were in a position of being educated and highly skilled as woman, exclusion from the industry was not as easily possible (perhaps even despite of your race).

Contemporary research on women in mining in South Africa focuses on black women, because they constitute the majority of the female workforce. Now keeping this in mind the following could be argued: Highly skilled (white) women have always had access to mining jobs, whereas low skilled or unskilled women (white and black) did not have the same access, in fact they could have been (as they have) legally prevented to work underground. These laws could then be argued not only to have been discriminatory on gender grounds but on grounds of class as well. Women could enter the mining industry as long as they were highly skilled, but unskilled jobs were reserved for men. Taking into

account the disadvantages that Apartheid caused mainly black people, it is no wonder they constitute or still constitute the majority of the unskilled to semi-skilled workforce on the mines.

Benya (2009) found that recruitment companies target especially the poor and unemployed, mostly in rural and informal settlements close to mines (in Rustenburg). Mining companies then aim to fill the gender quota with vulnerable black women from rural communities with high unemployment. All of what has been said here should point to the fact that this is by no means accidental, again affirming Hooks' (2000) argument that it is very much deliberate and intended. This then perpetuates the structural problems that persist because of Apartheid. White women now benefit because of Apartheid and black women are still left in the disadvantaged position. One could further argue that even though it could be assumed that white women's entry into the mines was because of feminism and the fight for equality in the workplace; it was in actual fact it was because structural and institutional racism and in spite of feminism.

6 Conclusion

In the literature aspects on whiteness is touched upon. Race forms part of this study, in the sense that it is used as a variable that differentiates women in mining. It adds to the complexity of homogenising women in the industry, especially if one considers the unintended benefits that white women have received on the basis of race. In this review I linked race (whiteness) to class in that the post-Apartheid workplace will never be completely unaffected by the past and that it continues to shape class relations, especially for white South Africans.

In this review I highlight the importance of gender performativity (Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993), masculinity (Connell, 2005) and in later chapters I will again come back to these ideas. Other feminist literature from Bradley (2013) and Glucksmann (2005) was also included to show how important it is to still

examine the role and effect of reproduction on women, this again links to the feminist idea of a 'second shift' from Hochschild and Machung (2003).

The lack of literature on the topic of white women in (coal) mining should be evident by now. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:4) say that “there is not yet enough literature that illuminates how gendered identities and inequalities are constructed and sustained in mines in developing countries”. This should be viewed as evidence to not only support this research but to show how this study will contribute to the vast literature on mining. This review contextualises the research and stresses the importance of adding to the existing literature. From all the literature read and reviewed, there is nothing that singles out the experiences of white women. The available research in South Africa does not explicitly exclude white women, but tends to focus on black women (who are generally unskilled) in mining. As stated earlier, feminism and gender studies have taught the research community, no two women’s experiences are the same. Women have diverse experiences, beliefs, religions, attitudes, backgrounds, educational levels, and economic statuses that differentiate them from one another. Zaretsky (1976) argues that factors such as the mentioned above, differentiate women from each other and causes them to be heterogeneous. Current studies in South Africa on women in mining can then definitely not be generalised as “women” in mining, insinuating that it is inclusive of women of all occupations within the mines, different skill levels, job tenures, classes, ethnicities and races. This study begins to unpack one element: the whiteness of South African women in mining. By sharing their experiences, which is just as varied as any group of women’s experiences would be.

Three things should now be clear. Firstly, that women in mining are not a homogenous group of workers and they never were. Secondly, that the racial composition of women workers are by no means accidental, it is because of structural reasons caused by Apartheid. Thirdly, the analysis of women in mining should include more variables or social divisions than just gender or race. Ethnicity, job tenure, level of education and socio-economic status and all

class related issues should be included in the analysis, because all these aspects relate to their experience of mining. Yuval-Davis (2006) argues for an inclusion of more than just the 'triple oppression' approach to analysing the condition of women, but that the social divisions used should be viewed as autonomous and may never be given president over another. These social divisions continuously affect other social divisions and the context of a person or agent involved. This is key in understanding and explaining the experiences of white women in coal mining.

The next chapter will highlight a collection of literature on women in coal mining from various parts of the world. In addition it will deal specifically with the largest coal fields in South Africa: the Witbank coal fields.

CHAPTER 3

LOCAL AND GLOBAL: WOMEN IN (COAL) MINING

“However, once we are in the pit, and our eyes are accustomed to the darkness, we begin to see them as gendered places. We start to see figures of women working alongside men”.

(Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006:3)

1 Introduction

The legacy of colonialism and Apartheid is still very much visible in everyday South Africa; these two factors have undeniably shaped contemporary mining culture. This chapter will continue to explain the position of white women within the current context of (coal) mining in South Africa in relation to other literature on mining.

I will begin by firstly differentiating between mining in developing and developed countries. Women experience and have experienced mining differently in the developing world. This is due to the fact that most developing countries were at some stage colonies of European countries. The impact of globalization challenged developing countries in providing better standards of living to a progressively larger populace. Developing countries are linked to economies in England, Germany, China, the United States and other industrialised capitalist countries, in the sense that they are part and parcel of the process of exploiting minerals. In these countries mineral extraction can play an enormous role in economic development (Connell & Howitt, 1991).

2 The Experiences of Women in Coal Mining in Developing Countries

The literature on women miners in developing countries stresses the point that “intersections of gender with class, race, caste and ethnicity” are important in order to understand the multiple identities of the women involved (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006:8). This affirms the argument made in the previous chapter. Women cannot merely be viewed as social subjects. Perhaps something to consider here is the fact that the South African situation is quite unique to that of the rest of the world. In South Africa women differ in terms of class, race and ethnicity, in comparison to other single ethnic states. This shows the ‘diversified and fragmented labour force’ that Bezuidenhout and Buhlungu (2010) refer to. The legacy of colonialism and Apartheid furthermore complicate the mining industry in South Africa and the analysis thereof. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:8) state that:

“For developing countries, one must look at mining in its entirety, both as large and small, as oppressive and emancipating, as highly capitalised as well as a livelihood activity for women, in other words, one must look at the complexity of mining and gendered roles therein”.

The experiences of women miners in developing countries are different to that of developed countries. This is due to a number of reasons highlighted in the literature. During colonial times mining developed as an enclave of the periphery serving the needs of core countries and in other instances it helped fuel industrialisation, imperialism and global capitalism. All of which shaped developing countries and their mining industries. There is an increasing tendency by multinational mining companies to employ women in various jobs, ranging from administrative to technical jobs in the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. It is evident that the history of gender discrimination has helped shape employment patterns even in these parts of the world. Although, it should be noted that with the large number women who now have access to

higher education, women are in a better position to qualify themselves to enter a previously male dominated area of mechanised mining (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006).

Another difference with women in developing countries is that for them, mining can provide the livelihood of an entire community and not just a family, as is often the case of the developed world. Lahiri-Dutt (2003) states that ever since mining in India became more mechanised, the participation of women have declined. This is interesting seeing as in most developed countries it is exactly mechanisation that lead to the increased participation of women (Lewenhak, 1988).

3 The Experiences of Women in Coal Mining in Developed Countries

The majority of the literature on women in mining from developed countries originates from the USA, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Canada. Although, in both the USA and the UK female miners have since almost disappeared, the rapid decline is left with no theoretical explanation. What will follow is a selection of historical and contemporary key literature on women in coal mining. This is in order to illustrate the difference between the developing and developed countries and to indicate the discrepancy between the two referred to by Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006).

The UK's coal industry, now basically non-existent (Office for National Statistics, 2015), if compared to how it once was, boasted many female (and child) mine workers (Bradley, 1989). "Women's work in mines, then, started by their giving assistance to their menfolk within the family economy, and as mining became commercialised by large landowners and proprietors their employment continued" (Bradley, 1989:105). The 1842 Commission investigated the working conditions of people on the collieries. The Commission found the working conditions harsh and inhumane, especially for women and children. The remnants of their working conditions are now only seen in popularised

handmade sketches of the 'pit brow lasses' which depict bare-breasted women hauling coal on their backs. Women's employment was mainly confined to collieries in Yorkshire, Lancashire, South Wales and East Scotland (Bradley, 1989). The Commission's report led to new legislation (Mines and Collieries Act of 1842) that prohibited women and children from working underground (Burnette, 2015).

Bradley (1989:108) argues that it was often the case with women working in the pits were used for menial tasks and not for highly skilled labour. She goes on to talk about the case of Hannah Hughes, an experienced female miner: "[...] but it was significant that she was debarred from handling explosives, a task not only dangerous but involving technical knowledge, [...] was so frequently withheld from women". It is argued by Mark-Lawson and Witz (1990) that the family labour system was just one form of patriarchal control over women's labour, and once the family labour system buckled, and there were no means left to control women, men just barred them from the industry completely.

The case of the USA is no different. Especially if one considers that they were the first country to have affirmative action policies in combination with "the biggest coal boom in half-century in the 1970s" (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006:13). This gave thousands of women entry into the coal mines. The United Mine Workers of America and the Coal Employment Project were filled with women activists. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006) state that even though American women in coal mining were at the forefront when the fight for equal work and pay in the sector was at its highest, these women have seemingly disappeared out of the industry. Where coal mining once seemed a promising career for women in the States, current statistics are indicating the opposite. Women miners in the USA made history in the late 60's and 70's by legally gaining entry into coal mining with the help of the Women's Movement and other self-arranged women's union groups. They forced the occupational laws restricting their entry to be changed. Some of these victories were even captured in mainstream and independently made movies such as 'North

Country'; 'Kentucky Woman'; and 'Coal Mining Women' (Barrett, 1982; Doniger, 1983; Caro, 2005).

Lewenhak (1988) explains that the expansion and technological advances in the industry accompanied women's entry into mining. This gave many middle-aged wives and mothers in Appalachia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky a chance to earn a decent living wage. More so than they would have made in the clothing factories, which typically employed women in these areas. This said, in 1982 only 2.2% (270 000 women) of the workforce were women (Lewenhak, 1988:153). Women currently hold 9.2% of all jobs in coal mining in the USA. (CATALYST, 2012).

Barbara Filas, the former president of Geovic Mining in the US recalls the words from an interviewer who told her: "I don't have any use for women working in the coal mines" (Marshall, 2014). She persevered and now says, in relation to a career in mining: "you can put your kids through college, take care of yourself and own your own home. It gives your freedom" (Marshall, 2014).

The RAMP-UP report of 2010 was an initiative by Women in Mining (WIM) Canada in 2009 to strengthen policy and practice and thereby to increase recruitment, retention and advancement of women in the industry. They believe that women need to be actively involved in growing the industry and to create awareness of career opportunities. Women represent about 14.4% of the Canadian mining industry (all minerals) and for coal mining 12.3% (CATALYST, 2012). The RAMP-UP report documented the major barriers that women perceived, which included: the need for flexible work practices; the problematic masculine culture; and gender specific challenges to career advancement. The interesting point about these barriers to employment is the fact that management did not agree with these perceptions by the female employees. This report also listed various benefits of including more women in the industry. Including that women could be the solution for the skills shortage; it would increase the potential for innovation and market development; and lastly that it

would lead to stronger financial performance and improved governance (WIM Canada, 2010).

In 2011 women comprised roughly 15% of the Australian mining workforce. There was a 38.1% difference in salaries between men and women (men earning more) for senior managers (CATALYST, 2012). It is significant that the Australian and Canadian literature on women in coal mining reflects a similar situation to that of South Africa. Bearing in mind that the former are developed countries, it would appear that women in mining across the globe are experiencing the same barriers in employment, but that the degree just varies. Across the spectrum of developed and developing countries women are underrepresented in the industry. A report published by PwC and WIM UK (2015:16) states that: “on average, the mining industry has lagged behind the progress made by other key sectors”, they further state that of the 500 mining companies surveyed, only 7.9% had women in leadership roles.

4 The Feminisation of Labour

The new legislation governing gender equality in the mining industry could be classified as the feminisation of mining. That is of course if you view feminisation strictly by Standing’s (1999) definition as occupations that were traditionally reserved for men. Feminisation should by no means be viewed as a simple process. It does not happen overnight and it does not occur without resistance from many and various stakeholders, including other women.

Benería (2001:45) argued that feminisation is merely shifting risk factors, especially for women by stating the following:

“There are clear indications that women’s higher educational levels and rising labour market participations have benefited those who have moved into managerial and professional occupations. This seems to contribute to an increase in income

inequality among women; the benefits received by women at higher education levels must be contrasted with the precarious conditions for the large majority. Although more studies are needed to document this tendency for different countries, available evidence for Brazil and the United States points in the direction”.

The above points to what McCrate (1995) refers to as a “growing class divide among women”. This is clearly the case in South Africa, but what is unique in this case is that it coincides with race because clearly black women constitute the majority of (unskilled) women in mining. McCrate (1995) only talks about a class division, but with the latter in mind, and of course the racial division that exists in the industry, this complicates the South African situation. This is the only reason that white women have for some time, even before the legislation changed, been part of the mining industry – working as health and safety officers, engineers and as actual miners in some experimental programs (which will be discussed in later chapters).

Standing (1999:600) warns that:

“While there has been an overall trend toward more flexible, informal forms of labour, women’s situation has probably become less informal, while men’s has become more so. A welcome development is that, according to a recent exhaustive assessment, there has been some decline in the extent of sex-based occupational segregation in most parts of the world. However, this too may largely reflect the weakening position of men rather than any dramatic improvement in the occupational opportunities of women. The trends of flexibility and feminisation combine to pose an historical challenge to social and labour market policy”.

If one considers what Standing (1999) is arguing, entering mines offer women some form of job security whilst offering the opposite to men. However, it does not mean that women had any “dramatic improvement” in their occupational opportunities. Standing (1999) is arguing to look at both sides of the coin and to critically examine the feminisation of the mines.

The other side of this argument is of course to remember that women have always been part of mining, as the evidence of John (1980); Bourdenet (2003); Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006); Burke (2006); Sone (2006), Alexander (1999) and Sinha (2006) have suggested. Could the industry really then be considered as now being in the process of feminisation, if in fact women are actually just re-entering the industry they were once part of? Has the male dominance then in fact only been related to modern times, industrialisation and the growth of capitalism? There is of course another side to all of the arguments made by the authors, whether this is in fact feminisation or not, given the evidence above. Feminisation as a term refers to previously male occupations being deskilled, devalued and thereby being ‘opened up’ for women. This is however not the case if one looks at what is happening with white women on the mines. They are highly or at least semi-skilled and in direct competition with their male counterparts. Could this then be truly classified as feminisation? Or could this research be putting another spin on feminisation and on what is actually going on with white women workers?

5 Coal Mining in South Africa

This review would be incomplete without explaining the history, process and relevance of coal mining to South Africa and the broader research community. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:13) say that “coal has been the backbone of modern development, truly the king among all the minerals” and Coleman (1943:16) says “here is the mineral upon which industrial civilisation, East and West ultimately rest”. This is affirmed by Alexander (2008) when he states that the coal industry of South Africa by and largely served gold mining.

There are an estimated recoverable coal resources of 31 billion tons in South Africa, with approximately 19 coalfields located across the country, mainly in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Free State (Jeffrey, 2005). Coal provides roughly 88% of South Africa's energy needs and it is estimated that 95% of South Africa's electricity is coal-fired thermal generation (Jeffrey, 2005). Coal is a major energy source because of its abundance and the fact that it is a relatively cheap source of energy (Jeffrey, 2005). South Africa is exporting through the Richards Bay Coal Terminal, making it the fourth-largest coal-exporter in the world. South Africa's coal is obtained from collieries ranging from among the largest in the world to small-scale producers. Operating collieries have been decreasing. It is believed that about 46.5% of South African coal mining is done underground and about 53.5% is produced by opencast mining methods. South Africa has the 7th largest coal reserves in the world. The country will be able to mine coal for at least another 50 years, much longer than any other mineral in the country such as gold, platinum or diamonds (Anglo American, 2011). The coal industry is considered highly concentrated with the two largest independent operators in coal mining in South Africa being Anglo American (Anglo Thermal Coal) and BHP Billiton Energy Coal South Africa (Becs). The other companies include SASOL; Kumba Coal; Coal of Africa and Exstrata Coal. Anglo American is the majority owner of exporting coal mines and has various mines across the country, the bulk of their coal mines are primarily situated in the Witbank coal fields in Mpumalanga. The export coal mines includes Goedehoop-, Greenside, Kleinkopje-, Zibulo-, and Landau Colliery. The Eskom/SASOL coal mines include Mafube-, Kriel-, New Denmark-, New Vaal- and Isibonelo Colliery. There are however still other operations in South Africa, including Richards Bay Coal Terminal and Phola Coal Processing Plant (Anglo American, 2011).

Coal is mined using two methods namely: surface or 'opencast' mining and underground or 'deep' mining. Depending on the geology of coal deposits, a method best suited for the extraction will be chosen. In South Africa, surface mining is predominantly being used, because of shallow coal deposits. The

method of extraction entails the following: the soil and rock is first broken up using explosives, then removed using large machinery (draglines) or alternatively by using a shovel and a truck. Once the coal seam is exposed, extraction can begin. Here the coal is drilled, fractured and systematically mined in strips. The extracted coal is then loaded on to large trucks or conveyors for transport to either the coal preparation plant or directly to where it will be used. The influence of technology on the industry has been phenomenal. Coal mining across the world has historically never been this productive. People in the industry need to be highly skilled and well-trained to use the complex, state-of-the-art instruments and equipment (World Coal Association, 2012).

The above should indicate the importance of this mineral to the economy of South Africa and the invaluable role it plays in other sectors of the economy. It is not only a source of major employment to thousands of South Africans, but it contributes to the wealth of this country. This should point to the relevance of this study to social research. Research on gold and platinum mining has long dominated industrial sociology. Gold and platinum resources have declined over recent years and has increasingly become economically and environmentally unsustainable. Studies point to the possibility of depletion in the near future (Love, 2012; STATSSA 2015; Van Rensburg, 2011). Coal mining and its vital importance in many sectors of the economy (whilst other sources of alternative energy are not being explored) is left largely under researched by sociology. There are many aspects; trends and phenomena within the labour aspects of coal mining to be uncovered and theorised.

6 Witbank Colliery Life: a Social Space from a Historical Point of View

Witbank, now known as Emalahleni is a booming city, situated in the province of Mpumalanga. The Witbank coal fields is the fourth largest producer of coal in the world which started operations in 1898. Alexander (2008) probably wrote the most significant account of the history of Witbank colliery life in the early 1900's. What makes Witbank different to any other coal field in South Africa is

the accessibility and the shallow depth of the coal deposits. Very few mines initially needed shafts to gain access to the coal, therefore slope mines were mainly utilised. The Witbank coal fields very quickly became the largest producer of coal in the country. By 1921 the area in and around Witbank was producing 45.5% of all the coal in South Africa. At that stage coal was largely produced for the gold mines which used it to produce power. Coal production and trade soon became highly organised. The Transvaal Coal Owners Association (TCOA) was founded in 1907 by big mining companies. The TCOA was established to prevent the competition from ruining the industry by standardising the supplies. The TCOA however operated like a cartel by controlling the price of coal and managing sales. This however has to be understood in terms of the influence and hold that the gold mines had on the coal industry. The gold mines on the Witwatersrand were their core market (Alexander, 2008).

South African coal mines were highly mechanised even in the early years, especially in comparison to other coal producing countries. In 1920 almost 82% of the South African coal was cut using machines, in contrast to only 60% in the US. What contributed to the high mechanisation was the “concentration of capital, character of the seams, the cost and availability of labour, and an existing division of labour” (Alexander, 2007:211).

Alexander (2008) highlights the importance of the compound rooms as a significant part of colliery life for black mine workers that in turn also contributed to and enabled worker solidarity and organisation. He argues that the creation of this culture was that of a complex process that was mainly due to state intervention. Alexander (2008:15) states that: “the 1911 Act was a key factor in determining the food the miners ate and the rooms in which they slept, socialised, had sex, and organised.” He continues to say colliery culture must be understood as “product of complex interactions” that included all the stakeholders at the time (Alexander, 2008:15). The culture which existed was

deliberately created by the black workers themselves. This culture was inevitably transformed through working-class mobilisation.

There was a stark difference between black and white worker conditions, ranging from housing, food and of course the actual labour and wages. The black workers created their own past time activities, only occurring on weekends. Most of which were either against the rules of the mines or illegal, such as drinking alcohol, smoking dagga and sex. Employers were weary to intervene, because they knew that their interference could have a negative effect on production, in most cases a blind eye was turned. Black workers fought and fiercely protected their privacy and integrity amidst the hostile work environment of the times (Alexander, 2008).

Alexander (2008) raised an important point on the history of strikes in the Witbank area. Probably the most significant strike in mining history was the Rand Revolt in 1922 by white miners that had wide spread support in Witbank. These strikes started a week earlier at the collieries. He (2008:10) states that:

“Coal miners were probably the most militant black workers in South Africa during our period, and their actions were often successful, despite strikes being illegal. A range of factors help explain this achievement, including the character of demands raised, which were virtually all couched in terms of established regulations and rights”.

Alexander (2008) affirms that as with all other areas of mining in South Africa at the time, coal was no different; race was a determining factor in the occupational culture. It had a direct effect on your income, housing, food, family etcetera. Furthermore, one should consider the effects of this on a mining town and how it in turn shaped the town and the people in it. These clear hierarchical differences are still very evident in Witbank today.

7 The absence of Women in South African Coal Mining

Alexander (2007) speculated as to the reason for the absence of women mineworkers through the history of mining in South Africa. Although there was some involvement, supplementary to mining activity, such as beer brewing, the production of food or prostitution, no direct activity was ever fully recorded in coal or gold mining. Alexander (2007) argues that the only concrete reason for their absence could be the legislation that prohibited them. Alexander (2007:214) states that:

“The South African Republic (ZAR), which ruled the Transvaal, in its *Wet No. 12, 1898 (XVIII: 146)*, bluntly banned the employment of women. The relevant clause, written in Dutch, was carried over, almost word for word, into the Union of South Africa’s *Mines and Works Act, No. 12, 1911* (paragraph 8.1). This stated: ‘No person shall employ underground on any mine a boy apparently under the age of sixteen years or any female.’”

One argument commonly heard was that the working conditions in and on mines were too harsh for women, that the nature of the labour is what kept them from entering. Bozzoli (1983) rejects this notion. She argues that it was because of the women’s involvement in agricultural activities and social/biological reproduction that eliminated the option of engaging in wage labour. Their domestic responsibilities purely didn’t allow for it. Bozzoli (1983) continues to say that by the end of the 19th century, young men that were previously involved in activities such as hunting, raids and fighting were now freed up; they could get involved in wage labour. For the older men, it was different. They could control rural societies, and by keeping the women there, they could to a certain extent guarantee the return of the men, or at least an influx of their earnings. For the men working on the mines, it meant that their land was secured by their wives. Although this argument can only account for the absence of rural women, it says very little about the absence of women from mining towns.

Alexander (2007) continues to list five reasons for the lack of any women in mining in the first three decades of the 20th century in South Africa. He states that: technical requirements; economic pressures; cultural constraints; political campaigns and lastly legal imperatives are what prevented women from entering mining. Although I would argue that the main reason for female absence is legislation, seeing as when this changed in 1996, women started entering (or re-entering for that matter) mining in more than just the previously allowed capacities.

8 Conclusion

The formal introduction of women in mining is one of the most progressive occurrences in mining history since the acceptance of black trade unionism in South Africa. It is imperative not only to the mining industry but to sociology as a discipline that the available research needs to be expanded to be inclusive of all the workers (women included) in the mining industry.

In this chapter I highlighted the difference between the experiences of mining from a development angle. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006) draw upon certain fundamental differences between the level of development and things that should be kept in mind when analysing women in mining from developing countries, such as South Africa.

I draw upon Standing's (1999) definition of feminisation of labour in order to illustrate that what is happening currently in mining is not purely that, it is far more complicated. Women are now not merely entering but re-entering an area that they previously did occupy (in whatever capacity). In addition to this, the context and history of coal mining specifically in the Witbank coal fields is explained as well as the considerable role this mineral plays in the economy of the country. Witbank forms the backdrop for this study, how it was shaped through various structures of the past is still very evident even today.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“Research is to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought”.

(Szent-Gyorgyi, 1957:58)

1 Introduction

This study is exploratory in nature, because of the specific focus of the study (white women in coal mining) and the lack of available literature on the topic. The study required a research approach and design that allowed maximum exploration and thick descriptions of the lives of these women workers. Two research approaches were used in this research: qualitative research and feminist research. The research methods for this study were mainly interviews and observations, from which the categories, life histories and a thematic analyses were compiled. It was a deliberate choice to use a triangulation of research methods in order to strengthen the research methods and to eliminate possible weaknesses in both of them. In addition, this was done to ensure validity of the data and to add as much depth and richness to the data as possible. The research was done using both a deductive approach and an inductive approach, thus working from theory and analysing the social setting as explored, but then returning to the theory critically. This chapter will explain and describe the research design and methods that I decided to use in the study.

2 Behind the Research Design

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding and exploring, more than explaining (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Kumar (2011:104) states that the focus of qualitative research “is to understand, explain and explore”. This is exactly in line with the focus of this study. Qualitative research typically follows deductive

reasoning. It further offers the researcher some flexibility because it is not as linear and chronological as quantitative research. Neuman (2003) highlights the fact that qualitative research is ideal to construct social reality or cultural meaning. A qualitative research design focuses on the interaction between the participants and their social world. It is also imperative to understand that with qualitative research the information gathered is constrained within the context or the situation.

The disadvantage of qualitative research is that it is less specific and not as precise as quantitative research. In addition, it is not as well structured as quantitative research. A qualitative study cannot be replicated because of the amount of variables (Kumar, 2011). With this said, for this study, a qualitative research design best suited the nature, aims and objectives of the study: the research being exploratory; the small sample of participants and the fact that qualitative research “explores experiences, meanings, perceptions and feelings” (Kumar, 2011:20).

A constructionist ontology was used as the foundation of this study because the participant’s reality is subjectively constructed by themselves. Furthermore, because a feminist approach was used, the foundation for this study lies in the assumption that the world around us is socially constructed. De Vos *et al.*, (2011:309) state that constructionist ontology “can only be constructed through the empathetic understanding of the research participants meaning of his or her life world”. The ontology and epistemology of the study is based on the idea that there is no objective reality, only narrative truth which is based on personal experience and constructed through self-conscious action. Therefore, the methodology included elements of traditional ethnography and life histories.

A feminist approach was chosen because it best suited the objectives and theoretical framework of the study. The assumptions of feminist research are supported by feminist theory which in turn is based on certain assumptions about the world, which include but is not limited to: patriarchy, sexism and the

agency of women. It is concerned with the power-imbalance between the researcher and the researched and the way in which women was historically ignored or marginalised. Kumar (2011) argues that feminist research may be classified as action research because of the strong focus on changing or addressing the inequality between the sexes.

Neuman (2003:88) argues that “feminist research is based on a heightened awareness that the subjective experience of women differs from an ordinary interpretative perspective” and that “women tend to emphasize the subjective, empathetic, process-orientated, and inclusive sides of social life”. In order to create knowledge or write on behalf of women, a marginalized group, I thought it best to use a feminist approach, so as to stay true to the data. Furthermore, feminist research views the researcher as a “fundamentally gendered” being and in which my own gender will shape my basic theoretical assumptions because of the gendered cultural context of the research community (Neuman, 2003:88). I viewed gender in this study as a fundamental social division within the workplace. The fact that I am a woman and the researcher could not be ignored, and therefore I used it to strengthen the research process and to support the theoretical perspective of the study. Sarantakos (2005:54) affirms the latter by stating that “feminist research is research on women, by women and for women”. Stanley and Wise (1983:18) carry on to say that “...we reject the idea that men can be feminists because we argue that what is essential to ‘being feminist’ is the possession of ‘feminist consciousness’. And we see feminist consciousness as rooted in the concrete, practical and everyday experiences of being, and being treated as, a woman”.

Feminist research has a long history in studying the politics of work. Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006:xiii) reiterates the link between feminist research and mining by saying that:

The analogies between mining and social research, including feminist research, can appear to be striking, especially in

relation to ‘unearthing’ the hidden stories of women. However [...] the similarities end there as we begin to recognize that the approaches to researching women’s stories can be as diverse as practices of mining itself. We acknowledge this diversity and by choosing this interdisciplinary platform [...] to explore the theme of women miners in developing countries, [...] to ‘engendering’ the development mining can, and should, bring. [...]. The conventional hegemonic notions of mining as large-scale and masculine tend to hide important questions relating to gender and development [...].

Here Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006) clearly show how and why it is almost imperative to use a feminist approach when conducting research on women in mining (especially in developing countries). This supported the choice for a feminist approach in this study. Gender was central to this study, and the research participants, largely being a diversified heterogeneous group of white women, allowed the chosen methods to ‘unearth’ the data. Therefore various interdisciplinary methods and a triangulation of methods were employed. A feminist ethnographic approach was used to document the lives of a small number of participants in order to find out how they experienced being women in the mining industry. Reinharz (1992) argues that feminist ethnography documents the lives of women who were previously seen as marginal (which is the exact case in mining) and recognizes women from their perspective and within their context.

This is a new field of research and required more than one research design. As I earlier stated, more than one research design was used: life histories and ethnography.

The reason why I chose ethnography, although it originated in anthropology and is mainly used as a differentiating research method for them, was because in this case it helped to achieve the objectives of the study. Rofel (2007:41)

defines ethnography as: “the contingent way in which all social categories emerge, become naturalized, and intersect in people’s conception of themselves and their world and, further, an emphasis on how these categories are produced through everyday practice”. The social categories in this case included mainly race, class and gender. With ethnography a selected group is studied from a close proximity, and subjectivity is not an issue, because in anthropology, the assumption of objective research does not exist. A researcher is not objectively removed from the participants, but becomes subjectively involved in their lives for a certain amount of time. Creswell (2007) argues that the informants of an ethnographical study are there to inform the ethnographer of the cultural concepts in order for the researcher to create a holistic cultural description, which is rich in description and interpretation in the end.

The reason I included life histories in addition to ethnography in the research design was for two reasons: to supplement the ethnographic observations made but mostly to adhere to the feminist approach followed in this study. Earlier I argued that the women in coal mining have completely been ignored in South African history and contemporary research in coal mining, especially in Sociology. Their life histories gives them a voice in the literature, which are one of the main goals of feminist research (Bryman, 2001). Somers (1994:606) famously argued for the use of narratives in sociology. She continued to state that: “these concepts posit that it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities”. These life histories were told by the participants themselves, I used mainly their own words because their stories needed to be told. Life histories and the way these narratives were used will be explained in more detail under the section of data capturing and analysis that will follow later in this chapter.

3 The Measurement: Conceptualisation

The concepts used in this study were mainly developed during the data collection phase. This allowed me to reflect on and re-examine the data continuously. Neuman (2003) believes that it is here where concepts are linked to one another to create a theoretical relationship. The actual process of conceptualization however, is discussed in greater detail in the chapters that will follow relating to the findings of the study. The exploratory nature of this study did not allow for operationalization. Sarantakos (2005:137) states that: “exploratory studies are most frequently carried out when there is insufficient information about the research topic so [...] the operationalization of the questions is difficult or even impossible”.

I would however like to point out that the concepts of race and ethnicity were used in this study as a social construct, thus not something real or concrete. The same goes for the concept of gender. These concepts are related to each other and I illustrated this using various theories to draw and point to their interconnectedness. Neuman (2003:185) states that “a researcher’s truth claims need to be plausible [...] and gain validity when supported by numerous pieces of diverse empirical data”, such as the descriptions of my own experience of the data which was validated by several other theories. The fact that more than one theory was used to explain the data should point to the validity of the research.

4 Selection of Participants and Access

Within a qualitative design, the selection of sample is guided by: access; invaluable information or knowledge and their a-typicality (Kumar, 2011). The core sample of the study consisted of 20 white women who perform manual and non-manual work in the coal mining industry, but excluded all administrative workers. It was a deliberate choice to exclude administrative workers from the study as (especially) white women historically occupied these type of positions throughout mining and other sectors.

The participants all work at the following companies respectively: BHP Billiton; Anglo Thermal Coal; Coal of Africa and SASOL. The choice to include women from various companies was to ensure to an extent a generalised and representative picture of the participants' varied experiences and not to have it limited to the occupational culture of one company.

The participants were either Afrikaans or English speaking, with no language preference between the two. The interviews were conducted in both languages depending on the participant's preference. I conducted 20 interviews with white women workers, one black woman and three white men, across skill levels, mines and mining companies. From the 20 white women, six women were engineers; four heavy machine operators; two mine captains; two safety managers; one electrician, one contract coordinator; one senior surveyor; one plant planner; one head of environment and one head of human resources. The one black woman worked in employee services, (technically an administrative job) but her work experience made her input invaluable to the study. I informally interviewed one white woman who is married to a miner (forms part of the category '*Poppe*', used and explained in later chapters). The three men I interviewed were all in senior management with a history of work either in the production or engineering side of mining. All of the men have been in the industry for more than 20 years.

A qualitative research approach does not require a large number of participants because of the depth of insight it allows the researcher to gather. If the target population is a fairly homogenous group, the sample size does not need to be large (Sarantakos, 2005). The interviews were intensive and allowed for in-depth research on the lives of a few white women. For this reason a small number of participants were satisfactory, because it supported the objectives of the research.

The sampling techniques used included judgement sampling and snowball sampling respectively. These methods are both considered non-probability

sampling methods commonly associated with qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Spradley (1979) highlights certain key elements in choosing participants for an ethnographic study. These elements include enculturation (know their own culture); current involvement and adequate time (to be a participant). These three elements were the guiding principles behind choosing the sample and employing both judgment sampling and snowball sampling. Mouton (1996) argues that using multiple research methods increases the reliability of the observations; this to a large extent was an advantage in the study. Judgement sampling was employed because my judgement was used on whether they were likely to provide me with the experience, information and stories that I was looking for (Kumar, 2011). Unlike quantitative research where the desire is to select a random sample for representation, this is not the case with qualitative research or with the aims of this research (Kumar, 2011). Representation could then be considered a disadvantage of using this method, although for the scope; availability; time and aims of the study, it was not only ideal but also the best suited data collection method (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Snowball sampling was then used when participants suggested other women that I should speak to. Babbie and Mouton (2001) argues that because snowball sampling can result in debatable representativeness, this type of research method is most often used in exploratory research. This study as mentioned before was exploratory in nature; therefor this method suited the objectives of the study. Again, the question of representation was raised. As before, I would argue that because of the scope of study, availability; time and the aims of the study, that it was the best suited data collection method for this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Access to the research participants is gained through two key informants whom I met in a personal capacity through networking at the commencement of the study. Both key informants held managerial positions at Anglo Thermal Coal and BHP Billiton respectively. These key informants first contacted women they knew in the industry on my behalf and if they were willing to participate, they

were contacted directly by me. I approached the participants in their personal capacity and not in their official capacity.

5 Data Collection and Fieldwork

Sarantakos (2005:203) describes field research as "the systematic study of ordinary events and activities as they occur in real-life situations". This method of study uses particularistic field research which focus on social issues and situations to understand the structures, processes and outcomes as they occur and as displayed in the behaviour of those involved in a study.

Two methods for data collection were employed in this study: interviews and observations. As mentioned earlier, a social constructionist approach was followed. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) argue that two popular research methods ideal for this type of approach are interviews and participant observation. They continue to state that "constructionist approaches see the interview as an arena within which a particular linguistic pattern (typical phrases, metaphors, arguments, stories) can come to the fore (Terre Blanche & Durrheim,1999:153). The researcher is part of the construction, never completely removed, and therefore the data that is gathered is considered as co-constructed by the researcher and the participants. Semi-structured interviews were used as this allowed me optimal freedom to steer the interview in different directions, especially if the participants were willing to share private, personal information about their experiences.

The interviews were conducted at a venue chosen by the participants themselves and lasted anywhere from two to four hours. Some participants were interviewed more than once at their own request, because after some reflection on their part they wanted to share more than initially covered in the first interview. The majority of the interviews were recorded and transcribed, although some informal interviews were only documented by written notes, either during the interview or afterwards. This was because some contexts did

not allow for recordings, for example underground. The majority of the mines did not allow any recording devices close to mining activity, mostly because it is regarded as a safety risk. Gas emission from mining activity could react to batteries inside the devices and cause an explosion. During one of the underground tours at the Okhozini Shaft one of the participants arranged for a camera that was suitable to take underground. These photographs formed part of the observations.

The data collection was done over a period of 13 weeks during which these two methods were employed to gather as much data as possible. In the field the primary data collection method (semi-structured interviews) was supplemented with a secondary data collection method (non-participant observation), which added to the depth and richness of the data. These methods allowed optimal freedom and the chance to clarify both questions and answers, as well as double checking some of the information given (Kumar, 2011).

In addition to the mentioned methods, informal interviews with other participants deemed fit to add a better understanding, for instance the labour process or race relations on the mines, were also conducted. The interviews were not limited to white women and included one black woman and three white men, two who are senior managers and one a former foreman. These interviews were supplemented by the observations made in the field and certain prepared questions, originating from the literature, were used. Extensive field notes were taken during these observations. De Vos *et al.*, (2011) affirm that writing field notes offers the researcher a chance to reflect and to critically examine what happened in the field. In compiling these notes made the comparison for the analyses easier, because certain phrases, expressions and occurrences were the same among participants. Non-participant observation was used, because it was the least invasive method and because this was what the participants agreed to. Non-participant observation is defined by Kumar (2011:141) as a method of observation where the “researchers do not get involved in the

activities of the group but remain a passive observer, watching and listening to its activities and drawing conclusions from this”.

The problems with observation are many; some which include what is referred to as the Hawthorne effect, where people begin to act differently than they would under normal circumstances or that the observer may become biased (Kumar, 2011). Furthermore, observations depend on interpretation, which can differ between researchers (Kumar, 2011). Although, one should remember that no method is without any problems, care should be taken to avoid the above mentioned scenarios. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) warn that the researchers must remain sceptic of what they observe in the field, because what is seen cannot always be considered as authentic. In the case of this study, it was imperative to examine other similar studies, especially ones that employed the same methods. By continuously going back to the literature and consulting different sources I argue that the interpretations made from the observations is true to the participants’ reality.

The aim of the research was to explore (at length) the true experiences of these women workers. I believe that certain experiences can only be understood through physically observing these women while they are working and to build a personal relationship and rapport with them while conducting the interviews. It should be noted here that non-participant observation (in the form of job shadow and guided tours of various mines and labour processes) allowed me - “inside information”- and personal experience which I argue added the desired depth to the research. I could observe, follow and record the participants as they carried out their work. I realise that the danger to use data collection methods such as participant observation is that the researcher may lose objectivity and the ability to observe as a researcher. This was not the case with my study, as ethnography to begin with is subjective, and the researcher cannot be removed from the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

6 Data Capturing and Analysis

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) argue that a constructionist analysis is not separate from the data collection phase, but that it happens concurrently. Data capturing for this study was done in three ways: audio recordings; field notes and photographs. The majority of the interviews were digitally recorded (with the permission of the participants); where it was possible and permitted, photographs and field notes were taken. Direct quotations from participants interviewed in Afrikaans were translated in the text but their original words were added as a footnote below the text. The analysis of the data was done in three phases: firstly categorical; secondly through life histories and lastly through thematic analyses. I would like to clarify here that although there has been some debate on the terminology used describing life histories, life stories and oral histories it was my choice to refer to these participants stories as life histories. It is my belief that their stories is not only a historical account, but an account of their lives up until now, by themselves (Reinharz, 1992).

It should be noted that the categories mentioned above were based on independent variables and used merely as a summary of certain variables. This was then compared and analysed across the different categories as identified (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The categories were based on three ideal categories of women that constitute white women in coal mining. The first being 'City Girls', the educated professional women, that did not originate from mining communities, but moved there for work. The second category, the "Compound Women", were born and raised in mining communities or compounds and typically had fathers, grandfathers, uncles and brothers that work or worked in the mines. These women chose to enter mining as an occupation and did so with much resistance from their families and communities. The last category, the 'Poppe' (*literal translation the dolls*), as with "Compound Women" grew up in mining communities or compounds and are married to men now working in mining. They however are not working in mining; the majority of them have no

tertiary education and are housewives. The reason to include them in the categories will be explained in the next chapter in greater detail.

From the interviews four life histories were compiled. The life histories allowed their lives to be contextualised within the broader scope of South African society and the mining industry and thereby better portray the effects and implications of class, race, gender and ethnicity. In addition to this, it offers the reader a glimpse into the lives of these otherwise invisible women. True to the feminist approach it gave these women a voice in the literature, as narrated by them. Nite and Stewart (2012:5) defend the importance of life histories (stories) in mining research as “that the voices of ‘ordinary’ people are often too little heard in the writing of history generally”. This “potentially grants maximum autonomy to participants as they share with researchers their reflections on the experientially-based narrative of their lives” (Nite & Stewart, 2012:5).

The thematic analyses were done by drawing on certain reoccurring themes that emerged in the interviews and by critically comparing and applying them to the literature. The methods of data analysis included pre-coding of the data, interpreting and reinterpreting, reflecting, and revising the recorded data. The chosen themes for this study included: the mining town; the mine itself; the people in the mining communities; the labour process and lastly the job itself. These themes are discussed in greater detail in the chapters that will follow.

7 Strengths, Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

I have already mentioned some of the possible limitations of the research methods which were used. Benya (2009:41) has stated in her own research that: “ethnography is very useful in that it provides information when other methods are not effective”. By combining interviews with observations I tried to counter any limitations they might have had and indirectly strengthened the research methods. The fact that I documented the lives of the respondents from a close proximity counted in favour of the study. This was then in actual fact one

of the delimitations of the study, making a deliberate choice to only include a small number of participants.

The strengths and limitations of this study lay primarily in the lack of sound scholarly work on the topic. Therefore the scope of the literature was expanded to include other key text on the broader topic such as gender, feminisation, labour and mining. The study aimed to rectify the problem of the lack of literature on the topic by including white women in South African mining research.

8 Ethical Considerations

Full disclosure was of utmost importance. My identity as a social researcher, and an explanation of the purpose of the research was given to the participants prior to conducting all interviews and mine tours. Participants were fully informed about the methods and the intended possible uses of the research. In addition to this, they were informed that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage from the research for whatever reason. Participation in this study was not rewarded. All participants were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview being conducted (see Appendix). These documents are kept in a safe place at the University of Pretoria as written proof of the respondent's consent. The consent form was written in easily understandable language and made available in both Afrikaans and English. For fear of participants being identified or victimised in any way, although they were not required to divulge information that could possibly identify or harm them, I decided to refer to sensitive information under 'anonymous'. This excludes the four life histories where real names were used with their permission. This study did not jeopardise the participants' safety or well-being. The integrity of the study was honoured at all times (Neuman, 2003).

9 Conclusion

The methodology believed to be the best suited to gain the most from the data was chosen for this study. In studying a small group of women, previously marginalised and ignored in the literature, a feminist approach was used and I employed both semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation to explore their personal lives and work. This was deliberately done to best support the research design, but mostly to help uncover and plot a new research area in sociology. The data was then analysed through the use of categories, life histories and thematic analyses.

The literature on mining in South Africa is vast, but limited to say the least when it comes to coal mining and more importantly to white women in coal mining. The reason to delve into these women's lives was primarily to understand the past and thereby the present. There is a definite relationship between society, the historical context and individuals which constitute it.

The following chapters will deal with the findings gathered during the data collection phase.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE HISTORIES

“Science too often trivializes the profound, answering questions that are very different from the ones that were asked. To formulate a question suitable for scientific research too often requires us to forget what it was that we really wanted to know”.

(Davis, n.d.)

In the next four chapters I will tell the life histories of four white women in coal mining. What should be evident is the tension between theoretical concepts and how assumptions about race, gender and nationhood play out in everyday life and popular conceptions. Furthermore, through the use of their life histories, these women declare how they fit into mining and other aspects of social life in their own words. Most importantly I will show how their sense of agency prevails.

I attempted to stay as true to the data as possible, to add the context, but more importantly to tell their stories using mainly their words. Flyvbjerg (2001) highlights the importance of the narrative, and the value it has in especially the social sciences. As I stated in chapter four, one of the objectives of this research was to give the women who participated in the study a voice in the literature. I would first like to state that the names of the participants and their personal information used in these life histories have not been changed. This is an account of their lives up until the time of the interviews as told by them. However, certain details of their experiences which I felt could pose an ethical dilemma or could portray the participants in a negative way was omitted from their life histories. Because I felt that it contributed to the richness of the data I included it in the thematic analysis under ‘anonymous’ in chapter 9.

Each life history will begin with a broad introduction of the theoretical concepts highlighted in each story and other key points, evident in their own stories, will be highlighted throughout. What will follow now are the life histories of four remarkable white women in coal mining.

CHAPTER 5

MARINDA: THE PIONEER

“I chewed more rocks on that mine than I ever hauled coal”.

(Bekker, 2012)

What makes Marinda’s life story so remarkable is the fact that she has been working in coal mining for the last 25 years. She entered mining while it was still illegal for women to do manual labour. Marinda was part of an experimental group of women recruited by SASOL in anticipation that the laws prohibiting women to work on mines would be revoked. Marinda Bekker was the first female dragline operator in the world. When recalling the early days as being one of the first women in coal mining she humorously says that: “I chewed more rocks on that mine than I ever hauled coal”³ (Bekker, 2012). In her life history I would like to highlight her strong sense of agency and how she used that against the structures in her own life, throughout her story I will pause at certain events in which this is evident.

Marinda says that she never thought she would end up working in mining. She initially wanted to enter military service or the police force after matric, but her father refused. Her mother wanted her to become a nurse, but she did not consider herself the "care taker"⁴ type. It was her dream to become a game ranger, but now she thinks she would have been “too soft”⁵ to do the job. She describes herself as someone with a "soft, small heart". She says that she would not be able to do all the things she did as a child when she was still a "tomboy", because now she has become a real "girl". She is now 48 years old. Marinda has been married for 28 years and has two grown sons. She currently resides in Secunda and works at the Isibonelo Colliery as a Control Room Operator (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda is one of four siblings; she has an older brother and two younger sisters. She remembers her childhood fondly, visiting her grandparents on their farm (who

³ "Ek het meer klippe gekou op daai myn as wat ons kole gery het".

⁴ "sorg"

⁵ "te sag"

had ten children), playing with her cousins and brother and being a real “tomboy”. She says that growing up, there was no distinction made between boys and girls in the family; they all played together, got into trouble together and were punished together. Although she does say that, whilst growing up, her family especially the men, were quite “rough”⁶, explaining that “they weren’t hesitant to get violent with women [...], you’ll be in the middle of a question and the next moment, you will be lying sprawled at the opposite end of the room”⁷, referring to her fathers' treatment of his children. She says that she was used to helping her father in and around the house because her brother was “sickly”⁸ and goes on to tell how much of the responsibility within the house she carried on her shoulders. Marinda says that growing up, she, and not her brother, was treated like her father’s son (Bekker, 2012).

Her family moved around frequently during her early childhood because of the nature of her father’s trade and the availability of work. He was a qualified artisan and worked as a fitter and turner. It was only once her father was employed in the mining industry that there was a real sense of stability. She was in grade five at the time. Her father was appointed at Hope Colliery and they moved to the Goedehoop Mining Compound just outside Witbank. Thereafter, he was employed at various other mines. Every time he was relocated the family would move with him to nearby mining towns. She recalls staying in and around Witbank, Kuruman, Kriel, Morgenson and Matla. Her father remained employed in the mining industry up until his death. He passed away a week prior to his retirement. She believes that the long working hours and the commuting distances to and from work took a toll on his health and feels that it contributed to the heart attack that he subsequently died of (Bekker, 2012). This is specific event had a significant effect on her own life, this should point to not only her work ethic but how she herself sacrificed her own health for her work.

Marinda matriculated in 1984, after which she moved to Johannesburg and got married. Her husband worked in security at Johannesburg Hospital and she worked at the South African Revenue Service for ten years. In 1987 her first child was born

⁶ “rof”

⁷ “hulle het maklik klapperig geraak met die vrouens [...] Jy sal nog dink jy vra vir iets, en die volgende oomblik lê jy aan die ander kant van die vertrek”.

⁸ “sieklik”

and her husband secured a position as a boilermaker in Secunda where they moved to and have been living ever since (Bekker, 2012). She struggled to find employment in Secunda, and her first job was in a temporary position (3 months) at SASOL, working in contract services. Shortly after her contract was terminated she saw a newspaper advertisement by SASOL, they were recruiting women to enter an experimental program that was aimed at employing 40 women in the coal-mining sector. She applied and was invited for an interview. She says that even during the interview, she did not know exactly what the position would be; but she went for the interview because she needed a job. Marinda remembers being quite shocked when the man conducting the interview asked her: "Will you be able to do the job with those long nails?"⁹ To which she replied: "What do my nails have to do with a job?"¹⁰ The interviewer again asked her: "Will you be able to work with a shovel?"¹¹ To which Marinda answered: "What does 'n shovel have to do with my work, what kind of job is this?"¹² The interviewer then told her that it was a job as an operator on a mine, to which she answered: "But that is something I can do regardless of my nails and my make-up and my hair!"¹³ The interviewer's only response was that: "It is a mine, you will get dirty"¹⁴ Marinda's personal appearance has always been important to her. This was the one thing she refused to negotiate about throughout her career in mining. Many of her colleagues, especially men, would ask her why she still puts so much effort into her appearance while working on the mine. Her reply would be simple: "Why are you so concerned about my nails, my hair and my make-up? It is just part of being a woman. You don't have to lose your femininity because you work in mining"¹⁵. She explains that her feminine appearance was, to a large extent, a means of sustaining some part of herself, almost preserving a bit of who she was. "Even if I had to sit for eight hours alone on the dragline, you still want to look nice and feel pretty"¹⁶. Marinda explains that: "my anatomy didn't change the moment I started working on the mine. I am also not going to start acting like a man to try and fit in, there is no way. I refuse to go out and drink with them in order to be

⁹ Gaan jy die werk kan doen met hierdie lang naels?"

¹⁰ "Wat het my naels met 'n werk te doen?"

¹¹ "Sal jy met 'n graaf kan werk?"

¹² "Wat het 'n graaf met my werk te doen? Watse werk is dit?"

¹³ "Nou ek kan dit mos doen met my naels en my make-up en my hare!"

¹⁴ "Dis 'n myn, jy gaan vuil word."

¹⁵ "Waaroor worry julle oor my naels en my hare en my make-up? Dis net vrouwees... jy hoef nie vrouwees te verloor om in die myn te wees nie".

¹⁶ "Al sit ek agt ure alleen op die dragline, jy wil tog darem mooi lyk en mooi voel".

'one of the boys'. I am a woman, end of story"¹⁷. "I had long nails, and went to work with make-up on. The only thing I did to make things easier and quicker for myself was to perm my hair. That way I could just quickly wash and dry it and go home. That's it"¹⁸ (Bekker, 2012).

After the interview she was later informed that she was successful and should report at Trichard (a small town near Secunda, Mpumalanga) the following week for medical; inductions; aptitude and psychometric tests. Marinda started her new job on the 1st of April 1990, at SASOL's Syferfontein open-cast coal mine with the rest of the newly recruited women. There were 11 black women and 29 white women (including Marinda). She describes the other women as: "like [...] me, dainty and fancy"¹⁹ (Bekker, 2012).

Most of the newly recruited women were employed as operators, and one was employed as an electrical apprentice. They were divided into groups, and assigned machines that they would be trained to operate. They were mainly assigned to operate trucks and bulldozers or "dozers" as she refers to them. Besides operating the machines, the women were assigned more menial tasks like painting drums, and demarcating areas with markers and poles. She remembers during the early years of her working on the mine how people would stare at her in town if she walked around in her overalls, because it was so strange to see a woman dressed like that. Nowadays she says it is very common to see women wearing overalls in town, so no one even notices it anymore (Bekker, 2012).

As time went by, more and more women resigned. From the original 40 women that were recruited, only six women stayed in mining. The rest of the women all resigned over time for various reasons. Marinda made the following remark about some of the other female recruits who left: "I don't want to specifically point a finger, but we had a number of those 'masculine ladies' and even they couldn't cut it, which was strange

¹⁷ "My anatomie het nie verander toe ek in die myn begin werk het nie. Ek gaan ook nie soos 'n man probeer wees om by hulle in te skakel nie, daar is nie 'n manier nie! Ek gaan nie suip saam met hulle om 'een van die manne' te wees nie. Ek is 'n vrou, finish en klaar!"

¹⁸ Ek het my naels gegroei en ek het met make-up gaan werk nogsteeds. Al wat ek gedoen om die lewe vir my makliker en vinniger te maak was ek het my hare ge-perm, sodat ek dit net vinnig kon was en droogmaak en werk toe gaan. That's it."

¹⁹ "soos ek [...], dainty en fancy".

to me, because I really thought that a “butch” would excel in this type of work, but they didn’t”²⁰. Of these six women who stayed, two were white and four were black. Currently, only three of these six women are still employed on the mine (one passed away and the other two have since retired) (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda believes that many of the white women “couldn't handle the pressure”²¹ and that is why all of them have left since. The majority of the resignations happened soon after they started working shifts, because up until then the female recruits only worked during the day. The day shift was from 07:00-15:45 and the night shift was from 16:00-00:45. According to Marinda, most of the women left because “their husbands did not want them working such hours”²². I would like to point here to the ‘second shift’ referred to chapter two. This is exactly the type of things that prevented the majority of the first cohort of women in coal mining from staying. The gendered nature of reproduction is clearly man-made, it is not a natural phenomenon as many would think, but it is as social and cultural act and not a purely biological act as argued by Bradley (2013). The segregation these women endured at work persisted well beyond the workplace into their own private lives at home. These women had carried the bulk of the work at their own homes, while their husbands were only expected to ‘help-out’ but as soon as that became too much of a burden, they were expected to quit their jobs, because it is not natural for a man to do so. Marinda goes on to explain that: “most of us started working for financial reasons, this is very common, actually that is why you work, because you have no other financial support. I think it caught up with some of these husbands, when they had to sit at home with the kids. I don't think they could handle it”²³. This links to what Hooks (2000) argued when she said that women from the working class joined the labour market for monetary reasons, and not with a feminist agenda. The same is clear from Marinda's story as well.

²⁰ "Ek wil nou nie spesifiek vinger wys nie, maar ons het nou al 'n paar 'man vrou tjies' daar by ons gehad, en hulle kon dit ook nie maak nie. Ek het gedink 'n 'butch' sal uitstaan in daai tipe werk, hulle sal floreer, maar hulle het nie".

²¹ "kon nie die druk hanteer nie"

²² "Hulle mans wou nie hê hulle moes sulke ure werk nie".

²³ "Meeste van ons het begin werk oor finansiële redes, en dis algemeen. Dis waarom jy eintlik gaan werk, omdat jy nie finansiële ondersteuning het nie. So baie van hierdie mans, as hulle so met die kinders gesit het, dink ek dit het hulle gevang, hulle kon dit nie hanteer nie."

When the shift pattern changed again, this time to three shifts per day (07:00-15:00; 15:00-23:00 & 23:00-07:00), even more women resigned, according to Marinda. She mentions that "during this time they hired several more women, but they didn't last"²⁴. She finds this difficult to understand and comments: "it is an opportunity for them, because mining pays well. Not even office work in mining pays as well as manual labour. If that isn't motivation, then I don't know what is. But, OK, you have to also remember that it comes from two sides. It comes from you as a woman; whether you can do it, or want to do it and if you'll be able to keep up. And then it also comes from your family and their support. If you don't have the support of your family, you won't survive the mine"²⁵ (Bekker, 2012).

The first machine that Marinda was assigned to was a Hitachi bulldozer. The training took nearly a year to complete. She describes the bulldozer as being very old and not very technologically advanced. She had to climb into the machine through a broken window, but nevertheless speaks with great fondness of "her dozer". Her training officer was Samuel, a man she describes as "a very good old black man, I learnt all the tricks of the trade from him"²⁶. She believes that she was a "very good dozer operator"²⁷, and describes operating the dozer and later the dragline, as her "nicest jobs"²⁸. She thought that driving a truck was too monotonous, as opposed to operating a "dozer". The "dozer" at least required "that you use your brain a little"²⁹. Although she is quick to say that truck driving is not a "dumb job, but for me it is too straightforward. You can only go back and forth, tip, and then go back again. It is the same route over and over, I can't do that. I enjoyed myself tremendously on those two machines"³⁰ (Bekker, 2012).

²⁴ "In die tyd het ons nog vrouens aangestel, maar hulle het nie gehou nie".

²⁵ "Dit is vir hulle 'n geleentheid, want mynbou betaal goed. As jy in die myn in werk, nie eers kantoorwerk betaal so goed nie. En as dit nie motivering is nie, dan weet ek ook nie. Maar, OK, dan moet jy ook onthou dat dit kom van twee kante af. Dit kom van jou as vrou af, of jy dit kan doen, of jy dit wil doen en of jy gaan byhou. En dan kom dit van jou familie af, die ondersteuning van jou familie, en as jy nie ondersteuning daar kry nie, dan gaan jy nie oorleef in die myn nie".

²⁶ "'n baie goeie ou swarte, ek het al die 'tricks of the trade' by hom geleer"

²⁷ "baie goeie 'dozer operator'"

²⁸ "lekkerste werke"

²⁹ "jy kan darem jou brein so bietjie gebruik met die 'dozer'"

³⁰ "Ek sal nie sê dis dom om dit te doen nie (trok bestuur), maar dis vir my te 'straightforward'. Jy kan net vorentoe en agtertoe, gaan tip, terugkom, dieselfde roete oor en oor. Ek kan dit nie doen nie, ek het myself baie geniet op daai twee masjiene".

She says she could write a book about all the things she had to endure on the mine. "There will be a few guys that will sue me if the truth comes out! In those days we thought that if we were to confront them, we would get fired"³¹. The newly recruited women all endured endless bullying and verbal abuse from their male counterparts. Marinda believes that these were tactics they devised amongst themselves to make the women resign. She describes how the men would yank the women around by their overalls and try to rip open the front section, in order to expose their breasts, probably in an attempt to embarrass and humiliate the women. Marinda devised her own plan to, in some way, try and protect herself. At first she only modified her allocated overalls but later she started making her own clothes for work. She made shirts with very high collars and no buttons and made trousers without any zips or buttons. She says that: "It's difficult for a woman; the men will grab your shirt and pull at the buttons! You have to think ahead, because you are a woman, and you work alone"³² (Bekker, 2012). This is a fascinating form of agency, how Marinda took it upon herself to change the overalls in order to make her work more bearable. Something that could have easily been addressed by her employers and the system at large, which was a major barrier in her own career and everyday work experience. This links back to what Gibson (1992), Alexander's (1999) and Hipwell et al (2002) argues with women being more than just passive agents, although they were talking about miners wives and not female workers, I would argue that what Marinda did with her overalls is proof that women took charge of their own situation.

Marinda recalls during the first few years how many of the men did not address her directly, even though she was standing right there. They would speak about her in the third person: "tell Marinda to do this or that"³³. Whenever she spoke up or addressed the person directly, they would act surprised and say "Oh, did you understand what I just said?"³⁴ Interestingly, Marinda still feels sympathetic to the men she used to work with: "I think it was a strange experience for them to see us in that context, and I also believe that many of us outperformed them, and they couldn't

³¹ "daar sal 'n paar ouens wees wat my dagvaar as ek die waarheid sou vertel. Ons het daai tyd gedink dat as jy hulle aanvat, gaan hulle vir jou fire".

³² "Ek het so vêr gegaan dat ek in die begin my eie klere gemaak het, sodat ek nie knope of iets het nie. Dis moeilik vir 'n vrou die mans vat sommer jou hemp en dan trek hulle!" "Jy werk alleen, jy's vrou alleen, jy moet vorentoe dink".

³³ "Sê vir Marinda dit of dat".

³⁴ "Oo, het jy verstaan wat ek bedoel het?"

handle it"³⁵. And then continues to explain that: "they didn't worry. If they told you to move something, how you moved it, what plan you made, did not concern them. When they came back, the job had to be done. How you did it, didn't worry them. If you couldn't get it done, you were cursed at and insulted. But, it's mining, if you were overly sensitive or overly anxious, then you took it to heart. I believe that is why many of the first women left"³⁶ (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda is proud of the fact that she never enlisted the help of men to get her work done. One particular thing that she mentions numerous times is the difficulty of dragging and moving cables. She says that: "I figured out ways to help myself. I struggled for hours, even if they were to ask me now to go and move a cable, I could still do it"³⁷ even though, "I am small, it is no joke to drag those cables, and oh hell they are heavy. In all honesty, I want to see a woman that can do that today!"³⁸ (Bekker, 2012).

Her personal motto in mining was this: "I always said I don't have to be smart to be strong, or I don't have to pretty to be strong. I just need to be able to make a plan in order to help myself. But I can see today, with the new ladies starting now, they don't have the perseverance or the willpower to, to, [paused] they maybe want to rise in the ranks a little, but they don't want to put in the physical effort that the work requires. It gets to me, because when I started they broke us"³⁹. Marinda says that she had to change herself in order to survive the mine. "I probably got meaner with time. No, I should rather say I became heartless, now I almost have their

³⁵ "ek voel net vir hulle was dit 'n vreemde ondervinding om ons in so 'n opset te kan sien. Ek glo baie van ons het beter perform as hulle, en dan kon hulle dit nie hanteer nie".

³⁶ "Hulle het nie geworry nie. As hulle vir jou gesê het skuif daai ding... hoe jy hom geskuif het, watse plan jy gemaak het, hulle het geen ontsag vir jou gehad nie. As hulle terugkom moes daai werk gedoen gewees het. Hoe jy dit gedoen gekry het, het hulle nie oor geworry nie. As jy dit nie gedoen gekry het nie is jy gevloek en sleg gesê. Ek meen, dis mos mynbou, as jy kleingeestig en kleinhartig is dan het jy dit ernstig ter harte geneem. Ek glo dis waarom baie van die eerste vrouens weg van die werk af is".

³⁷ "Ek het maniere uitge-figure, ek het myself gehelp. Ek het ure om gespartel, as hulle my nou gaan vra om die kabel te skuif, ek sal dit gaan doen".

³⁸ "Ek is klein, daai kables is nie 'n grap om te sleep nie, dit is hel swaar. In alle eerlikheid ek wil vandag 'n vrou sien wat dit kan doen".

³⁹ "Ek het altyd gesê: ek hoef nie slim te wees om sterk te wees nie, of mooi te wees om sterk te wees nie. Ek kan planne maak om myself te help. Maar ek kan nou in vandag se tyd sien, met die nuwe dames wat nou begin, hulle het nie die dryfkrag of die wilskrag om, om, (pouse) hulle wil dalk bietjie uitstyg, maar hulle wil nie die fisieke krag insit om daai werk te doen nie. Dit vang my, want ek meen, hulle het vir ons gebreek, hoor."

mentality"⁴⁰. She goes on to explain that: "I am actually soft-natured, I had to learn to speak up"⁴¹. She taught herself the coping skills she uses to deal with the masculine mining culture. She says: "but I learned, as time passed. If they can trample you like that, why keep quiet then? If they swear at me, I swear right back"⁴² because "you are not supposed to use the "F" word, but it is all that they understand"⁴³ (Bekker, 2012).

After a year of working on the mine she was approached by management to start working on the dragline, a position she did not apply for. The aptitude tests she had done during her induction training indicated that she would be a good candidate to undergo dragline training. At first, she was not interested, but was told by her boss that she did not really have a choice. Applicants for the position consisted mainly of male artisans, with few women having applied. All of the applicants had to undergo further screening to establish whether they would indeed be capable of doing the job and operate the machine. She proudly notes that: "my tests showed better results than most of the men that were there"⁴⁴. Eighteen candidates were chosen for the training program for the dragline, but not all of them could undergo training at the same time. There was only one dragline at that stage. The other one was still under construction and only one or two people could be trained at a time. This meant that she did supplementary training in the meantime for other machines and equipment including the operation of a frontloader, truck, scraper, water car, diesel car and a back actor. She did this for two years while waiting to start her dragline training. Marinda says that this had more to do with the "politics"⁴⁵ of the mine because "the men kept telling me I am taking the food from their mouths, because they are the breadwinners and if I go for training before them, then they won't get qualified. So I spoke to my boss and told him: 'Look, I know I'm a woman, I understand that the

⁴⁰ "Ek het seker maar kwaai geword met die jare. Nee, ek sal eerder sê ek het gevoelloos geword, nou het ek amper hulle mentaliteit".

⁴¹ "Ek is eintlik saggeaard, ek moes maar leer om nie my mond te hou nie".

⁴² "Ek het geleer met tyd, as hulle jou so kan trap, vir wat sal jy dan stilbly? Jy's net so persoon soos hulle. As hulle my vloek, dan vloek ek hulle terug."

⁴³ "Jy is die veronderstel om die "f" woord te gebruik nie, maar dis al wat hulle verstaan".

⁴⁴ "en my toetse was beter as baie van die mans s'n wat daar was".

⁴⁵ "politiek"

men have to qualify first, let them do their thing and finish."⁴⁶ After four years the mine received their second dragline, but Marinda still did not receive training, because "we were so many men. You can only train one or two at a time. So I just waited until it was my turn"⁴⁷. Once she did eventually start the training, she recalls the comment of a black training officer who said to her: "but you operate this machine like someone who has been doing it in secret!"⁴⁸ (Bekker, 2012).

The mine then decided to buy another dragline. Marinda was consulted by management and asked to provide input on what could be added to the dragline to improve the working conditions for the female operators. The only thing she requested was a toilet. She explained to them the difficulties because the machine could not be stopped in order for them to take a bathroom break. A female operator cannot improvise as men do. Menstruation further complicated things. The third dragline was then fitted with an inferno toilet. Marinda says that she cannot understand why management went through all the trouble, because women were never allocated to operate the new dragline. Female operators were told that they could not operate the new dragline, because it was "too complicated". She goes on to say that the on-board toilet had to be closed after a week, after the men used it, because they made a "mess of it"⁴⁹. Marinda did not experience the new dragline to be much different from the two older ones: "I have operated that thing a few times, and for me there was no difference, it operates exactly the same. The only difference is that its cabin is on the left side"⁵⁰ (Bekker, 2012).

In 2004 Anglo Thermal Coal took over from SASOL at Syferfontein Colliery. She says that she felt that Anglo didn't want women on the dragline, because soon after all of the female operators were made to share control of the dragline with men, who never gave the women a chance to fully operate the machine alone. They were treated as assistants, even though Marinda was now in actual fact training the

⁴⁶ "Die mans het vir my bly sê ek vat die kos uit hulle mond uit, want hulle is die broodwinners. As ek voor hulle gaan, dan kry hulle nie gekwalifiseer nie. Ek het vir my baas gesê: 'kyk, ek is 'n vrou, ek verstaan die mans moet eerste kwalifiseer, laat die mans nou maar hulle ding doen en klaar kry"

⁴⁷ "Ek kon nogsteeds nie dadelik opleiding kry nie omdat ons so baie mans was. Jy kan net een of twee oplei op 'n tyd. Toe het ek nou maar gewag tot dit my beurt was".

⁴⁸ "maar jy operate soos iemand wat die ding skelm ge-operate het!"

⁴⁹ "want hulle het dit so bemors".

⁵⁰ "Ek het daai ding al 'n paar keer gaan operate, en daar was geen verskil nie, hy werk presies dieselfde. Al wat verskil is sy kajuit sit aan die linkerkant".

operator she was assisting. This led to her decision to transfer from the dragline to the control room where she is currently working. She says that “this is how, at the end of the day, they eliminated women from the dragline”⁵¹ (Bekker, 2012).

Looking back Marinda does not feel that she was ever respected as a dragline operator. She mentions: "I don't feel that any woman working in a mine gets any respect. Look, not everyone can do this, especially not a woman, not in our world (referring to mining)"⁵². She clearly remembers the early days of working as a dragline operator and says that: “it was really difficult, because they really [pause], I don't want to say discriminated against us, but they treated us really badly because you were a woman. They thought we were there to take away their jobs. Their point of view was: ‘if you are here you are able to do a man's job and you are getting a man's pay, then you have to do a man's job’”⁵³ (Bekker, 2012).

The working conditions worsened for Marinda once she started working on the dragline. Her male co-workers used intimidation and sabotage tactics to try and force her to resign. She talks about how her car was tampered with many times. How male co-workers loosened the nuts of the wheels on her car or removed the plug on her car's alternator. They even placed chewing gum in the key holes of her car or stole her car's bumper. The worst incident she remembers was when her front wheel came off whilst driving. Now looking back, she says that if she didn't drive slowly that night, she would have died on the highway. Marinda reported this specific incident the following day, especially because the intimidation had now reached a level where it became a blatant attempt on her life. The mine security did not do anything to investigate the incident (Bekker, 2012).

She believes that she endured the brunt of the men's abuse. She ascribes this to the anger they had at the fact that the women were not leaving, their scare tactics and intimidation were not working, especially not on her. She was not only upsetting the

⁵¹ "Hulle het so, op die einde van die dag, vroumense geëlimineer op die dragline."

⁵² "Ek voel nie enige vrou wat in 'n myn werk kry respek nie. Want ek sê vir jou, dis nie enige iemand wat dit kan doen nie. Veral nie 'n vrou in ons wêreld nie".

⁵³ "In my tyd toe ek begin het was dit ontsettend moeilik, want hulle het regtig teen ons [pouse] ek sal nie sê gediskrimineer nie, maar hulle het jou baie sleg behandel omdat jy 'n vrou was. Hulle het gedink jy is daar om hulle werk oor te vat. Dis hoe hulle siening was, as jy hier is kan jy 'n man se werk doen en jy kry 'n man se pay, dan doen jy 'n man se werk".

status quo of coal mining but she was doing better than most of her male counterparts, having less break-downs and closely producing the same amount of coal as they did per shift (Bekker, 2012).

There was one incident in her career that changed everything. One evening while she was still working on the dragline a black foreman came to her and requested her help with a problem. She agreed, because this was not an unusual request. Marinda soon realised that she was in trouble once he pulled over in an isolated spot with no lighting. He pushed her into a corner while trying to force himself upon her. He then offered to pay her for sex, as he had heard rumours that she was having sex for money with co-workers. She was terrified that he would rape her. She says she can't remember what she said to him, but he eventually decided to let her go and take her back to the dragline. Once he started driving she jumped out of the moving vehicle and ran towards the nearest workers she could see. She reported the incident to the foreman on duty, but he only told her to report it to Human Resources the next day. This is exactly what she did. Human Resources opened an official case of inquiry against the man that tried to attack her. Marinda knew that no one would believe her. In an attempt to prove that she was telling the truth she demanded that they perform a polygraph on both of them. The polygraph proved that Marinda was telling the truth. The inquiry led to nothing, he was never charged or even suspended. Her husband even tried to intervene. He went to speak to the mine security, but they just brushed him off (Bekker, 2012).

It was then decided by Human Resources and mine management that Marinda should take a six month break from working on the dragline. She was sent for mandatory psychological counselling and put on 'light duty'. For Marinda it felt as if they were punishing her for what happened. She says that she thinks that there are still some people who do not believe her. Marinda says that "the men at work will always think that you are taking a chance"⁵⁴. The worst and most astounding part of all of this is how the men started treating her afterwards. She says: "you should have seen how many men tried their luck after it happened"⁵⁵ (Bekker, 2012).

⁵⁴ "die mans daar by die werk dink altyd jy vat 'n kans".

⁵⁵ "jy moes gesien het na dit gebeur het, hoeveel manne het hulle luck ge-try".

She is still disillusioned by the way the mine handled the situation and feels that they failed her. At the time management promised her that it would never happen again and that steps would be taken to ensure her safety while working at night. "I was so hurt by the fact that the mine didn't protect me after what happened. They promised to install a camera on the dragline and that I will be able to work with someone that I trust, but that never happened"⁵⁶. Marinda says that "the Human Resources person was a woman. She should have known how I felt. But I think she just thought: 'well it can't be that bad because this is what happens to us every day in the township"⁵⁷ (Bekker, 2012).

She says she doesn't know what she did to encourage the vicious rumour that the men spread about her that nearly got her assaulted. Marinda says that it is part of the mine culture to sometimes joke about sex and although it is sometimes necessary to partake in sexual banter and jokes, for collegiality, she feels that a woman should probably not do it, because some men take it the wrong way (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda is still affected by the incident and says that she can vividly recall the way the man smelled. She talks about being afraid of black men ever since it happened and how unfair it is towards them, because "this black man that is standing in front of me in the queue did nothing to me, but still I am scared of him, I sometimes wish that I could just explain to them why I look so irritated with them, and just say to them that it is not personal"⁵⁸. She mentions that she is very hard on some of the men working for her: she finds it hard to make small talk, especially with black men. If a man just stops by to say hello or have a cup of coffee she is immediately suspicious that they might be there for other reasons. She believes that this is the result of what happened to her, now she is always vigilant and keeps male co-workers at a distance. "I am rude and aggressive, they probably see me as the biggest bitch on

⁵⁶ "Dit het my seergemaak, want die myn het my nie beskerm in dit wat gebeur het nie. Hulle het my belowe hulle sal 'n kamera op die dragline sit en ek sal saam met iemand werk wat ek kan vertrou, maar dit het nooit gebeur nie."

⁵⁷ "ons HR was 'n vrou, wat moes geweet het hoe ek voel. Maar ek dink haar mentaliteit was 'wat met jou gebeur het, is wat elke dag met ons in die lokasie gebeur, dit kan nie so erg wees nie'".

⁵⁸ "hierdie swart man wat voor my staan in die ry het niks aan my gedoen nie, maar nou is ek bang vir hom, ek wens ek kan partykeer verduidelik hoekom ek so geïrriteerd lyk, en net sê 'dis nie persoonlik nie'".

the mine, but it doesn't bother me. This is how I try to protect myself now"⁵⁹. She never feels a 100% safe. Now when she works the night shift, she ensures that there are always two exits unlocked so that "if the shit enters through the one door then I can get out through the other"⁶⁰. She says that she used to give hitchhiking mineworkers that had transport difficulties lifts to work, but after the incident, she stopped doing that, regardless of their race (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda doesn't believe that this was an isolated incident. She knows of other women who have gone through similar experiences where the mine management failed to act in accordance with what should have happened. She goes on to talk about a lesbian co-worker that tried to commit suicide after she was gang raped by male co-workers, who wanted her to "feel what she was missing"⁶¹. The men took her out drinking with them after work and then raped her. Marinda is not sure if a case was ever opened against them, but the woman left soon after the incident (Bekker, 2012).

She mentions that "in later years the mine started talking to the people, especially the men, so that they would abuse us less, look down on us less, because we are on an equal level now"⁶². Although, she continues to say that women abused their 'new rights'. She also says that: "many women take it the wrong way if a man, for instance, calls you a "pretty thing"⁶³ (Bekker, 2012).

"You need support from your husband and your family, but not everyone understands that you are in a man's world"⁶⁴. This is what she believes gave her the strength to continue working despite everything that happened (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda still experiences considerable guilt over her job and the time she missed with her children as they were growing up. She recalls nights when she was terribly

⁵⁹ "Ek is ongeskik, ek is aggressief, hulle dink seker ek is die grootste bitch op die myn, maar dit pla my nie. Dis seker maar hoe ek myself probeer beskerm".

⁶⁰ "as die kak by een deur inkom, dan kan ek by die ander een uit"

⁶¹ "sodat sy bietjie kon voel wat sy mis"

⁶² "In latere jare, het die myne met die mense gepraat, en veral met die mans, dat hulle ons minder mishandel, dat hulle minder op ons neersien, want ons is op 'n gelyke vlak nou".

⁶³ "As 'n man dalk vir jou sê 'jou mooi ding', het hulle dit verkeerd opgevat".

⁶⁴ "Jy het die ondersteuning van jou man en jou familie nodig, maar nie almal verstaan jy is in 'n man se wêreld nie".

worried about her children when she was working the nightshift and her husband was on standby. She had to make use of a domestic worker to take care of her children, because there was no other family members nearby that could help take care of her children. She comments on this by saying: "they actually lost a mother. It was when my oldest was in standard one (grade three) when I decided to rather send him to boarding school, so I could have more peace of mind, because my domestic worker of 13 years quit her job. This was better for me, because at least if they were sick or something, the hostel mother could take them to the doctor. They came home on weekends and school holidays, even if I had to work. They were a little bit older then, so I taught them to make sandwiches, coffee and stuff like that for themselves"⁶⁵. Marinda says that: "for years I missed all their sporting events. I could not attend, because I was working on the machine, I could not get time off, and the machine could not stand without being operated. It was so imprinted in you, it costs money, every minute that the machine is not working, is thousands of Rands. So you use your leave to make it up to them or on weekends if you are not working. Those days I only had one weekend off in a month. Now with the four shift system we at least get two weekends a month off"⁶⁶. She says that she believes this is probably why she still spoils her two sons. She knows that they missed out on having her around, but she always tried to at least give them the best of everything (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda's own mother never accepted the fact that she worked on a mine, with her main concern being her daughter's physical safety. She was afraid Marinda would get hurt or injured working with heavy machinery. Furthermore, her mother didn't think it appropriate that a mother should spend so much time away from her children. Her brother and sisters made no secret about their disapproval of her career choice. She says that they were quite judgmental and openly cruel towards her about the

⁶⁵ "Hulle was 'n ma kwyt, eintlik. Toe die oudste in Standaard een was, toe besluit ek, dat ek hom liever in 'n koshuis sit. Dat ek net meer gemoedsrus kan kry, want my oustie van 13 jaar het besluit sy werk nie meer vir my nie. Toe gaan dit beter vir my, want as hulle siek is dan vat die koshuistannies hulle dokter toe. Hulle het naweke en vakansies huistoe gekom, al het ek gewerk. Hulle was toe al bietjie groter, so ek het hulle mooi geleer om vir hulle broodtjies, koffie en sulke goed te maak".

⁶⁶ "vir jare het ek hulle sportbyeenkomste gemis, want jy kan dit nie bywoon nie, jy's op die masjien en jy kan nie afkry nie, die masjien kan nie staan nie. Dis in jou in ge-print, dit kos geld, elke minuut kos duisende rande. So jy moes maar jou verlof gebruik om bietjie op te maak, of naweke as jy af is. Ek het daai tyd net een naweek 'n week afgehad. Nou met die vier skof sisteem het ek darem twee naweke 'n maand af".

fact that she, for instance, sent her children to boarding school. They told her that she had abandoned her kids by sending them away (Bekker, 2012).

Even her husband was sceptical at first when she got the job. When she started working in shifts, his biggest concern was for her safety, because she had to drive home alone late at night and it is quite a distance from Secunda to the Syferfontein mine. He didn't see how they would make it work, especially with the kids because they were still young at that time. Her answer was simple: "we are two, aren't we? I wasn't alone in the bedroom when we made the kids, it's a joint venture!' He knows it's fifty-fifty, I told him that from the beginning"⁶⁷. She goes on to explain how they help and support each other: "He takes over the things I can't do if I am at work, and I do the same for him. I am not scared to grab the lawnmower and to cut the grass if he went and did all the laundry and vacuumed the house for me"⁶⁸. She adds that: "If it wasn't for him, then it wouldn't have worked. If it bothered him that I worked shifts, it just wouldn't have worked"⁶⁹ (Bekker, 2012).

She mentions that she is not really the "domestic type"⁷⁰ and that her husband often cooks dinner and performs household chores when she is at work, even when the children were young, he was the primary caregiver. They still help with household chores, cook meals and even pack her lunchboxes for her when she is resting before a shift. She outright says that "without them and their support, I couldn't do this"⁷¹ Marinda believes that this is the reason why so many of the other women had to leave their jobs, because their husbands did not want to take care of the kids on their own (Bekker, 2012). Again, here she points to the implication of reproduction of women.

Another problem in her own marriage besides the logistics and safety concerns was the fact that Marinda earned a lot more money than her husband. This caused

⁶⁷ "Toe sê ek vir hom: 'nou maar, ons is mos twee. Ek was nie alleen in die slaapkamer toe ons kinders gemaak het nie, dis 'n joint venture!' Hy weet dis 50/50, ek het hom van die begin af gesê".

⁶⁸ "Hy vat funksies oor wat ek nie kan doen as ek by die werk is nie, dan doen ek dieselfde vir hom. Ek is nie bang om die grassnyer te gryp en die gras te sny as hy vir my die wasgoed gewas of die huis gesuig het nie".

⁶⁹ "as dit nie vir hom was nie, dan sou dit nie gewerk het nie. As hy omgee het oor ek skofte werk, dan sou dit nie gewerk het nie".

⁷⁰ "versorger"

⁷¹ "Sonder hulle, en hulle ondersteuning, sal ek dit nie kan doen nie".

immense strain at first. She explains that: “in the beginning of our marriage it was very difficult, because I always made more money than he did, when I worked at SARS and SASOL and even now at the mine, I earn more than he does. In the beginning he couldn’t handle it”⁷². Bradley (2013) notes that in the case of role reversal where husbands tend to do more than their wives with relation to domestic chores, which is in any case the exception and by far not the rule, it is because their husbands are unemployed or because the husbands do not earn as much as their wives. If you look at Marinda’s life and how she tells of the equal distribution of domestic work in her house, you can contribute this to what Bradley (2013) argues, that it is because she earned more money than he ever did.

The fact that she out earned her husband, however, was also what enabled Marinda to provide her family with a better life than she had growing up. She made a point to take the children on family holidays once a year. She tells enthusiastically of her dream to fly in an airplane, which she had never done, up until 2011 when she bought her family tickets to fly to Cape Town for a holiday (Bekker, 2012).

Her husband is very proud of her achievements, despite the initial problems that it might have caused in their marriage. She says that: “people tell me, people that know I work on the mine; his colleagues and so on, that they can hear when he speaks about me that he is so very proud of me”⁷³ (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda’s support network mainly consists of her immediate family, her husband and her sons. She says that because of the nature of her work it has always been difficult to make female friends in town. She works mostly with men and furthermore, she does shift work, which includes working at night. The only close friendships she has are mostly formed with the people she works with, causing a myriad of other problems. Marinda says that she was quite perplexed the first time she bumped into a male colleague in town, but he refused to acknowledge or greet her because he was with his wife. She explains that friendships with males are often frowned upon or

⁷² “In die begin van ons huwelik was dit baie moeilik, want ek het altyd meer geld gekry as hy. Toe ek by die ontvanger gewerk het, toe ek by SASOL gewerk het en nou by die myn kry ek nogsteeds meer geld as hy. Hy kon dit nie hanteer dat ek meer geld as hy verdien het nie”.

⁷³ “kom mense wat weet ek werk op die myn, sy kollegas en so, en sê vir my: hoor hier, ons kan hoor as jou man van jou praat, hy is verskriklik trots op jou”.

looked at with suspicion; people are always assuming an affair. Furthermore, she says that the: "wives can be very aggressive and jealous"⁷⁴ of the women working with their husbands (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda talks about the sisterhood between the first group of women she was recruited with. Although they seldom worked together on a team, they supported one another where they could. At one point when Marinda worked on the dragline, she had a black women working with her as her bulldozer operator. That was the only time in her career as an operator that she was not the only woman working on a shift. They helped each other out when they were tired, Marinda sometimes operated the bulldozer when her co-worker had difficulty doing so and she in turn would help her with some of her tasks. A male operator would not have done anything that was "not his job"⁷⁵. If she requested white male operators to do something a specific way, they would be very offended that she was telling them "how to do their fucking jobs"⁷⁶. They refused to take orders from a woman (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda frequently comments on the fact that she had to work really hard to achieve what she did and that the women entering the sector today have it much easier. She says that: "you had to perform to achieve something. Now it feels like you can just walk in, and you have it, or things are done for you, perseverance is almost non-existent. I see it with the women working with us at the moment, if they had to work under the same conditions as I did in the beginning, they would never make it"⁷⁷. Marinda talks about a young "girl" she met at a training course: "She won't be able to do half the things that we as the first women had to do, because they have been telling the men to help out the women. If a woman struggles, she is allowed to ask for help nowadays. We were told straight: 'you are here, you chose to do a man's job, and we won't help you. Then they will just sit there on their trucks, dozers or dragline and laugh at you. You will be falling around in the mud and water, but they

⁷⁴ "die vrouens kan baie aggressief en jaloers op ons raak".

⁷⁵ "nie sy werk nie".

⁷⁶ "hoe om hulle fokken werk te doen".

⁷⁷ "Jy moes perform om iets te kon bereik. Nou voel ek net, jy kan maar net instap, dan het jy ietsie, of dinge word vir jou gedoen. Ek kan dit sien met die vrouens daar by ons. Hulle sal nie, ek sê jou nou, as ek hulle moet vat op die pad wat ek geloop het van die begin af tot nou toe, hulle sal dit nie maak nie".

won't lift a finger to help you, because you chose to be there, you chose to do a man's job"⁷⁸ (Bekker, 2012).

"To me, the most important thing is safety and production. Nowadays, they (women) will just stop their machine for 30 minutes because they are tired! If I did that during my days, they would have taken me off that machine and demoted me! I didn't even get time to go to the toilet; I had to make a plan while being on the dragline. I always told them: 'If you see the seat lying broken on the floor, you should know that it was so rusted, because of how many times I had to pee in my pants"⁷⁹. She goes on to explain that there were three people involved in operating a dragline, being the controller (which she was), an assistant, which would have been a man, and a bulldozer operator which also would have been a man. If you had the need to go to the toilet, then you "just open the door and lean out, with a tissue, so that you are at least able to wipe yourself"⁸⁰, whereas now, the machine gets stopped and the foreman will come and fetch the women and take them to a toilet!"⁸¹ Marinda says: "It irritates me if I hear a woman call a foreman to come and move a cable or a machine"⁸² (Bekker, 2012).

She talks about the women currently in coal mining. Marinda says: "good luck girls, you're not here because of hard work, you were just put there as a quota. We had to work to get where we wanted to be"⁸³ and goes on to say that: "we were brought up in mining with tough love, nowadays it's more like, 'oh don't worry, we will help you, because you just can't cut it on your own"⁸⁴. She believes that everyone in mining is

⁷⁸ Sy gaan nie die helfte kan doen wat ons eerste vrouens gedoen het nie, want hulle het nou al vir die mans gesê hulle moet bietjie vir hulle help daar. As die vrou sukkel, dan mag sy vra vir hulp. Ons is gesê, reguit, jy is hier, jy wil 'n man se werk doen, doen dit nou, ons gaan jou nie help nie'. Dan sit hulle vir jou so en kyk, op trokke, op dozers, op die dragline, dan lag hulle vir jou. Jy val jousef simpel in die modder en water; hulle sal nie 'n vinger lig nie want jy wil mos daar wees, jy wil mos 'n man se werk doen".

⁷⁹ "Vir my is veiligheid en produksie nr1. Nou stop hulle sommer die masjien vir so 30 minute want hulle is moeg! In my tyd sou hulle my van die masjien afgehaal het, hulle sou my ge-demote het. Ek het nie eers kans gekry om te gaan toilet nie, ek het maar 'n plan gemaak op die dragline. Ek het altyd vir hulle gesê, as julle sien die pontoon lê stukkend op die vloer, dan moet julle weet hy het afgeroes, want ek het hom stukkend gepiepie!"

⁸⁰ "In my tyd het jy sommer die trok se deur oopgemaak, hier op die kant sodat niemand kan sien nie. Met 'n ou tissetjie sodat jy darem vinnig kan afvee".

⁸¹ "Nou word die masjien gestop, die voorman gaan haal haar en sy gaan toilet toe!"

⁸² "Dit irriteer my as ek hoor 'n vrou roep 'n voorman om 'n kabel of 'n masjien te kom skuif".

⁸³ "Good luck girls, julle het nie daar gekom oor harde werk nie, julle is daar ge-uplift. Ons het gewerk vir waar ons wou wees."

⁸⁴ "Tough Love was ons opbrengs. Nou is dit, toemaar ons sal jou help, want hulle kom nie die mas op nie".

there for the money and “you can’t just sit there and look pretty and let a man do your job, and you just piggyback on their hard work. You have to do your part and if you don’t want to do that, what are you doing here?”⁸⁵ (Bekker, 2012).

There is some ambivalence on how she views other white women currently in coal mining. She says that: “I have a lot of respect for women who have made it further than I have in mining, like the engineers, and the mine managers. But then I ask myself, did they go through what I did? They had opportunities, better than I did, and yes, they went and studied, but they were not under the same pressure as I was. But I am proud of them and what they have achieved, really, from the bottom of my heart”⁸⁶. “If the women, currently in mining, would work harder, then they would realise what mining is all about. Now they get spoon fed and helped with everything. Nowadays, if they struggle a little, they run to Human Resources. It should probably be like that, because women are designed different from a man, but women should get out of the state of mind that a man has to do everything for you. You have to make your own plan, because in our line of work, the men will just ridicule you if you can’t to your job. The first thing they say is: ‘women in mining are useless!’ Then I always have to explain to them, that the women that I started working with and the women working now, are on two different levels”⁸⁷ (Bekker, 2012).

This being said, she still feels that the mines are not employing enough female operators. She ascribes this to the fact that many women wasted money completing the training programs and then quitting because they could not handle it, or because they became pregnant. She believes that this is what is making the mines reluctant to employ women as operators. Even though she is of the impression that many

⁸⁵ "Ons almal is daar vir een ding, vir geld. Nie vir sit en mooi lyk en 'n ander ou moet jou werk doen en jy is 'n rugryer die heelyd nie! Jy moet jou kant bring, en as jy dit nie wil doen nie, wat soek jy hier?"

⁸⁶ "Ek het baie respek vir die vrouens wat verder gekom het as ek in die myn, soos die ingenieurs, die mynbestuurders, maar dan vra ek myself: 'het hulle dieselfde deurgegaan as wat ek deurgegaan het?' Hulle het geleenthede gehad, beter as ek. Ja, hulle het geleer, maar hulle was nie so onder druk soos ek nie. Maar ek is trots op hulle en wat hulle bereik het, uit my hart uit".

⁸⁷ "As hulle harder werk sal hulle 'n ander siening hê van wat in die mynbou aangaan. Nou word hulle 'ge-spoonfeed' en met alles gehelp. As hulle bietjie swaar trek dan hardloop hulle eerste ding HR toe. Dit moet seker so wees, want 'n vrou se aanmeakaarsit is heeltemal anders as 'n man s'n. Maar 'n mens moet uit daai groef uit kom dat 'n man vir jou alles moet doen. Jy moet 'n plan maak, want in ons lyn van werk voel dit vir my die mans lag 'n mens af as jy nie 'n werk kan doen nie. Die eerste ding wat hulle vir jou sê is: Women in mining are useless! Dan sê ek altyd vir hulle: My geslag in mining en die klomp van vandag is op twee verskillende vlakke".

women would not be able to pull their weight, she feels that there are many that could, but they are not given the opportunity. The mines are also not promoting the "real"⁸⁸ mining jobs to women. There is no real recruitment for women, and nothing is being done to create awareness amongst women about the different opportunities available to them. "We white women are not as strong as black women. Black women come to work and gut it out, they just keep going, and they don't give up, because of the financial motivation"⁸⁹. Marinda attributes most of these sexist practices to the Human Resources division. She says: "what bothers me is that the women from Human Resources sit in on interviews, but they will not fight for a woman to be employed as an operator. If you look at the offices, there are so many women; every second appointment is a woman"⁹⁰ (Bekker, 2012).

One gets the impression that Marinda does not think that operating a dragline or working in mining is something that many women could do. She feels that most of the "new" women do not have the strength of character or the will to do the hard work it takes. "I feel that once you clock in, you have no gender, then you are just a number and you are here to do your job. How you do it or how you manage depends on you"⁹¹ (Bekker, 2012).

Marinda mentions that in her current job, working in the control room, she gets along with all the people with her on the same shift. She feels that they appreciate and respect her and her abilities, but that it took time to build trust and a good working relationship. It is not something that happened overnight. When talking about the men she works with she says: "to me they are all the same, even today. The other day I said to one of the guys, would you let your wife do the job I do and then speak to her the way you are speaking to me now? Would you like it if a man spoke to your wife in the way that you speak to us?" The man's answer to Marinda's question: His

⁸⁸ "regte werke"

⁸⁹ "Ons wit vrouens is nie so sterk soos die swart vrouens nie. Die swart vrouens kom werk en hulle hou uit en aan en aan, hulle gee nie so gou moed op nie, want die finansiële motivering is daar".

⁹⁰ "wat my pla is dat vrouens, HR vrouens in daai onderhoude sit, maar hulle veg nie vir 'n vrou om 'n pos soos operator te kry nie. In die kantoor, daar is daar baie vrouens, elke tweede aanstelling is 'n vrou".

⁹¹ "As jy inklok, voel ek, is jy geen seks nie, dan is jy 'n nommer, jy's daar om jou werk te doen. Hoe jy dit doen, hoe jy dit regkry, hang van jousef af".

wife wouldn't "do a job like this"⁹². She comments on this by saying that: "It is difficult, especially for a white woman doing this job"⁹³ (Bekker, 2012).

She describes her job in the control room as boring compared to operating the dozer or the dragline. She mentions that she feels like a mother, because she has to constantly check on everyone and sort their problems out. "Some days I feel like resigning. But then I stop and think: 'why? Because today was a little bit hard?' Then I just tell myself: 'I won't resign because of them, I won't give them that satisfaction!'"⁹⁴ Marinda now complains about the numerous health problems she has been, and still is afflicted with because of her work on the dragline. She could not go to the bathroom for hours, and as a result she has severe bladder control problems today, despite having had an operation. She also struggled with constipation as a result of not being able to relieve herself timeously (Bekker, 2012).

"I've been on the mines for 25 years now, maybe I am just in a rut? But it feels like men join and other people join, but the attitudes towards women in the mine haven't really changed. It just feels like they feel you are there, you've got a job to do, you are on an equal level and that's it. They treat you like one of them; there is no thought that they might have to treat you a little differently, because you are a different sex"⁹⁵. After all of these years, they still treat you as if you are nothing and if you are dumb. It doesn't matter where you have worked or how long you have you worked on a specific machine, they don't think you have the capabilities or the knowledge that they have"⁹⁶. "Sometimes I really want to be honest about how I feel about their attitudes, but then I also think to myself, I don't know where he comes from, I can't really point it out to him, because you don't know what his state of mind

⁹² "Ek gaan nie onderskeid tussen hulle tref nie, want vir my voel hulle almal dieselfde, nou nog. Ek het nou die dag vir een van die ouens gesê, sal jy dat jou vrou die werk doen wat ek doen en dan praat jy met haar soos jy met my praat? Sal jy daarvan hou as 'n ander man met jou vrou praat soos julle met ons praat?" Sy antwoord was dat sy vrou nie "hierdie werk sal doen nie".

⁹³ "Dis moeilik, veral vir 'n wit vrou daar by die werk".

⁹⁴ "Party dae voel ek wil bedank. Dan dink ek, vir wat? Omdat ek vandag bietjie teëspoed opgetel het? Dan dink ek, nie vir hulle nie, ek gaan hulle nie tevrede stel nie!"

⁹⁵ "Dit is nou al hoeveel jaar... ek gaan nou al vir 23 jaar op die myn, miskien is ek net in 'n groef? Maar dit voel net vir my nuwe mans kom in en ander mense kom in, en die attitudes teenoor 'n vrou in die myn, dit het nie regtig ge-change nie. Ek voel net dat hulle voel jy's daar, jy't 'n werk om te doen, jy's op gelyke vlak en dis dit. Hulle behandel jou soos een van hulle, daar is nie van ons moet jou bietjie anderster hanteer, dis 'n ander geslag nie".

⁹⁶ "Hulle behandel jou nogsteeds, na al die jare, of jy boggerol is en of jy dom is. Maak nie saak waar jy gewerk het of hoe lank jy op 'n masjien is nie, hulle dink nie jy het die vermoë of die kennis wat hulle het nie".

is on that particular day”⁹⁷. Marinda believes the only way to stay sane and to be a good worker, mother and wife is to not take your work problems home or vice versa. Your private and your work life should stay separate from each other. “I work with really nice men now, they respect me as a woman, because I think they realise that we actually have very similar personal lives at home”⁹⁸. Marinda’s closing comment is: “It’s difficult, but I wouldn’t change it for anything in the world. I enjoy myself tremendously, because not one day is the same”⁹⁹ (Bekker, 2012).

⁹⁷ “Partykeer wil ek rêrig sê hoe ek oor hulle attitudes en goed voel. Maar dan moet ek ook dink, jy weet nie waar kom hy nou vandaan nie, jy kan hom nie op dit wys nie, want jy weet nie wat sy gemoedstoestand is nie”

⁹⁸ “Ek het baie nice mans saam met wie ek werk ook. Hulle respekteer jou as 'n vrou, want ek dink hulle het dieselfde lewe (as ek) by hulle huis”.

⁹⁹ “Dis moeilik, maar ek sal dit vir niks in die wêreld verruil nie, ek sal nie. Ek geniet myself gate uit, want nie een dag is dieselfde nie”.

CHAPTER 6

CAROLA: FROM ELECTRICIAN TO ENGINEER

“My second job starts when I get home [...] ladies always has¹⁰⁰ two jobs”.

(Alcock, 2012)

In Carola’s life history you will see very strong correlations to the literature, especially with reference to the ‘second-shift’ and other feminist literature. Her love for her work but also the price at which it comes. Furthermore, the greater implication of reproduction on women. Carola’s story also illustrates one major and deep-seated difference between men and women: the ability to bear children and the implications of biology.

Carola is a 36 year old mother of three, a qualified electrician and electrical engineer who now works as a training officer for Anglo Thermal Coal in Standerton at the New Denmark Colliery. She was born in Secunda, at that stage a small town in Mpumalanga, but later her family moved to Standerton, also a small town in the same province, where she finished her matric. Her parents were both working class individuals, though neither of them ever worked for the mines or in the chemical and energy industry, as most people do who stay in the surrounding areas of the Witbank coal fields. Her father is the reason she so desperately always wanted to become an electrician. He had his own business doing electrical installations and used to ever since she was a little girl take her with him on projects. She started helping him on projects at the age of twelve. Carola credits her love for all things electrical to the exposure that her father gave her. During her first year in high school, she chose accounting and typing as elective subjects, but then decided that she was actually interested in electrical things and technical drawings so she decided to rather attend a technical high school. She says that this is where things changed for her and that this is where she realised she is actually a feminist: “I would always say a woman can also do this or do that, maybe even do it better than a man, so it was always a

¹⁰⁰ *sic*

matter of proving myself on my own behalf and on behalf of other women” (Alcock, 2012).

She completed high school in 1996 and applied for an apprenticeship at Eskom after obtaining a technical qualification at N4 level, but was denied because she was a woman. The formal rejection letter however stated “Dear Mr”. Carola tried to apply at the New Demark Colliery where the Training Officer, at that stage, laughed at her and told her that “there is no way that you will ever get in”. She “tried for years to get into mining, but gave up” (Alcock, 2012).

In 2001 she married and started a family whilst still freelancing for her father and completing further training as an electrical artisan and qualifying in 2007 at the top of her class. Her husband also works at New Denmark Colliery where she currently works. He is also an artisan but a qualified fitter and turner. His family originally emigrated from Britain in the United Kingdom to South Africa after the British coal mines started retrenching people and South Africa, with its booming coal industry, started recruiting experienced workers from abroad. Because of his contacts and years of experience her husband offered to get her a job at New Denmark Colliery, but she refused: “I would never have been able to go about it that way; no one would have accepted me” (Alcock, 2012).

In 2009 she again applied at Eskom to do her learnership. This time around she was accepted. She enjoyed working at Eskom, although she says that the likelihood of a promotion for white women was limited: “Eskom suppressed white women”. It was exactly for this reason that she resigned a few years later and moved to mining. She says however: “I miss Eskom though, not the people, but the technology”. She was then appointed at Anglo Thermal Coal, Zibulo Colliery where she worked for a few years as an underground electrician. She compares working underground to working at Eskom as: “underground mining is not straight forward. At Eskom it was easy. In mining, everything is difficult, small spaces, heavy machinery and equipment, everything underground is a mission, you can’t just lift a motor, you have to rig it first, nothing ever goes as planned, so it’s hard work [...] it’s tough, it’s hard and it’s dirty, but it’s fun”. She says that the support from her foremen and the rest of her team was vital to her success as an artisan. “The guys would help you and sometimes you

need their experience” but goes on to say that “I would never stand aside and watch how a man does my work if I can’t pull my weight”. Carola talks candidly about the hardship that women who work alongside men face: “you have to work twice as hard [...] to prove yourself, and once you’ve proved yourself you have all the respect in the world, [...] as a woman, you have to prove yourself worthy first, men can just walk in and do the job”. She remarks that the physicality of working underground was hard on her body and she soon realised that she was not strong enough to lift all of the things that the men were able to do. In order to physically get stronger she decided to start weight training after hours. This has made a huge difference. She says that after a while she didn’t even have to do train anymore, because being underground and working an entire shift was like a session in the gym. Carola explains that working with men is difficult at first “because you have to change yourself to fit in”; she goes on to say that “I think I became harder, less sensitive”. She says that “you can’t walk in here being a little lady [...] you become a woman after hours or on weekends”. Although she does say that she enjoys working in a predominantly male industry because of the way that men are, she explains this by saying that “the thing about men is, today we will fight, and tomorrow we’re friends and we work together, it’s not the same with women, [...] so you tend to adopt their cultures”. I think what is interesting is the women constant use of the “culture/s”. This concept continually surfaced and it is something they view as a concrete difference governing their work life. These women do not view it a social construction but as a natural difference between men and women. This is exactly what Bradley (2013) points to in her assertion that women at work experiences these

Carola realised this while in high school. By attending a technical high school which was predominantly male, Carola recalls that: “in my class we were 17 learners from standard seven to matric, three girls, later only two and the rest were boys. We became like family. So I really just grew up with boys. Even now, I can befriend men much easier than I can women. [...] The girls just annoyed me and I’d walk away but the guys, no problem (Alcock, 2012).

After working at Zibulo Colliery as an electrician, Carola then applied for a job as training officer at New Denmark Colliery. By that stage she was already a qualified electrical engineer. “I knew forever that I would not work as an electrician for long. I

wanted to get into the engineering side, the real brain work behind electrics”. Her day-to-day job now entails recruiting new artisans and training them until they are qualified in their various trades. She typically works a 10 hour day, starting at 6:00 in the morning and getting home at around four o’clock in the afternoon. The time at home is reserved for her children and her husband. She explains that her household is moulded around their work. Carola has a live-in maid that takes care of the children when they are not in day-care or when she has to work late. Here, Carola is actually talking about the burden of reproduction, something that Cock (1980) continually referred to.

Carola talks about being a mother and the difficulty that maternity leave creates at work and the impact it has on your career as a woman. She explains that: “going away, men hate that fact that women fall pregnant, we get a lot of resistance”. She believes that men do not realise how hard it is because they can’t put themselves in a woman’s shoes. She recounts an incident with an interview with a female trainee where one of the first questions posed to her was: “So how long after you qualify will you fall pregnant?” Now, although Carola says that this was meant as joke, there is some truth to this perception that men in mining hold about women. She continues to explain that the difficulty with a pregnancy and mining is that “there is no light duty in mining, so they drift around for nine months wherever and obviously packing a full salary and then there’s another artisan underground doing two people’s work. So now you must know, when she comes back he’s done nine months (pregnancy) plus five months (maternity leave) of double standby’s, double work and she packed a full salary for doing nothing, I can understand how they can be unhappy about it. But the men just don’t realise, it’s everyone’s social right to have children and unfortunately our children need us for at least five months after they are born”. She continues to talk about how hard it is to fit in and that after you have taken maternity leave it is as if you have to start all over again gaining the trust of the men you work with. For this exact reason Carola decided to leave Eskom, because after taking maternity leave with her last born child, it was just too difficult to fit back in (Alcock, 2012).

Carola learned very quickly to assert herself at work. She did this firstly by addressing the men she worked with using their first names. Now although she is familiar with Afrikaners addressing older men as “Oom” (*literal translation meaning*

'Uncle' although this is not limited to extended family but a way to address any man that is ten years older as a sign of respect) she never does it, unless they were introduced to her as that". She explains that within the mining culture everyone is always polite, "if you are underground, you greet everybody, this is very important. This way they will always help you if you struggle with something". She used the way she dressed for work as another way to assert herself. She does not wear make-up or jewellery to work and the clothes she wears to and from work (before changing into overalls) are comfortable and practical. She says that "I don't believe a women working here should come to work in a mini skirt and high heels because number one, you're just trying to flirt with the guys or something and you're going to get changed into overalls anyway, so it's needless and silly, then again she recalls a woman she worked with at Eskom and said that: "we always thought: 'now she just doesn't belong, not with her long nails and make-up' but she is now actually the best electrician at Eskom, she just excelled and she works really really hard and she's happy". However, Carola describes herself as: "I am a plain person, jeans and t-shirts". For Carola it has more to do with practicality. Jewellery for her is first and foremost unsafe to wear to work if you are an electrician. She does however mention that "you would try and still be neat, as much as possible" (Alcock, 2012).

Carola is passionate about her job, especially the technical aspects of it. She would not choose to do anything else, but says that she knows this life is not for everyone. She recalls a woman that approached her about doing an apprenticeship with Anglo Thermal Coal and after the woman was accepted into the programme her father refused. She commented on this by saying: "I think this is the case with most white women, they either see manual work as beneath them or someone in their family does and this prevents them" (Alcock, 2012).

When she talks about the effect of her job on her marriage she says: "he knows that it's something that I love. He does not like the idea of me in the mining industry that much; he feels that Eskom was much nicer, although right now, my job isn't that physically demanding. As an artisan, he wasn't happy because I had to go on call-outs and standbys and there was no guarantee that both of us would not get called out at night at the same time. At Zibulo I worked myself to smithereens, I think I spent one Sunday a month at home and it didn't bother me at all, because I had so

much fun. I was doing what I loved”. She believes that “his concerns are about his needs”. Carola continues to explain the demands of being a working mother by saying that her job never ends: “my second job starts when I get home, taking care of my children and he only has one job, ladies always has¹⁰¹ two jobs”. This is a profound statement made by Carola, she is actually talking about the “second shift” that has been covered extensively by Hochschild & Machung (1989). The fact that working women with families are actually working double shifts if you take into account their reproductive labour.

She continues to say that men constantly make women feel like their job is actually harder or that they work harder than women, as if “your job isn’t as important as his”. This being said, she does believe that “he is more proud that I am here and that I am making a success of it” (Alcock, 2012).

On other women in the industry she says that “this is an environment for women with a lot of guts and if you are not afraid to work hard. You’re either born for this or you’re not [...]. Women were taken out of mining because they were cheap hard labour and that I can understand. But we fought to get back in, and now finally we are” (Alcock, 2012).

¹⁰¹ *sic*

CHAPTER 7

CELIA: THE RELUCTANT WALLFLOWER

“My people don't even see me as a woman”.

(Pieterse, 2012)

Celia is a 38 year old mother of three, a wife and a qualified tradeswoman and now an engineer who works for Anglo Thermal Coal at the Goedehoop Colliery just outside of Witbank (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia was born and raised in Middelburg, where she still resides. She is the eldest daughter of her parents. Her father was a coal miner and her mother a homemaker. She has three younger siblings, two brothers and a sister. Growing up she describes herself as: “a bit of a tomboy, I never really worried about 'girly' things, not at all”¹⁰². What changed her outlook on the position of women in society was her mother. “My mother told me, from a very young age, that I should never let a man take care of me. So, for me, this is what it comes down to. You are not going to do something for me, I will do it myself”¹⁰³. “My mother was a housewife so she was very dependent on my father. I mean, when she lost her first husband in a train accident, she was lost, then she met my father and she was alright again. Now he's not there anymore and she is absolutely lost again”¹⁰⁴. Celia says that what her mother told her growing up had a much bigger impact on her, than her siblings: “But, when I look at my brothers and sister, they are also still lost. I don't know why it had such a big impact on my life”¹⁰⁵ (Pieterse, 2012).

“My father recently passed away, it's very rough. I run a house, work and handle things on my mother's side as well. My mother was never really able to work or

¹⁰² “Ek was eintlik maar 'n tomboy, ek niks ge-worry oor vroumens goeters nie, glad nie”.

¹⁰³ “My ma het my van kleinsaf gesê dat ek moet sorg dat 'n man nie vir my moet sorg nie. So dis waarop dit vir my neerkom. Jy gaan nie vir my iets doen nie, ek gaan dit self doen”.

¹⁰⁴ “my ma was 'n huisvrou so sy was maar baie afhanklik van my pa. Ek meen, sy't haar eerste man verloor na 'n treinongeluk, en toe was sy verlore en toe het sy my pa gekry en toe was sy weer oraaite en nou is hy nie meer daar nie en sy is absoluut verlore”.

¹⁰⁵ “Maar as ek na my boeties en sussie kyk, is hulle ook nogsteeds verlore. Ek weet nie hoekom dit so groot impak op my lewe gehad het nie”.

something like that, so I try and help on that side, My brothers and sister are still very much dependent if you know what I mean”¹⁰⁶ (Pieterse, 2012).

Her mothers’ own experience was probably the biggest driving force behind Celia’s ambition to succeed at a professional career. She has always wanted to become an engineer, ever since high school. Of course, this was not what many had in mind for a girl from Middelburg, especially during the 80’s. It took her nearly 15 years to qualify as an engineer. She says: “When I finished school women weren’t allowed to enter the industry. I wanted to study engineering, but I couldn’t get a bursary and my parents didn’t really have the money. So because I was a woman, most of my bursary applications just said: ‘sorry you’re a woman you can’t’. I wanted to go to university but I just couldn’t get the finances”¹⁰⁷. So: “While visiting a friend in Middelburg I met someone there who wanted to help me get an appy-ship, like a part appy-ship, but they actually only give you a chance to learn so you do N2, N3, N4 and so on and as soon as an appy-ship opportunity opens up then you can slot in there or whatever”¹⁰⁸. “I had to work while I studied so I had to do it part time. I never studied full-time”¹⁰⁹. “I did an S4 and a B-Tech. I worked at a steel factory, Columbus Stainless Steel for ten years before I came to Goedehoop”¹¹⁰ (Pieterse, 2012).

While working at Columbus Stainless Steel she says: “I was lucky because I was qualified as a fitter, but I didn’t work as a fitter. I worked at condition monitoring. I did laser alignments, motor shaft alignments, parallel alignments of rollers in the plant as well as vibration and oil samples and stuff like that”¹¹¹ (Pieterse, 2012).

¹⁰⁶ “My pa is onlangs oorlede, dis baie rof. Ek hardloop huis, werk en dan hanteer ek nog my ma se kant se goette uit, my ma kom nog ooit regtig werk of so iets nie, so ek help maar aan daai kant. My boeties en sussies is nog baie afhanklik as jy weet wat ek bedoel”.

¹⁰⁷ “Toe ek skool klaargemaak het mag vroue mos nog nie in die bedryf in gekom het nie. Ek wou baie graag ingenieurswese gaan doen het, maar ek kon nie ’n beurs kry nie en my ma’le het nie regtig geld gehad nie, en omdat ek ’n vrou was, het die meeste van die beurs plekke net vir my gesê: ‘nee sorry, jy’s ’n vrou, jy kan nie’. Ek wou so graag universiteit toe gegaan het, maar ek kon net nie die finansies kry nie”.

¹⁰⁸ “Ek het by ’n vriendin gaan kuier in Middelburg en ek ontmoet toe ’n ou daar wat help om ’n appy’ship te kry. Soos ’n halwe appy’ship, maar hulle gee jou net eintlik kans om te leer, so jy doen steeds jou N2, N3, N4 en so aan, en sodra daar ’n appy’ship geleentheid oopgaan dan slot jy net daar in”.

¹⁰⁹ “Ek het gewerk en geleer, so ek het dit deelyds gedoen. Ek kon nooit voltyds gaan leer nie”.

¹¹⁰ “Ek het toe my S4 gedoen en ’n BTech. Ek het vir 10 jaar op die fabriek gewerk by Columbus Stainless Steel voor ek Goedehoop toe gekom het”.

¹¹¹ “Ek was gelukkig want ek was ’n gekwalifiseerde fitter gewees maar ek het nooit gewerk as ’n fitter nie. Ek het by condition monitoring gewerk. Ek het laser alignments gedoen, ek het motor shaft alignments gedoen, parallelle alignments van rolle in die plant en vibrasie en olie samples en sulke tipe goed gedoen”.

The reason she decided to leave Columbus Stainless Steel was for her career. Although she was qualified as an artisan and earning a fairly good salary, she still did give up her dream to become an engineer. She says: “I was blocked at Columbus. They didn't want to help me write my ticket and that is why I left. They wanted to keep me there, but it is as if I reached a ceiling, I couldn't go any further. I told them I was going to walk, but they wanted to keep me in the position I held in condition monitoring. I wanted to be an engineer. An engineer needs experience, what use would my ticket be if I could do nothing with it? I couldn't be one without the right experience”¹¹² (Pieterse, 2012).

She then applied at Anglo Thermal Coal, Goedehoop Colliery and was appointed. “I have been at Vlaklaagte Shaft for five years now”¹¹³. They afforded her the opportunity for further training in order to become an engineer and “last year I got my ticket to be an engineer”¹¹⁴ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia does not regret her time spent at the Steel factory. She believes that she gained invaluable experience in her years there. She says that during her engineering training: “I saw when I was with other junior engineers that they didn't have a lot of experience, I have a lot. I grasped things very quickly and could move through the work quickly, it was relatively easy for me, and the others struggled”¹¹⁵ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia loves what she does. She sums up her day as: “I start at 5:30 in the morning; normally I begin with getting a downtime sheet and attend to breakdowns. Then the general surveyors (GS) explain the breakdowns and we find out why it happened and how we can prevent or fix it in the future. Then the production meetings start. We explain the downtimes again, but then production and engineering speaks to one another. We have a lot of meetings, then we go underground and do legal

¹¹² “Ek was geblokkeer by Columbus. Hulle wou my nie help om my ticket te skryf nie en dis hoekom ek daar weg is. Hulle het my daar try hou, maar dis asof ek 'n plafon bereik het, ek kon nêrens meer heengaan nie. En ek het gesê ek gaan loop, maar hulle wou hê ek moet net daar bly waar ek was in daai posisie by condition monitoring. En ek wou 'n ingenieur word. As 'n ingenieur kort jy ervaring, wat help dit ek kry my ticket daar maar ek kan niks daarmee doen nie. Ek kan nie dit word sonder die regte ervaring nie”

¹¹³ “Ek is nou vyf jaar by Vlaklaagte Shaft”.

¹¹⁴ “laas jaar het ek my ticket gekry om 'n ingenieur te wees”.

¹¹⁵ “Ek het gesien toe ek saam die ander junior ingenieurs was, hulle het nie baie ondervinding nie, ek het baie, ek het goed vinnig gesnap en vinnig daardeur gegaan dit was vir my redelik maklik, die ander het gestoei”.

inspections. I am probably underground for about two to four hours a day. The travelling takes very long. You can only drive about 40km per hour and some of the sections are about 9km from here so then you have to drive from here to there and then you can come back again”¹¹⁶. Her work, if and when she is on call, never ends. “At home I am constantly on the phone, when a section stands for longer than two hours you have to co-ordinate everything to get that section back up and running”¹¹⁷ (Pieterse, 2012).

She was the first female engineer hired at Vlaklaagte Shaft. Because of this, the facilities have not yet been upgraded to accommodate a woman in a management position. “We have a manager’s change house, but there isn’t one for women. When I just got here, the door was broken, and then they told me: ‘I must just shout when I go in’. But I didn’t do that. I fixed the door, because that just didn’t work for me”¹¹⁸ (Pieterse, 2012).

When talking about the challenges she faces at work, she says: “People! People are my greatest challenge at work, especially the people who report directly to me. You get people who, for instance, those who are between the ages of 20-35, which is mostly our type, that were raised with women in the industry, so they’re not as resistant towards it, but I have one GS that is 43 years old, uhm, that knows everything and anything and who gives me a very hard time. Because you can see he is one of those that believe women don’t belong in the workplace or whatever. [...] Where with the other guys you can motivate them and get them going, but with this guy it’s very difficult. I am sure it is because I am a woman”¹¹⁹. “I the am not the

¹¹⁶ “Ek begin so 5:30 in die oggende, gewoonlik eerste kry ek die down time sheets van die vorige skof, dan begin ons dit bespreek, ek en my GS. Ons kyk na die breakdowns, probeer kyk hoe ons dit kan voorkom of fix en dan begin die produksie meetings. Dan verduidelik ons weer die down time sheets maar dan praat produksie en engineering teenoor mekaar. Ons het verskriklik baie meetings. Dan gaan ek ondergrond vir legal inspeksies. Ek is elke dag seker twee tot vier ure ondergrond. Die travelling vat geweldig lank, jy kan net 40km per uur ry en van die seksies is so 9km van hier af, so dan ry jy nou tot daar, doen die inspeksie en kom weer terug”.

¹¹⁷ “By die huis is ek konstant op die foon as ’n seksie langer as twee ure staan dan moet jy die goed help koördineer dat dit aan die loop kan kom”.

¹¹⁸ “Ons het ’n managers change house, maar daar is nie een vir vrouens nie, toe ek hier gekom het, was die deur stukkend gewees, toe sê hulle vir my ‘ek moet maar net skree as ek ingaan’. Maar ek het nie dit gedoen nie, ek het die deur kom fix want daai gaan nie vir my werk nie”.

¹¹⁹ “Mense! Mense is my grootste uitdagings, veral die wat direk aan my rapporteer, jy kry mense wat so sê nou maar tussen 20 en 35 is wat min of meer my tipe is, wat groot geword het met vrouens in die bedryf so hulle is nie so resistant nie, maar ek het een ou wat 43 is, uhm, wat alles ken en alles weet en wat vir my ’n

fighting type but I often have to use harsh words with him and then he would be just as loud back, because you can hear that he is used to speaking to women that way and then I just say: 'Sorry, I am not a woman, you don't speak to me that way', but he provokes me, he does it intentionally"¹²⁰ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia believes that this is more of a cultural thing, which comes down to how you were taught to treat women. "It is much, much more difficult working with older white Afrikaans men"¹²¹. This is where she feels her authority is always challenged just because she is a woman. This however is nothing new to Celia. "At the factory I also struggled when I started there. I would go measure vibration, but then someone would go and do it again, because they did not trust that my measurements were correct. So the first two years were difficult, the guys just didn't believe me"¹²². And: "when I eventually left they had so much faith in me that they, for example, did not trust the guys who reported to me. They phoned me, even if I wasn't on standby, then I would come in to fix things for them"¹²³. She speaks fondly of finally receiving the trust and recognition she worked for and deserved. "At a stage one of the big managers paid for dinner out for my husband and I, 'all expenses paid', as a reward for all the good work I had been doing"¹²⁴ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia has no illusions on how difficult it is working in a predominantly male environment. She says: "you have to work twice as hard as them to get it right (gain trust). That's absolutely how it is"¹²⁵. She believes that this is what happens to all women who work in traditionally male industries. "They expect it of you. They feed

geweldige harde tyd gee want jy kan sien hys een van daai wat glo vrouens hoort nie in die werksplek nie of watokal nie. [...] Waar die ander ouens kan jy motiveer en hulle aan die gang kry, maar die ou is baie moeilik. Ek is seker dit gaan daarvoor dat ek 'n vrou is".

¹²⁰ "Ek is nie 'n bakleierige tipe nie, maar soms moet ek hard praat en hy praat dan hard terug, want jy kan hoor dis hoe hy met vrouens praat. En dan sê ek vir hom: "Sorry, ek's nie 'n vrou nie, jy praat nie so met my nie, maar hy tart my uit, hy is regtig aspris".

¹²¹ "Dit is vir my baie baie moeiliker om met ouer Afrikaanse mans te werk".

¹²² "By die fabriek het ek net so gesukkel in die begin. Ek sou byvoorbeeld 'n vibrasie gaan vat het, dan gaan doen iemand dit oor want hulle vertrou nie my lesing nie, so die eerste twee jaar was dit erg, die ouens ou my net nie glo nie".

¹²³ "toe ek eventueel daar weg was, het hulle soveel vertrou in my gehad. Hulle het tot die outjies wat aan my gerapporteer het nie geglo nie, hulle het my gebel ek was soms nie eers op standby nie, dan kom ek uit om die goed te fix vir hulle".

¹²⁴ "Op 'n stadium het een van die groot managers daar vir my en my man betaal vir ete, "all expenses paid" vir al die goeie werk wat ek gedoen het".

¹²⁵ "jy moet twee keer harder werk as hulle om dit reg te kry (vertrou), dis absoluut so".

you a whole lot of crap about breakdowns and other things they think you know nothing about, so you really have to research it in-depth. They won't take these chances with a man, but believe me, they take chances with women"¹²⁶ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia mentions a number of times when she denied her gender at work, by arguing that she was there to do her job and only that. "My people don't even see me as a woman. I am absolutely only work-orientated"¹²⁷. Although on talking about her femininity she says: "it is very important to me"¹²⁸, she just doesn't act like a woman at work. She says that it only matters at home and: "my husband makes me feel very in touch with my femininity, and that's really nice"¹²⁹ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia had to teach herself various coping skills and to be more assertive with her male colleagues. She says that: "I definitely had to adapt to fit into mining"¹³⁰. "I don't want to be treated differently because I'm a woman, I came into their environment, so I am the one who has to adapt"¹³¹. For instance: "I use swear words, you have to every now and then"¹³². With regard to handling older white Afrikaans men, she puts production first, she needs to get the job done. So she says: "there are certain people that you can achieve a lot more with if you show some respect. So if I call him 'Oom' I can move mountains with him, but if I address him by his first name I would never get anywhere with him"¹³³. This intricate power dynamic needs to be handled carefully, because in the end she believes you need to be able to work together and be able to trust each other. She does however feel that her years of experience are what counts in her favour. "What gives me power is the fact that I come from the 'old school'. Trade tests, appy-ship, years of work experience and then I became an

¹²⁶ "Hulle verwag dit van jou, hulle voer jou alle poep oor breakdowns en goeters want hulle dink jy weet nie, so jy moet rêrig research doen en in diepte ingaan, hulle sal nie kans met 'n ou vat nie, maar glo my hulle vat dit net met vrouens".

¹²⁷ "My mense sien my nie eers as 'n vrou nie. Ek is absoluut net werksgemotiveerd".

¹²⁸ "dis vir my baie belangrik".

¹²⁹ "my man laat my baie in tact voel met my vroulikheid en dit is vir my baie nice".

¹³⁰ "Ek moes absoluut aanpas om in te pas in my mynbou".

¹³¹ "Ek wil nie anders behandel word omdat ek 'n vrou is nie, ek het hier ingekom, dit was hulle environment, so ek moet adapt".

¹³² "Ek vloek, 'n ou moet maar so nou en dan".

¹³³ "Daar is sekere mense, jy kan baie meer met hulle uitrig as jy respek toon. So as ek vir hom sê 'oom' kan ek berge versit met hom, maar as ek hom op sy naam noem gaan ek niks met hom regkry nie".

engineer"¹³⁴. "If I didn't have that behind my name and I because I don't have a pretty 'whatever', I would have struggled, but because I have practical experience I get the respect I need "¹³⁵. This said, she does however state that: "It would have been much easier to get things done if I were a man"¹³⁶ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia is highly focused on her work and believes that above all your private life should be separate from your work life. She says: "I've never had a sexual harassment case, because for me it is all about the work"¹³⁷. She continues to say that in addition to this she has: "never had any problems with the wives (of colleagues), but I have to say that I feel some women provoke it [...] I've never had such an incident, because you know what, it's work, personal issues should have nothing to do with it"¹³⁸. She also says that: "I listen to my husband's advice, because he also works with women. He gives me tips and tells me about women who wear low-cut tops, or the kind of things that provoke men to do the things they shouldn't be doing. So, if you dress conservatively and cover everything up you will be respected, but if you bear (or bare) too much, the men will talk about you behind your back"¹³⁹ (Pieterse, 2012). Although she says that: "I'm probably too much of a slave driver, I am here to work and that is exactly what I do. I don't get involved in another man's personal life"¹⁴⁰. She even takes this as far as social media by saying that: "you shouldn't be on Facebook and things like that with the people you work with, I think you should have a work life and you should have a home life"¹⁴¹ (Pieterse, 2012).

¹³⁴ "Wat vir my mag gee is ek kom uit die old school uit, trade test, appy'ship, baie jare gewerk en toe ingenieur".

¹³⁵ "As ek nie dit agter my naam gehad het nie, en ek het ook nou nie 'n mooi watokalnie, sou ek gesukkel het, maar omdat ek praktiese ervaring het, kry ek die respek wat ek nodig het".

¹³⁶ "Kyk ek sou baie dinge makliker reg gekry het as ek 'n man was".

¹³⁷ "Ek't nog nooit 'n sexual harassment saak gehad nie, want dit gaan vir my oor werk".

¹³⁸ "Kyk ek het nog nooit probleme met die vrouens gehad nie, ek moet vir jou sê, ek dink party vrouens lok dit uit. [...] Ek het nog nooit 'n issue gehad nie, want weet jy wat, ek werk, dit gaan nie vir my oor persoonlike aspekte en sulke goeters nie".

¹³⁹ "ek luister baie na my man, want hy werk ook saam vrouens, hy sal vir my tips gee en vertel van die vrouens wat lae halse dra en sien, dis als die goed wat mans provoke om te doen wat hulle nie moet doen nie. So as jy konservatief aantrek en als toemaak sal jy respek kry maar as jy oopmaak gaan jy... kyk die ouens praat maar agter jou rug".

¹⁴⁰ "ek is seker te veel van 'n slawedrywer. Ek is hier om te werk en dis wat ek doen. So ek raak nie by 'n ou se persoonlike lewe betrokke nie".

¹⁴¹ "Jy facebook nie met jou werksmense en daai tipe dinge nie, ek dink jy moet werk hê en jy moet huis hê".

Handling social events at work is hard enough as it is for Celia. She says that: “things can get quite rough at the parties, but I never stay long enough to experience it”¹⁴². This is because of her work ethic. She continues to say that: “there are people that look up to me. What happens the next day if they know that I acted inappropriately at the party? I am very conscious of the example I have to set”¹⁴³ (Pieterse, 2012).

She does however think that negotiating your relationship as a woman with a male colleague in front of his wife is quite: “tricky, because you speak to them in the way you would normally do at work, but those women still believe in showing a lot of respect to their husbands; they have to ask permission, and keep quiet and only say something every now and then or whatever. So, when I speak to the men like I normally do at work, you can see the surprise on their faces. My husband told me once that I shouldn't speak to the men like that in front of their wives”¹⁴⁴ (Pieterse, 2012). I believe that what she is explaining here, speaks to how Celia performs her gender not only at work but in other settings outside of work (Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Halford & Leonard, 2006, Butler, 1993). Tyler & Cohen (2010) argue that the organisational culture of a company can influence the way a woman would perform her gender at work. Here Celia is clearly contesting the power relationships embedded in the organisation and the community and in doing that renegotiating it.

Celia, struggles with this even in private social gatherings. She does a man's job and works in a male environment. This isolates her from female conversation in the sense that: “when men sit around the fire at a barbecue, they share their experience and that helps hey. When I sit around the fire at a barbecue, I have to sit with the 'tannies' that crochet and knit and make socks and wipe the children's noses and run around. I can't really share my experience with them and gain knowledge from them, so it is difficult. I also can't just get up and go and join the men, because then I get dirty looks from the women. But that is where my interest lies, so it is really very

¹⁴² “By die party's gaan dit maar rof, maar ek bly nie lank genoeg om dit te beleef nie”.

¹⁴³ “Kyk ek het mense wat na my opkyk, en dan wat gebeur die volgende dag as hulle weet ek het myself wangedra by die party? Ek is baie gestel op die voorbeeld wat ek moet stel”.

¹⁴⁴ “Dis waar dit taai raak. Want jy praat met hulle soos jy by die werk met hulle praat en daai vrouens glo nog aan baie respek, jy moet vra, jy moet doodstil bly en net ietsie nou en dan sê en watokal en jy praat met hulle soos jy by die werk met hulle praat en ek kan sien hoe rek hulle oë. My man het al eenkeer vir my gesê ek moenie so met hulle praat voor hulle vrouens nie”.

difficult. Everything I learn, I have to learn the hard way. I can't just ask someone 'how did you do this or that?' At work there just isn't enough time. So, socially a man benefits a lot more than I ever could"¹⁴⁵ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia explains that even though it is a strategic decision to not ever emphasise her own femininity or gender at work, it has been used against her. She tells very candidly of the worst experience of her working life. "There was a road show held on HIV/AIDS awareness, about condoms and protected sex and stuff like that. We were all there, the big bosses too. I was sitting in front because I was the shaft engineer. When they were finished, the big mine guy from head office came and addressed everyone. He asked everyone to stop having unprotected sex and whatever, then he looked me straight in the eye and asked 'Celia, do you love sex?' And I sat there with the whole shaft sitting there, I can't tell you how I felt. I just sat there wondering if he really just asked me that, but he kept looking me in the eye waiting for an answer!" I just sat there and felt myself go red, purple, yellow and all the other colours of the rainbow. I just thought, 'I will not answer you'. Luckily another man saw that the moment was getting awkward, so he jumped in and said he liked sex, diverting the attention from me. Later that day I received a call from my engineering manager saying I had to come see him, because he heard I acted strangely at the road show. I told him what happened"¹⁴⁶. What bothers Celia was not the question, but the very difficult position her response to the question left her in. "I have to work underground, alone, to do inspections and stuff. So now, if I answer 'yes' to his questions and they

¹⁴⁵ "as mans om 'n braaivleisvuur sit en hulle praat, dan deel hulle ondervinding en dit help nê. As ek om 'n braaivleisvuur sit, dan moet ek saam die tannies sit wat hekel en brei en sokkies maak en die kinders se neusies afvee en almal rondhardloop en ek kan nou nie regtig my experience met hulle deel en ondervinding kry nie. So dis baie moeilik. En ek kan ook nie opstaan en tussen die mans gaan staan nie want dan kyk die vrouens my met groot oë aan. Alhoewel dis waar my belangstelling is. So dis baie moeilik. Alles wat ek moet leer moet ek op die harde manier leer. Ek kan nie vra: 'hoe het jy dit gedoen nie want in werksomstandighede is daar nie tyd daaroor nie. So socially kry 'n man baie voordele uit dit uit as wat ek daaruit kan kry".

¹⁴⁶ "Hier was so Road Show wat Anglo gehou het oor HIV/AIDS awareness, dit het maar gegaan oor kondome en protected seks en sulke goed. Kyk ons was almal daar, die groot base ook. Ek sit toe so ewe heel voor want ek is die skag se ingenieur en toe hulle nou klaar is met die show kom die groot myn ou van head office en hy spreek toe almal aan en hy vra toe nou vir die mens hulle moet ophou om unprotected sex te hê en watookal. En hy kyk vir my in my oë en hy vra vir my: 'Celia, do you love sex?' En ek sit daar en dis soos in die hele skag sit daar ek kan nie vir jou sê hoe ek gevoel het nie. Ek sit en wonder het hy dit nou regtig vir my gevra en hy bly kyk my in die oë en hy wag dat ek hom 'n antwoord gee! Ek sit daar en ek voel hoe word ek rooi, pers, geel, al die kleure van die reënboog. En ek dog net, vir jou gaan ek nie antwoord nie. Gelukkig sien 'n ander man toe die moment is nou nie lekker nie toe sê hy nee hy like sex en toe skuif die aandag darem. En later die middag toe bel my engineering manager my en sê ek moet hom kom sien want hulle het gesê ek het snaaks opgetree by die show of watookal en ek vertel hom toe wat gebeur het.

pin me down and rape me underground? And then, afterwards, at the hearing they'll just say 'yes, but you said in front of 300 people that you like it'¹⁴⁷. She describes this one incident as the most horrific incident in her entire career and life. "That was the worst thing that happened to me on the mine and in my whole life. I will never sit in front at any function again! And it was a big boss at Anglo, but they say that's just how he is. My boss told me that I could file a complaint, but I told him that I might just as well sign my resignation letter then, it's the same thing"¹⁴⁸ (Pieterse, 2012).

She mentions numerous times how her family is a source of inspiration, but subsequently how in addition to this, it adds to her own personal guilt of not always being available for them the way she feels she should be. Celia married soon after her 21st birthday. She says: "the Lord blessed me with a fantastic husband. I think if He didn't give me what I have I would probably have become gay or something like that"¹⁴⁹. She goes on to talk about their children: "within the first year of our marriage we already had our first child"¹⁵⁰. This was no easy task, caring and raising children while both parents worked shift jobs. She says that: "we went through a very stressful time, because I wanted my own career. I pursued it very strongly and, uhm, it caused a lot of stress"¹⁵¹. "My life at home is completely different to that of other women [...] because we often work on an equal level with men, whereas a lot of women are submissive towards their husbands. The husband will ask for a cup of coffee and the wife will immediately jump up and go make one. It is very different in my house. My husband and I have a partnership. I respect him, but I won't say 'yes and amen' to everything he says. So, I won't just jump up. I think my relationship with men in general is very different from the norm"¹⁵² (Pieterse, 2012).

¹⁴⁷ "Ek moet ondergrond gaan, alleen, om inspeksies te doen en goed. Nou antwoord ek 'Ja', hulle druk my vas en verkrag my ondergrond en as jy dan voor 'n hearing kom dan sê hulle net ja wel jy het voor 300 mense gesê jy hou van dit".

¹⁴⁸ "Dit was vir my die ergste in die myn en in my hele lewe. Ek sal nooit weer voor sit by 'n funksies nie. En dis 'n grootkop by Anglo, maar hy is net so blykbaar. MyBaas het gesê ek kan 'n klag maak maar ek het vir hom gesê ek kan dan maar netsowel my bedanking teken, dis dieselfde ding".

¹⁴⁹ "die Here het vir my geseën en 'n fantastiese man gegee. Ek dink as die Here nie vir my gegee het wat ek het nie was ek seker skeef of iets".

¹⁵⁰ "binne die eerste jaar van ons huwelik het ons al ons eerste kind gehad".

¹⁵¹ "ons is deur 'n baie stresvolle tyd omdat ek my eie career wou gehad het. Ek het dit baie hard gejaag en uhm, dit het maar stres gemaak".

¹⁵² "My huislewe is heeltemal anders as 'n normale vrou sin [...] Omdat ons baie gelyk in dieselfde valk met mans werk, maar baie vrouens is onderdanig aan hulle mans. Hulle sal vra: 'maak vir my koppie koffie' en 'n vrou sal opspring en dit dadelik gaan doen. Dis baie anders in my huis. Ek en my man het 'n vennootskap. Ek

She says it was hard finding a balance between work and home and a routine that worked for them as a couple and that: “where we are now is the result of a lot of give and take”¹⁵³. Her children are now fairly older than when she just started working and she believes that it is much easier now than it was back then. “My son is now 13 years old, my daughter is 10 and my youngest is six. I am very lucky, the older two are exceptionally smart, they also study by themselves. Then the Dear Lord gave me a challenge with my youngest; with him it is not as easy. He craves a lot of attention and this makes it extremely difficult for me now. So to teach him and help him is difficult, it’s rough”¹⁵⁴. Celia talks about the difficulty of being a working mother, especially being in a very stressful job that are most of the times not limited to office hours. She says that: “I am supposed to be home by five in the afternoon, but most of the times it’s closer to six or seven”¹⁵⁵. As a family she thinks they try to support each other. “My husband works shifts, but it is only a problem if he works the afternoon shift, otherwise he is already at home when my children get there”¹⁵⁶. She says that she is lucky because: “my oldest son is very independent and extremely responsible. He takes his sister to school and waits for her in the afternoon so they can walk back together. He manages the stuff at home. The youngest is in after care at his school. He needs the discipline and routine that after school care offers him. He gets distracted easily”¹⁵⁷ (Pieterse, 2012).

She does however mention the guilt she feels for working so hard all the time. Even though her husband is there, she says: “they have a good relationship with their father, but I think that a mother is still a mother”¹⁵⁸. She says: “I feel very guilty about it”¹⁵⁹. She goes on to explain herself: “I am good at my job, I know that, but I am not

respekteer hom, maar alles wat hy sê sal ek nie voor ja en amen nie. So ja, ek spring nie op nie. Jou verhouding met mans is heeltemal anders in general as wat die normaalweg sou wees dink ek”.

¹⁵³ “waar ons nou is, het maar met skaaf en skuur gekom, baie skaaf en skuur”.

¹⁵⁴ “My seuntjie is nou 13, my dogtertjie is 10 en my jongste enetjie is 6. Ek is baie gelukkig, die oudste twee is fenomenaal slim, hulle leer self, maar OK, toe het Liewe Jesus nou vir my ’n challenge gegee met die jongste een. Hy verg baie aandag en dit maak dit geweldig moeilik vir my nou. So om by hom uit te kom en hom te help is moeilik, dis rof”.

¹⁵⁵ “Ek is veronderstel om so 5 uur by die huis te kom, maar meestal kom ek tussen ses en sewe by die huis”.

¹⁵⁶ “My man werk skofte, net as hy middag skofte werk is dit ’n probleem maar anderste is hy by die huis as hulle by die huis kom”.

¹⁵⁷ “my oudste seun is baie selfstandig en geweldig verantwoordelik. Hy vat vir sussie skooltoe en wag vir haar na skool en dan stap hulle saam huis toe. Die jongste is in naskool. Hy kort die dissipline en roetine wat dit vir hom bied. Hy is bietjie aandag afleibaar”.

¹⁵⁸ “hulle het ’n goeie verhouding met hulle pa, maar ek dink ’n ma is nogsteeds ’n ma”.

¹⁵⁹ “Ek voel baie skuldig daaroor”.

the best mother there is"¹⁶⁰. This is a difficult situation for her, with no easy answer and although she says: "I chastise myself often, but there is only that much you can do"¹⁶¹. She does however say that: "my job is good for my children, my husband doesn't have an education, so he is a foreman and doesn't earn a big salary. So we are absolutely dependent on my salary. If it wasn't for my salary, my children wouldn't have had the life they have now. So it's a choice you have to make"¹⁶² (Pieterse, 2012).

"This is a very demanding job, I enjoy it and I really like it, but you know what, when I lost my father, I resented myself for not spending enough time with him. I know now, that if something had to happen to one of my children I don't think I would get through it. I spend very little time with my children"¹⁶³ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia is well aware of the difficulty of being a woman and falling pregnant while working. She says that during the time she was pregnant there was no legislation or workplace policy restricting a pregnant woman from working. She says: "that's what was different for me here (comparing how things worked at the factory vs. mining). I worked up until four weeks before I went into labour and I did my own work. I wasn't on light duty; I went into the factory, did laser alignments, I climbed onto cranes until I was eight months along and did all my own work"¹⁶⁴. She says that: "people didn't treat me differently, because I didn't allow it"¹⁶⁵. It was a matter of willpower and personal choice. "I told myself: 'You've been called out to work, and I went there and I did my job. In fact, in my exit-interview they asked me how many children I have, and I told them three. They then asked me: 'when did you have these children?' I told them I had all three whilst working here and then when the woman from Human

¹⁶⁰ "Ek is goed in my werk, ek weet dit, maar ek is nie die beste ma wat daar is nie".

¹⁶¹ "Ek stenig myself baie maar jy kan net soveel doen".

¹⁶² "die werk is baie goed vir my kinders, my man het nie geleerdheid nie so hy is 'n voorman, hy kry nie 'n baie goeie salaris nie. So ons is absoluut afhanklik van my salaris. As dit nie vir my salaris was nie het my kinders nie die lewe gehad wat hulle nou het nie. So dis maar die besluit wat jy maak".

¹⁶³ "Hierdie is 'n baie demanding job, ek geniet dit, en dis vir my baie lekker, maar weet jy ek het my pa verloor en myself baie verwyd omdat ek baie min tyd met hom spandeer het en ek weet nou nog as daar iets met een van my kinders moet oorkom ek weet nie hoe ek daardeur sal kom nie. Ek spandeer verskriklik min tyd met my kinders".

¹⁶⁴ "dis wat vir my so anders was as hier (fabriek teenoor mynbou). Ek het gewerk tot vier weke voor ek gekraam het. En ek het my eie werk gedoen. Ek was nie op 'light duty' nie. Ek het in die fabriek ingegaan, lasor alignments gedoen, ekt op krane geklim tot 8 maande en ekt my eie werk gedoen".

¹⁶⁵ "mense het my nie anders behandel nie, want ek het dit nie toegelaat nie".

Resources looked through my file she said that she couldn't see when I was pregnant"¹⁶⁶ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia is strongly against Anglo's policy on pregnant women, although she understands the health and safety risks. "I think a woman should be able to decide for herself whether she wants to work during her pregnancy. Your body tells you what you can and can't do. You just have to listen to it"¹⁶⁷. She recalls her own experience of being pregnant while working: "I remember when I was eight months pregnant with my little boy, I climbed a ladder (at work). When I reached the top it felt as if he was in my throat! After that I realised I couldn't climb ladders anymore"¹⁶⁸. She says that a woman will know what her limits are when she is pregnant. For her: "if I saw that a floor was slippery or where an oil spill happened, I told them that I couldn't go there because if I slipped and fell I would hurt myself. You just have to be responsible"¹⁶⁹. She goes on to talk about a number of issues that arise when women in mining, especially those involved in manual labour are put on 'light duty' or surface work due to pregnancy and the animosity it creates between workers. This to her creates additional problems such as that you lose your sense of belonging to the team that you are allocated to and furthermore, you are judged by everyone for falling pregnant (Pieterse, 2012).

Being a woman in mining is difficult says Celia, and talks about the two sides of the coin by firstly saying: "look, I have a daughter and I work in the mining industry, but I would not allow my daughter to do it. I won't. It is just not right. I wouldn't want her to do what I do, it's much too stressful and if she really wants to be a mother one day, she should be with her children. My own children don't get the attention they should

¹⁶⁶ "En ek het vir myself gesê: 'Jy is uitgeroep vir werk en ek het daar gekom en dit gedoen. Inteendeel, met my exit interview het hulle gevra hoeveel kinders ek het, en toe sê ek drie. En toe vra hulle maar waar het ek die kinders gekry? Toe sê ek nee terwyl ek hier gewerk het en toe kyk die vrou deur my rekord en sê sy kon nooit sien waar ek swanger was nie".

¹⁶⁷ "Ek dink 'n vrou moet self die keuse kan uitoefen of sy wil werk of nie terwyl sy swanger is. Jou liggaam sê vir jou wat jy kan doen en nie kan doen nie. Jy moet net luister".

¹⁶⁸ "Ek onthou met my seuntjie, ek was 8 maande swanger toe klim ek 'n leer uit. Toe ek bo kom het dit gevoel of hy in my keel sit. Daarna het ek besef ek kan nie weer 'n leer uitklim nie".

¹⁶⁹ "as ek sien byvoorbeeld waar daar 'n gladde vloer was of waar daar olie lekke was, het ek net gesê ek kan nie daar gaan nie, want as ek daar gly gaan seer kry. Mens moet net verantwoordelik wees".

get from their mother"¹⁷⁰. She then goes on to say that on the other side: "mining is perfect for career driven women. Because here you will get the support you need. If you want to go places and achieve something, you'll be able to do it here"¹⁷¹ (Pieterse, 2012).

Celia explains two things about the predicament of her current position as a working mother. When considering other women in her position, she does not share their burden of having to sacrifice any aspect of her career to start a family because she already has one. She explains that: "I don't regret having it that way, look, the benefit for me is, even when I look at the other female engineers, I have a family and they are going to struggle to get a family because the work is extremely demanding. I have very little time for my children now. If I had to try now, I would never have had children"¹⁷². But then she goes on to explain the other side of the coin in saying that when considering men of her age, they are already so far ahead of her in their careers. She says that "in terms of the female environment, I am ahead, but in terms of the men I am behind, because if I were a man I would have been a manager by now"¹⁷³. Now, considering her own position, her gender and being a mother is not the only detrimental factors impeding her career at this stage but her age as well. "I want to be an engineering manager before I turn 50, but time is not your friend and I sometimes feel that I am behind the other engineers who are younger than me, and I still have so much to learn"¹⁷⁴ (Pieterse, 2012).

¹⁷⁰ "kyk ek het 'n dogtertjie en ek is self in mynbou en ek sal nie toelaat dat my dogtertjie dit doen nie. Ek sal nie. Dit is net nie vir my reg nie. Ek sal nie wil hê sy moet doen wat ek doen nie, dis te stresvol en as sy regtig 'n ma wil wees moet sy by haar kinders wees. My kinders kry nie die aandag wat hulle van hulle ma af moet kry nie".

¹⁷¹ "vir vrouens wat career driven is, is mynbou perfek vir jou. Want hier gaan jy support kry. As jy iewers wil kom en iets wil beryk sal jy dit hier kan doen".

¹⁷² "Ek is nie spyt ek't dit so gehad nie, ek kyk die voordeel vir my is self as ek na die ander vroue ingenieurs kyk, ek het 'n gesin en hulle gaan baie sukkel om 'n gesin te kru, want die werk is verskriklik demanding. Ek het baie min tyd nou vir kinders. As ek nou moes probeer, sou ek nooit kinders gehad het nie".

¹⁷³ "in terme van die vrou environment is ek voor, maar in terme van die mans is ek agter, want as ek 'n man was, was ek nou al 'n manager".

¹⁷⁴ "Ek wil graag 'n engineering manager wees voor ek 50 is, maar tyd is nie jou vriend nie en dit voel soms ek is agter van die ander ingenieurs wat jonger is, ek moet nog so baie leer".

CHAPTER 8

ANNETTE: HITLER'S DAUGHTER

“If you are a man in production and you do that, then you’re a strong man, but if I do it, then I am just a bitch”.

(Prinsloo, 2012)

Annette Prinsloo made history in Anglo Coal when she became the first female engineering manager in the company ever, and the second youngest person to ever be promoted to that position. She is 32 years old.

Annette is born and raised Centurion, Gauteng. She is the eldest of three siblings, with two younger brothers. Her father is a civil engineer and her mother a teacher. Growing up in an upper middle class (Afrikaner) family exposed her to a number of privileged experiences. She fondly remembers visiting NASA in the United States of America (USA) during a family holiday in her teenage years in 1995. Annette comes from a long line of aviators, with her grandfather being a VIP pilot for the Nationalist Party and her father completing his compulsory military service in the Air Force and later obtaining his Private Pilot Licence. This is where her love for mechanics and engineering started. At first she wanted to study aeronautical engineering at the University of Pretoria, because they were the only university offering that specific degree, but after receiving a full scholarship in mining related fields, offered by Anglo Coal with the added benefit of employment she decided to rather study mechanical engineering (Prinsloo, 2012).

She excelled at her studies at Tukkies¹⁷⁵ and enjoyed the freedom of being a carefree university student staying in a popular female hostel, Huis Nerina for which in her senior year she was also vice Primaria¹⁷⁶. Her weekends were

¹⁷⁵ Colloquial name for University of Pretoria students

¹⁷⁶ Leadership role within a hostel as part of the student body

spent studying, socialising with friends, other hostel students and occasionally visiting her family (Prinsloo, 2012).

Upon graduating with a few distinctions she was hired as a junior engineer for Anglo Coal and after completing her government certificate of competency (GCC) in 2007 she was promoted to full engineer. She has been working for Anglo Coal for nine years now. Annette has worked on a number of Anglo Coal mines in the Witbank coal fields and have specialised in underground, plant and surface, services and diesel machinery. She completed her mining ticket in record time, less than a year and passed the exam first time around. This is something she says was very hard and she knew going in that not everyone gets it, especially not the first time around (Prinsloo, 2012).

In describing a typical day at work she jokingly says: “It is accompanied by a lot of swearing!”¹⁷⁷. She would get up around 4am in the morning to leave her house at around 5am and arrive at work just after 6am. Her mornings are normally filled with production and engineering meetings where they discuss “everything to do with the production of the previous day, so what we will typically discuss is uhm, how much tons were cut, what went wrong, which machines were down and which ones is still down”¹⁷⁸. Annette would typically get home just after 6pm in the evening, but then she is mostly on-call for emergencies (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette got married in 2013 to Ettienne, a former electrical foreman for Anglo Coal. They met each other at work while he was still reporting to her. They have been together for 7 years. They have no children together but his young son from a previous marriage lives with them. Ettienne is currently self-employed and works from home. They hired an au pair to take care of their son in the afternoons after school and between Ettienne and the domestic workers the household chores are taken care of. Annette believes that because he is

¹⁷⁷ “Dit gaan gepaard met baie vloek!”

¹⁷⁸ “alles om produksie van die vorige dag te bespreek, so basies wat jy bespreek is, uhm, hoeveel tonne is gesny, wat het verkeerd geloop, watter masjiene het gestaan, watter masjiene staan nogsteeds”.

familiar with the mining industry he understands the nature of her work and how demanding it can be at times. She continues to say that: “Other people like working with people and they are good at it, but the part I like most about my job is the engineering, I love solving problems, I like the machinery, I like to learn about them, to know the technical part behind it, to do the maintenance and the planning. I don’t like the people part of it. I’m not good at it, I don’t like it at all. I don’t have a lot of sympathy for people and unfortunately that is 90% of my job”¹⁷⁹ (Prinsloo, 2012).

On being prompted as to why she does not like working with people she says: “As a woman, first of all, they think I have a lot of sympathy, so they think they can discuss anything with me and they can, I have sympathy to an extent, but the abuse it. It’s a lot easier to come and tell me, ‘oh, my wife is ill or my child is ill,’ because they naturally assume that I’ll sympathise, compared to his foreman who will simply say, ‘yes well, fuck it, tough shit, everyone has a wife and children’ and that is actually how I feel as well and I’m dependant on these guys, if he doesn’t work and something breaks then I sit with it”¹⁸⁰ (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette continues to explain that: “the problem is that if you do it for one person you have to do it for everyone, you can’t set that kind of precedent. Look, you have sympathy for someone, but at the end of the day I have to sit at work until who knows what time and wait for a machine to start up again while he sits at home with his sick wife, while I might have a sick husband at home as well. So

¹⁷⁹ “Ander mense hou daarvan om met mense te werk en hulle is goed daarin, maar die lekkerste deel van my werk is ek hou van die engineering deel van my werk, ek hou van die problem solving, ek hou van die masjiene, ek hou van daarvan om van dit te leer, om die tegniese deel agter dit ken, om die maintenance te doen en te beplan. Ek hou nie van die mense deel daarvan nie. Ek is nie goed daarin nie, ek hou nie van die mense deel nie. Ek het nie baie simpatie met mense nie en dis ongelukkig 90% van my werk”.

¹⁸⁰ “As ’n vrou, nommer een, dink hulle ek het baie simpatie, so hulle dink hulle kan enigiets met my bespreek en hulle kan, ek het simpatie tot op ’n mate, maar hulle misbruik dit. Dis baie makliker om vir my te kom sê: ‘sjoe, my vrou is siek of my kind is siek, want dis vir hulle natuurlik dat ek gaan simpatie hê, teenoor sy voorman wat net gaan sê: ‘ja wel, fokkit, tough shit, almal het vrouens en kinders’ en dis eintlik hoe ek voel en ek is afhanklik van hierdie ouens, as hy nie sy werk doen nie, kan iets breek en dan sit ek daarmee”.

you have sympathy and empathy to an extent, but at the end of the day it's still a business¹⁸¹ (Prinsloo, 2012).

She outrightly says: “the most difficult part of my job is firing people who can't stick to the rules of Anglo. At the moment I'm sitting with a very good worker. He works hard and you can depend on him, but he made a mistake because he didn't stick to the rules and now I have to fire him because that's the rule. Although I won't shy away from doing it. If you have to do it, you have to do it, but it's difficult to do that to a man who is 50 years old and will struggle to find another job¹⁸²” (Prinsloo, 2012).

“Another difficult thing is when you're in the field and you're struggling on a plant, things are just going wrong, coal isn't coming through, and you're the reason, because you are the responsible person for the plant, and you are the reason the mine isn't making any money, there is just no flow, because, see, when the coal comes out of the mine, it goes through the plant, if one of the plants are standing still, then the mine stands still and you're seen as the reason because it is your section and you have to manage it. It's difficult when you have to put out fires and to get things going when you don't have a proper maintenance plan to begin with when you take over a section and you have to start all over again. Look, it takes you at least 6 months to get something off the ground¹⁸³” (Prinsloo, 2012).

¹⁸¹ “Die probleem is, doen jy dit vir een iemand, dan moet jy dit vir almal doen, jy kan nie 'n president skep nie. Kyk 'n mens het simpatie vir iemand, maar op die ou end is dit ek wat dan tot wie weet watter tyd by die werk sit en wag dat 'n masjien weer kan op-start terwyl hy by die huis sit by siek vrou terwyl ek dalk ook 'n siek man by die huis het. So mens het simpatie en empatie tot op 'n punt, maar dit is nogsteeds 'n besigheid op die ou end”.

¹⁸² “Die moeilikste deel van my werk is om mense te fire wat nie by die reëls van Anglo hou nie. Ek sit nou weer met 'n geval van 'n baie goeie werker, hy werk hard, jy kan op hom staatmaak, maar hy het 'n fout gemaak omdat hy nie by die reëls gehou het nie, en nou moet ek hom fire want dis die reël. Alhoewel ek nie sal skroom om dit te doen nie. As jy dit moet doen, moet jy dit doen, maar dit is moeilik om dit vir 'n man wat 50 is wat baie moeilik weer gaan werk kry”.

¹⁸³ “'n Ander moeilike ding is as jy in die veld is en jy sukkel op die plant, dinge gaan net verkeerd, kole kom nie deur nie, en jy is die rede, want jy is die verantwoordelike persoon vir die plant, en jy is die rede dat die myn nie geld maak nie, daar is net geen vloei nie, want kyk soos die kole uit die myn kom, gaan dit deur die plant, as een van die plants staan, dan staan die myn en jy word gesien as die rede want dis jou seksie en jy moet die manage. Dis so moeilik as jy moet begin vure doodslaan om dinge aan die gang

She jokingly says that the only way she deals with the hardships of her job is with very much alcohol, but then adds that: “No, but seriously, at home you should switch off. I am lucky enough to have a husband who understands. I have a husband who understands when I have to work late and doesn’t get suspicious when I am at work until 2am in the morning, he knows I am really at work. There are a lot of men that work with us whose wives become suspicious. You must remember that all the women who are now in management positions are the first women to be in that position. It was like that on every mine I have worked on. There’s a man on the mine and for 20 years his wife knows that he has been working for another man. Now all of a sudden he is working for a woman and it is a woman calling him at 3 in the morning asking him what is going on in his section or he is calling another woman at 3 in the morning or even worse, we both are still at work at that time because something broke, because that’s the mine, if something breaks you have to fix it, production depends on it. We as women working on the mine have the same challenges as the men do¹⁸⁴” (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette confessed that she understands where these wives are coming from by saying: “I think I would also find it difficult if my husband should start working for a woman and she phones him at 3 in the morning. It would, it would be very difficult for me. So to a certain extent I can understand it and you don’t expect it when you start working on the mine, I mean it’s a professional environment you don’t expect it, especially not in the beginning. My first appointment, the man that was working for me and funnily enough now after six years his wife and I

te kry as jy nie ’n ordentlike maintenance plan het om mee te begin as jy ’n seksie oorvat nie en jy moet dit van voor af begin. Kyk, dit vat jou at least 6 maande voor jy ’n ding op sy voete het”.

¹⁸⁴ “Nee maar rêrig nou, by die huis moet jy regtig probeer afsluit. Ek is baie gelukkig om ’n man te hê wat verstaan. Ek het ’n man wat verstaan as ek laat werk en wat nie agterdochtig raak as ek tot twee uur by die werk sit nie, hy weet ek sit regtig by die werk. Daar is baie mans wat saam met ons werk wat se vrouens baie agterdochtig raak. Onthou net, meeste van ons vrouens wat nou in bestuursposte is by myne is die eerste vroue wat in daardie poste staan, dit was so op al die myne waar ek nou al gewerk het. En nou is daar ’n ou, hy werk al vir 20 jaar op die myn, sy vrou weet hy werk vir ’n man, maar nou skielik werk hy vir ’n vrou. Nou skielik is dit ’n vrou wat hom 3uur in die nag bel en vra wat gaan met sy seksie, of nou bel hy 3uur in die nag ’n vrou of erger, ons al twee sit nog tot daardie tyd by die werk as iets breek, want dis die myn, as iets breek maak jy dit reg, dis produksie wat daarvan afhang. Ons vrouens wat op die myn werk, het al die uitdagings wat die mans ook het”.

are good friends, but at that stage she nearly left him because she thought we were having an affair because he was with me every day, we were together in meetings, we were together on site and we work late together. So, I understand it, but it puts a lot of extra pressure on me and you know, there has never been any reason for anyone to feel that way. And you see, men don't have that problem¹⁸⁵ (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette continues to explain how the gendered aspect of her work affects her: “especially in production, or in the production environment there are mainly men. I have always or mostly been the only woman in the engineering side, every now and then there is a tradeswoman. I have a lot of understanding for it, but it makes my life very difficult¹⁸⁶” (Prinsloo, 2012).

On talking about her coping strategies she says: “your level of stress becomes very different to everyone else. Something that is very difficult for someone else, is nothing to me. For example, a waitress’ biggest stress factor is ten tables, mine is whether one of the guys working for me will die today, he might fall off a machine or something can drive over him and that’s serious matters, we work with people’s lives. But I think you come home, you switch off, you climb in a hot bath with a glass of red wine, and tomorrow you wake up and carry on. If you allow these things to affect you, you will either become deeply depressed or you will simply not be able to cope with your work. You must simply learn how to carry on and I see how many people can’t cope with their work, they suffer from heart attacks or nervous break-downs, especially because we work in production. You see we have daily targets, for every hour

¹⁸⁵ “Ek dink dit sal vir my ook moeilik wees as my man nou vir ’n vrou moet begin werk en sy hom 3uur die nag moet bel. Dit sal, dit sal vir moeilik wees. So tot ’n mate kan ek dit verstaan en jy verwag nie so iets as jy daar begin werk nie, ek bedoel dis ’n professionele environment, jy verwag dit nie, veral nie aan die begin nie. My heel eerste aanstelling, die man wat onder my gewerk het, en snaaks genoeg, nou na ses jaar is ek en sy vrou eintlik vriende, maar op daai stadium het sy hom amper gelos omdat sy gedink het ons het ’n verhouding omdat hy elke dag saam my was, ons was saam in meetings, ons was saam op site, ons het saam laat gewerk. So ek verstaan dit, maar dit sit baie ekstra stress op my en jy weet, daar was nog nooit enige rede vir enige iemand om so te voel nie. En kyk, mans het nie daardie probleem nie”.

¹⁸⁶ “Veral by produksie, of in die produksie environment is dis oorwegend mans, ek is was nog altyd of meeste van die tyd die enigste vrou in die hele engineering kant wat ’n vrou is, nou en dan is daar ’n ambagsvrou. Ek het baie begrip daarvoor maar dit maak my lewe baie moeilik”.

that a machine isn't working the mine loses R200 000. The other day I had a break-down for 16 hours. That means that during that time the mine lost 1.6 million Rand which can never be recovered, and you are the reason even though you personally had nothing to do with it, like in that case water seeped into the engine and froze. It's no one's fault, no one could have prevented it, it happens, but it is my section, my plant was at a standstill for 16 hours. 1.6 million Rand, you can never recover it¹⁸⁷" (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette is weary to comment on which of the sexes have it better at work, she says: "I don't necessarily believe that a man copes better, but they cope differently. I take on the pressure of production and so much more, the things at home and the people I work with. You must remember that 9 out of 10 men I work with have little women at home, to put in that way, or women who work half day. Let's be realistic, for at least 7 of those men, they get home and their food has already been cooked, their homes are clean, the children have been bathed. I have to come home and cook because my husband works as well. Men naturally have stress as well, but for example a foreman has about ten guys working under him, and those ten guys tell their sappy stories to him, that's what he has to deal with, and men are more difficult, they are still able to tell someone, 'hey, fuck off, you did a kak job' and there won't be a grievance lodged against him. I do it, someone immediately lodges a grievance¹⁸⁸" (Prinsloo, 2012).

¹⁸⁷ "Jou level van stress raak net heeltemal anders as almal anders sin. Goed wat vir ander mense erg is, is vir jou niks nie. Byvoorbeeld, 'n waitress se grootste stres is tien tafels, myne is gaan een van die ouens wat vir my werk vandag doodgaan, hy kan dalk van 'n masjien afval of iets kan bo oor hom ry en dis ernstige sake, ons werk met mense se lewens. Maar ek dink, jy kom huis toe, jy sluit af, en jy klim in 'n baie warm bad met 'n glas rooiwyn, môre staan jy op en jy gaan aan. As jy gaan toelaat dat die goed jou affekteer gaan of in 'n diep depressie sak of jy gaan net nie kan cope met jou werk nie. Jy moet net leer om te kan aangaan en ek sien hoe party mense nie kan cope nie, hulle kry hartaanvalle en senuwee-ineenstortings, veral omdat ons in produksie werk. Kyk ons het daaglikse targets, vir elke uur as 'n plant staan, verloor ons myn R200 000. Ek het nou die dag 'n 16ure break-down gehad, dit beteken vir daardie tyd het die myn R1.6 miljoen rand verloor en dit kan nooit weer opgemaak word nie, en jy is die rede daarvoor, al het jy persoonlik niks daarmee uit te waai nie, soos met daai geval, daar het water in die motor ingekom en die engin het gevries. Dis niemand se skuld nie, niemand kon dit verhoed het nie, dit gebeur, maar dit is my seksie, my plant wat gestaan het vir 16ure. R1.6 miljoen, jy maak dit nie op nie".

¹⁸⁸ "Ek dink nie noodwendig 'n man cope beter nie, maar hulle cope anders. Ek vat die stress van produksie en soveel meer, die goed by die huis en die mense waarmee ek werk. Onthou, nege uit die

Annette notes her frustration with the double standard of being a woman in a managerial position by saying that: “If you are a man in production and you do that, then you’re a strong man, but if I do it, then I am just a bitch. I can’t even speak to someone loudly, not necessarily even swearing, then they log a grievance. If you’re a woman and you do that then you’re a bitch and a cow, or my favourite, I’m ‘Hitler’s daughter’¹⁸⁹” (Prinsloo, 2012). “Men as well, when you’re sitting with them in a meeting and they swear, then they immediately apologise. And I won’t apologise when I swear¹⁹⁰”. She jokingly says that she thinks she now curses more than them (Prinsloo, 2012).

On changing herself, Annette had the following to say: “I think you change, I think you have to change. You have to become harder. You always have to be fair, you have to treat everyone the same, rules are rules and keep to them, you have to be consistent, but especially we as women, you still have to keep your feminine touch. You can’t afford for even a moment to become like a man, and it’s easy to swear and carry on like a man, hey, but they don’t have respect for you when you do that. They have less respect for you when you do that and I still put on pretty clothes and make-up, even when I’m going to the plant and get very dirty, I still wear pretty clothes and make-up, I’m still a woman. I think a man has more respect for you when you do that. I won’t be someone who looks unattractive to myself and doesn’t look after myself to fit into the production environment. You can still look pretty, speak nicely, of course it’s relative, because sometimes you still say, ‘Oh fuck’. My mother always told me, ‘keep

tien van die mans waarmee ek werk het vrouetjies by die huis, om dit nou so te stel of vrouens wat halfdag werk. Kom ons wees realisties, vir ten minste sewe van daai ouens kom hulle by die huis, daar is klaar kos gemaak, hulle huise is skoon, die kinders is klaar gebad. Ek moet huis toe kom en kom kos maak want my man werk ook. Mans het natuurlik ook stress, maar kyk nou ’n voorman het byvoorbeeld tien ouens wat onder hom is, en daai tien ouens kom vertel hulle soppie stories vir hom, dis waarmee hy deal, en mans is moeiliker, hulle kan nog vir iemand sê: ‘man, fokoff, jy het nou ’n kak job gedoen’ en daar sal nie ’n grievance teen hom gemaak word nie. Doen ek dit nou? Daar word onmiddellik ’n grievance ge-log.”

¹⁸⁹ “As jy ’n man op produksie is en jy doen dit, is jy sterk produksie man, as ek dit doen, dan is ek net ’n bitch. Ek kan nie eers net hard met iemand praat nie, nie eers noodwendig al gevloek het nie, dan log hulle ’n grievance. As jy ’n vrou is en jy doen dit, dan is jy ’n bitch en teef, of my gunsteling, ek is mos ‘hitler se dogter’”.

¹⁹⁰ “Mans ook, as jy in ’n meeting saam hulle sit en hulle vloek, dan sê hulle dadelik jammer. En ek gaan nie jammer sê as ek vloek nie”.

your femininity.’ I think my mother was worried that I was going to change, because you see, you are a miner and I think it’s easy to become a Witbank miner, fat and rude with curlers in your hair, a typical Witbank... you can easily become like that. There are women like that, we have a woman like that, and she was a miner, now she is a section manager, but she is a miner. You never see her without her overalls. We sit in budget meetings with head office, it’s a huge meeting and she wears jeans and flip-flops. I mean, when you go to that meeting, the men wear ties, so if you’re a woman you would wear a business suit. People have a certain perception about miners and miners can dress that way, but if you are a woman... I can’t necessarily wear nice dresses and skirts because I work in the field, but even if I wear a pair of jeans I can still look nice and neat. I will never go to work without wearing make-up or my hair not looking pretty, you have to, you are still a woman, and besides no man would ever want you if you’ve become like those Witbank miners. I look down on a woman who looks like that and sometimes I think it’s perhaps just a woman’s way. For example I have a planner, she wears men’s trousers, she’s not a tomboy or anything like that, but she never wears make-up or anything like that, she would never do something nice with her hair, she just puts it up into a ponytail, she look untidy, she never look as if she is in a professional capacity. I know it’s a mine, but it is still a professional environment. It’s still Anglo American, it’s a professional company. I can sit on the plant and become pitch black, but when I’m in the office I’m neat. She will, for example, and I know it’s outside of work, become involved in physical bar fights and the worst of it is she would come and tell you about it: ‘Sjo, last night I beat a girl up that was flirting with my husband again with a fist through her face and I mean, she would never have been that way if she wasn’t working on a mine, I promise you. I think it’s just, you can easily look trashy and people will accept it, because it’s a mine, but you see I’m senior management and people look up to you and perhaps I’m the last person to talk, in a production you don’t talk and carry on, you get judged on your appearance, you can be strict and still be a good manager without being crass, crude or rough¹⁹¹’ (Prinsloo, 2012).

¹⁹¹ “Ek dink jy verander, ek dink jy moet verander. Jy moet harder word. Jy moet altyd regverdig wees, jy

“I have never had an incident where I was sexually harassed by a man. My very first job, when I was doing vacation work at one of the mines, a man said to me, ‘Wow, you’re a tasty thing, when am I going to have you?’ I don’t even know who it was, it was a tradesman with long hair, but I think that was the worst thing that’s happened to me. At that time it still shocked me, now I’d have something nice to say back to him. But I have to honestly say, I know people worry about sexual harassment and that kind of thing, but it has never happened to me. I think those kind of things happen underground and more often to black women. I think, furthermore, it doesn’t happen as often with us in coal, not at Anglo in any event, I think it happens more often and a lot worse in gold and platinum. It’s actually a very thin line. You also have to understand that sexual harassment is an immediately dismissible offence, so you don’t have to prove that you are innocent, we just have to prove you are guilty, a balance of

moet mense op dieselfde manier hanteer, reëls is reëls en hou by dit, jy moet consistent wees maar veral ons vrouens, jy moet nogsteeds jou feminine touch hou. Jy kan nie vir een oomblik bekostig om soos ’n man te word nie, en dis maklik om te vloek en te kere te gaan soos ’n man nê, maar hulle het nie respek vir jou as jy dit doen nie. Hulle het minder respek vir jou as jy dit doen en ek trek nogsteeds mooi aan en ek make-up nogsteeds, al gaan ek plant toe ek word baie vuil, ek trek nogsteeds mooi aan en ek make-up nogsteeds, ek bly nogsteeds ’n vrou. Ek dink ’n man het meer respek vir jou as jy dit doen. Ek gaan nie iemand wees wat vir myself lelik lyk en nie myself versorg om in te pas by die produksie omgewing nie. Jy kan nogsteeds mooi lyk, mooi praat, dis natuurlik relatief, want partykeer sê jy maar: ‘ag fok!’ My ma het altyd vir my gesê: ‘behou net jou femininity’. Ek dink my ma was bang ek gaan verander, want jy sien, jy’s ’n myner en ek dink jy kan baie maklik ’n Witbank myner word, dik en ongeskik en krullers in die kop, ’n tipiese witbank... jy kan dit baie maklik word. Daar is vrouens wat so is, ons het ’n vrou by ons, sy was ’n myner, sy is nou ’n section manager, maar sy is ’n myner. Jy sien haar nooit sonder haar overalls nie. Ons sit in budget meetings met hoofkantoor, dis ’n moerse meeting, nou trek sy ’n jean en plakkies aan. Ek meen, as jy na daai meeting toe gaan, die mans trek hulle dasse aan, so as ’n vrou sou jy ’n business suit aangetrek het. Mense het persepsies oor myners, en myners kan maar so aantrek, maar as jy ’n vrou is... Ek kan nou nie noodwendig mooi rokkies of rompies aantrek nie, want ek werk in die veld, maar self al trek ek ’n denim aan, ek kan nogsteeds mooi lyk en netjies aantrek. Ek sal nooit werk toe gaan sonder make-up of sonder dat my hare mooi lyk nie, jy moet, jy is nogsteeds ’n vrou en geen man sal jou in elk geval wil hê as jy soos ’n Witbank myner geword het nie. Ek sien neer op ’n vrou wat so lyk, en ek dink partykeer dis net ’n vrou se aard miskien. Ek het byvoorbeeld ’n planner wat, sy trek mans broeke aan en sy is nie tomboy of iets nie, maar syt nooit make-up aan of iets nie, sy doen nooit iets met haar hare nie, sy maak dit sommer vas in ’n pony, sy lyk onnetjies, sy lyk nie of sy in ’n professionele werk staan nie, ek weet dis ’n myn, maar dis nogsteeds ’n professionele werksomgewing. Dis nogsteeds Anglo American, dis ’n professionele maatskappy. Ek kan op die plant gaan sit en pikswart word, maar as ek op kantoor is, is ek netjies. Sy sal byvoorbeeld, en ek weet dis nou buite die werk, maar sy sal in handgevegte betrokke raak by ’n bar, en die ergste is dat sy dit vir jou loop en vertel: ‘Jis, ek het nou weer gisteraand ’n girl wat by my man aangelê het gebliksem met ’n vuis deur die gesig’ en ek meen, sy sou in haar lewe nie so gewees het as sy nie op ’n myn gewerk het nie, ek belowe jou. Ek dink dis net, jy kan baie maklik trashy lyk en mense aanvaar dit, want dis ’n myn, maar onthou ek is senior management, mense kyk op na jou toe en miskien is ek die laaste een want in ’n produksie meeting praat jy nie, jy gaan te kere, maar jy gaan op jou voorkoms ge-judge word, jy kan streng wees en jy kan nogsteeds ’n goeie manager wees sonder om kras, grof of kru te wees”.

probabilities. Men are really afraid of it, really, I have to say. I'm sure they've made examples of a few men. I know of an HR lady who was cornered in her office and kissed by a man, but she never made a big deal about it, but I think that was more a case of back and forth flirting and then it turned into that, but I'm sure things like that happen, but I can't even give you an example if I try think back on my time on the mine. I can't give you one example of someone who was really guilty of it. I've handled a case where a foreman, he was so fed-up with a woman on his team that he started to write down her instructions on a piece of paper, once he handed it to her roughly and accidentally touched her breast. I found him innocent because it was really just an accident and I told her afterward, 'you really have to be careful of crying wolf, you really have to be careful, because, first of all, you can ruin a man's life, his career forever. You can never escape and accusation like that, when you are found guilty'¹⁹² (Prinsloo, 2012).

She is protective of the men that she works with in regard to sexual harassment. She says: "I feel a woman should be able to discern, I have someone telling me my hair looks nice every day and all they mean by it is that my hair looks nice, nothing more. Because you should know. At the end of the

¹⁹² "Ek het nog nooit 'n geval gehad waar 'n man my sexually harass het nie. My heel, heel eerste werk toe ek nog vakansiewerk by een myn gedoen het, het 'n ou vir my gesê: 'Jis, jy's 'n lekker ding, wanneer gaan ek jou vat?' ek weet nie eers wie dit was nie, dit was 'n ambagsman met lang hare, maar ek dink dit was die ergste ding wat nog ooit met my gebeur het. Daai tyd het dit my nog verskriklik geskok, nou sal ek vir hom iets baie mooi kan terug sê. Maar ek moet nou eerlikwaar sê, ek weet mense worry oor sexual harassment en daai goed, maar dit het nog nooit met my gebeur nie. Ek dink daai goed gebeur ondergrond en dit gebeur meer met die swart vrouens. Ek dink verder ook dit gebeur nie so baie by ons in steenkool nie, by Anglo in elk geval nie, ek dink dit gebeur baie meer en erger by goud en platinum. Dis eintlik maar 'n baie dun lyn. Jy moet ook verstaan dat sexual harassment is 'n dismissible offence onmiddellik, so jy hoef nie jousef onskuldig te bewys nie, ons moet jou net skuldig kan bewys, 'n balance of probabilities. Mans is regtig baie bang daarvoor, regtig ek moet sê. Ek is seker daar is examples gemaak van 'n paar mans. Ek weet van 'n HR vrou wat in haar kantoor vasgedruk is en gesoen is deur 'n man, maar sy het nooit 'n big deal daarvan gemaak nie, maar ek dink ook daai was maar 'n geval van oor en weer flirtasies en toe draai dit nou uit in dit en ek is seker daarvan dit gebeur, maar ek kan nie vir jou eers 'n voorbeeld gee as ek nou terug dink aan my tyd by myn nie. Ek kan nie een voorbeeld gee van iemand wat regtig skuldig was daaraan nie. Ek het al 'n saak hanteer met 'n voorman wat vir 'n vrou op sy span, hy het so raadop geraak met haar dat hy haar instruksies op 'n papier neergeskryf het en eenkeer dit hard na haar toe aangegee het en toe perongeluk aan haar bors gevat het. Ek het hom onskuldig gevind, want dit was regtig 'n ongeluk en ek het na die tyd vir haar gesê jy moet baie versigtig wees om 'wolf' te skree, jy moet baie versigtig wees want nommer een, jy kan 'n man se lewe, sy toekoms kan jy verwoes vir altyd. As jy eers so klad teen jou naam het, almal weet jy kry dit nie weer af nie, nie as jy skuldig bevind is nie.

day you are in a mining environment, you are in a man's world, you decided to work there, now you have to work. If I walk into a crowd of men while they are telling a dirty joke, it was me who walked into it. You have to be able to discern and you can't be oversensitive. Men sometimes just say something, or tell a joke and then it's just because he found it really funny, it's not to make you feel uncomfortable or to embarrass you. But I think it might be different for me, because I am senior management, still I hope they have respect for me and not just because I'm in this position¹⁹³. "Look, I think the most difficult thing when you're a twenty-three or twenty-four year old student is when you have to walk into the mine and give orders for a man of fifty years old that has been on the mine for thirty years, I think I would also be pissed off. The big secret in that situation is not to act as though you know more than them, and even today you won't know more than they do. But still, depending on how you approach handle them, it gets better. I mean. Just before I got my ticket, my general supervisor, he was my boss, he has thirty years of experience and two months later after I got my ticket I was his boss and you can't tell a guy like that what to do. I think I learnt that from him, you respect the position, you don't necessarily have to respect the person, and that's difficult, because you walk in there as a snot-nosed student, plus you are a woman as well. I think those who don't have respect for you, at least respect the position¹⁹⁴" (Prinsloo, 2012).

¹⁹³ "Ek voel net 'n vrou moet kan onderskeid tref, ek het elke dag iemand wat vir my sê my hare lyk mooi en al wat hulle daarmee bedoel is dat my hare mooi lyk, niks meer nie. Want jy kan mos nou weet. Op die ou end is jy in 'n mining environment, jy is in 'n mans wêreld, jy het besluit jy wil daar werk, nou moet jy werk. As ek tussen 'n groep mans in stap wat 'n lelike grappie vertel, dis ek wat daar ingestap het. Jy moet kan onderskeid tref en jy kan nie oorsensitief wees nie. Mans sê partykeer net iets, of vertel 'n grappie en dan is dit net want dit was vir hom moer snaaks, dis nie om jou ongemaklik te maak nie of jou nou te wil embarrass nie. Maar ek dink dalk is dit anders met my, want ek is senior management, tog hoop ek hulle het respek vir my self en nie net omdat ek in hierdie posisie is nie".

¹⁹⁴ "Kyk ek dink een van die moeilikste goed, as jy 'n drie en twintigjarige of vier en twintigjarige student is en jy stap nou hier in 'n myn in en jy moet nou orders vir 'n man van in die vyftig gee wat al dertig jaar op die myn is, ek dink ek sal ook pissed off wees oor so iets. Die groot geheim daar is om nie maak of jy meer as hulle weet nie, en tot vandag toe, weet jy nie beter as hulle nie. Maar tog, afhangend van hoe jy hulle hanteer, raak dit beter. Ek meen, net voor ek my ticket gekry het, my general supervisor, hy was my baas, hy het dertig jaar ondervinding, en twee maande later toe ek my ticket het, toe is ek sy baas en jy kan nie vir so ou sê wat om te doen nie. Ek dink ook dis by hom wat ek dit geleer het, jy het respek vir die posisie, jy hoef nie noodwendig respek vir die mens te hê nie, en dis moeilik, want jy stap daar in as 'n snotkop student, plus nou is jy nog 'n vrou. Ek dink dié wat nie respek het vir jou nie, het ten minste respek vir die posisie".

In the way she addresses male colleagues she had the following to say: “I have a few older men who I address as ‘Oom’, because I think it’s a culture thing and I think it’s a respect thing and it’s also about how long you know a person. I don’t know, there are just some men who to me are ‘Oom’s’ and some who are not, so it doesn’t have anything to do with their age, but the ‘Oom’s’ would do anything for you¹⁹⁵” (Prinsloo, 2012).

Again, she mentions the difficulty of being a women in mining, especially at social functions: “It’s difficult, to an extent, at a function, because in most instances you are the only woman there and more so because you have to drink with them and you shouldn’t try to keep up or out-drink them. You can enjoy their company, but you shouldn’t let it get out of hand. You have to know your limits. One time when I was out with the guys and then they get drunk and as soon as someone starts flirting with you, you know, you have to drive home now and if he offers to walk out with you, you make sure you don’t walk out with him alone. You avoid that kind of situation, and the responsibilities lies with me as a person, maybe with him as well, but he won’t prevent the situation so I have to¹⁹⁶” (Prinsloo, 2012).

She clarifies this by adding: “the thing is, the mine is a terrible place, it only takes one incident and that story will spread, and it spreads for years. You have to do very little in order for story to spread, actually, you don’t have to do anything at all. If you’re the last person to leave at every function then that story will spread. You know what I do, I make sure all the men know I have a husband, I talk about him a lot, I make sure to bring him to functions where I

¹⁹⁵ “Ek het party ouer mans waarvoor ek sê ‘Oom’, want ek dink dis ’n kultuur ding en ek dink dis ’n respek ding en dan natuurlik ook hoe langer jou nou al ’n mens ken. Ek weet nie, daar is party mans wat net vir my ’n Oom is en ander is nie, so dit het nie iets te doen met ouderdom nie, maar die ‘Oom’s’ sal vir jou enigeiets doen”.

¹⁹⁶ “Dis moeilik tot ’n mate by ’n funksie, want in meeste gevalle is jy die enigste vrou daar en dan verder want jy moet saam drink maar jy moenie probeer byhou of iemand probeer uit drink nie. Jy kan lekker saam kuier maar jy moenie toelaat dat dit hande uitruk nie. Jy moet jou perke ken. Ek het al saam die ouens gekuier en dan word hulle dronk en sodra iemand by jou by begin aanlê, dan weet jy, jy ry nou en as hy saam met jou wil uitstap, jy maak seker dat jy nie alleen saam hom uitstap nie. Jy vermy so situasie, en die verantwoordelikheid lê by my as persoon, dalk ook by hom, maar hy gaan nie die situasie verhoed nie, ek moet”.

can and make sure they meet him. I definitely think it makes a difference if you have a husband, not only to the men, but to the wives of the men you work with. Look, a drunk man is a drunk man, you can't afford for something to happen. I have taken my team on breaks tice and then we sleep over, but I book my chalet at the opposite end from everyone else and at nine in the evening I go to bed, they can carry on without me. I make sure that there isn't even an opportunity for something to happen, I make sure there isn't a possibility for a story. And I also have good friends with whom I work, the will look after you, they get you drinks and they look after you and make sure that you get home safe, it's not like you get thrown to the wolves¹⁹⁷" (Prinsloo, 2012).

She notes on the racial composition of the mine that: "most of the white men I come across in my position at work are older, older white men, married men with children, most of them are divorced, many are divorced, divorces are rife on the mine, but management positions are still mainly occupied by white men¹⁹⁸" (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette again tries to clarify this from her point of view: "I prefer working with a man rather than a women. Women have a way of holding something against you, where with men it's over and done with. Women also don't like reporting to another woman, in the case of the last three positions below me which were occupied by women, it was the first time they ever had to report to a woman,

¹⁹⁷ "Die ding is net, 'n myn is 'n verskriklike plek, daar hoef net een dingetjie te gebeur, en daardie storie sal loop, en dit loop vir jare. Jy hoef min te doen vir 'n storie om te loop eintlik en jy hoef nie eers regtig iets te doen nie. As jy elke keer by 'n funksie die laaste persoon is om te loop dan gaan daardie storie loop. Jy weet wat doen ek, ek maak seker die mans weet ek het 'n man, ek praat baie oor hom, ek maak seker dat waar ek kan ek hom saambring na funksies toe en ek maak seker hulle ontmoet hom. Ek dink verseker dit help as jy 'n man het, nie net vir die mans nie maar vir die mans saam wie jy werk se vrouens ook. Kyk, 'n dronk man is 'n dronk man, jy kan nie bekostig dat daar gebeur dalk iets nie. Ek het al twee keer my hele span weggevat vir die naweek, dan slaap ons oor, maar ek book vir my 'n chalet aan die heeltmal 'n ander kant van almal anders en nege uur daai aand dan gaan slaap ek, hulle kan maar aan kuier. Ek maak seker daar is nie eers 'n geleentheid vir iets nie, ek maak seker daar is nie 'n moontlikheid vir 'n storie nie. En ek het ook goeie vriende saam wie ek werk, hulle sal jou oppas, hulle kry vir jou drankies en hulle pas jou op en kyk dat jy veilig by die huis kom, jy word darem nie vir die wolwe gegooi nie".

¹⁹⁸ "Die meeste wit mans waarmee ek op my pos te doen kry by die werk is ouer, ouer wit mans, getroude mans met kinders, meestal is geskei, baie is geskei, egskeidings is volop in die myn, maar bestuursposisies is meestal nog deur wit mans beklee".

and it was very difficult for me. Personally I don't know what I would do if I had to report to a woman. I think women are just too temperamental and emotional, I suppose I am as well. It sounds funny, but the first thing you question in a woman is her competency. Really. And any man working with me would probably say the same thing, they wonder whether I am really able to do my job, and the more you work with someone the more you come to realise they might just be competent. If I had to report to a woman now, that is the first thing I would wonder about, I would wonder whether she is capable of being my boss. Perhaps it isn't right, because I never think that about a man. You know, unfortunately a woman is a quota, we are a percentage that has to happen, so with any woman who gets appointed you wonder whether it's because she's able to or whether she has to be. And I've done it before, I have refused to appoint a woman who wasn't competent, I won't do it simply because she is a woman, I refuse and I have gotten into trouble because of it. The other day again, I had to interview a boilermaker and all I did was to put down a toolbox and ask her to carry it from one place to another. If you can't even do that there, how will she be able to do it in her work? So either she's ask a man to do it for her who still has to carry his own as well, or she'll take twice as long, so you have to take those things into account. If she can't manoeuvre her gas cylinders from one place to the next, that's her work, how is she going to do it? I'm not made to do it, we're not made to be boilermakers, and our bodies just aren't built for it. Some things we are made for, others not. Look, I have to be careful now, because I've worked with a female tradesman, she was one of the first diesel mechanics in Anglo, and look she could work any man into the ground or out of their position, but I don't think all women can do that. I always ask them whether they are really able to do what the man next to her is able to do in terms of physical strength. It's probably judgmental, but still, I am a woman and I know our capabilities compared to a man's, I can't manoeuvre a gas cylinder up and down and I'm not a skinny little thing, I am quite strong¹⁹⁹ (Prinsloo, 2012).

¹⁹⁹ “Ek het 'n voorkeur om eerder met 'n man as 'n vrou te werk. Vrouens het 'n manier om 'n ding teen jou te hou, waar met mans dit oor en verby is. Vrouens hou ook nie daarvan om aan 'n vrou te rapporteer nie, met die laaste drie posisies onder my wat deur vroue gehou is, was dit die eerste keer

Annette is ambivalent in talking about power dynamics at work but says the following: “I think it carries more weight if you are a man on the mine, they have more authority than us women. Look, it also depends on where you work in the mine, if you are in production you need a man that’s hard, that almost beats everyone up. You need a guy like that. One that’s able to swear you to pieces, you just need a guy like that.²⁰⁰” (Prinsloo, 2012).

On talking about staying in Witbank and making that her home she says: “now it’s the place where I stay, and you make the best of it. It’s funny, now if someone says I’m a Witbank miner I almost get defensive. Because your life is here now, your husband, your work, your friends. I think you do it with every place you live, either you make it tolerable for yourself or you don’t. I just had to accept it at a stage, look I stay in Witbank, I can’t always worry over it. And I

wat hulle ooit aan ’n vrou moes rapporteer, en dit was vir my verskriklik moeilik. Ek weet self nie wat ek sal doen as ek aan ’n vrou moet rapporteer nie. Ek dink net vrouens is te temperamenteel, en emosioneel, ek is seker maar ook. Dit klink nou snaaks, maar die eerste ding wat jy question by ’n vrou is haar competency. Regtig. En enige man saam wie ek werk sal serker dieselfde van my sê, hulle wonder of ek my werk regtig kan doen, en hoe meer jy dan saam iemand werk hoe meer sien jy dat hulle dalk wel competent is. As ek nou aan ’n vrou moet rapporteer sal dit die eerste ding wees waarvoor ek wonder, ek sal wonder of sy competent is om my baas te wees. Dis dalk nie reg nie, want ek dink dit nooit van ’n man nie. Weet jy, ongelukkig is ’n vrou nou maar ’n kwota, ons is ’n percentage wat moet gebeur, so met enige vrou wat aangestel word wonder jy of sy daar is omdat sy kan of is sy daar omdat sy moet wees. En ek het dit al gedoen, ek het al geweier om ’n vrou aan te stel wat nie competent is nie, ek gaan dit nie net doen omdat sy ’n vrou is nie, ek weier en ek het al in die moeilikheid gekom daarvoor. Ek het nou die dag weer ’n boilermaker geïnterview, en al wat ek gedoen het is om ’n toolbox daar neer te sit en te vra dat sy dit van een plek na ’n ander plek dra. As sy dit nie eers kan doen daar nie, hoe gaan sy dit in haar werk kan doen? So of sy gaan ’n man vra om dit vir haar te doen wat nog sy eie een ook moet dra of sy gaan twee keer langer vat, so jy moet sulke goed in ag neem. As sy nie haar gassilinders van een plek kan karring tot ’n volgende plek nie, dis haar werk, hoe gaan sy dit doen? Ek is nie gemaak om dit te doen nie, ons is nie gemaak om boilermakers te wees nie, ons liggaamsbou is net nie so gemaak nie. Sekere goed is ons gemaak voor en ander goed nie. Kyk ek moet ook nou versigtig wees, want ek het al saam ’n vrou ambagsman, sy was een van die eerste diesel mechanics in Anglo gewees gewerk, en kyk sy kon enige man onder die grond in werk of uit hulle posisie werk, maar ek dink nie alle vroue kan nie. Ek vra altyd vir hulle, kan hulle regtig doen wat die man langs haar kan doen in terme van fisiese krag. Dis seker maar judgemental, maar tog, ek is ’n vrou en ek weet was is ’n vrou se capabilities teenoor ’n man se capabilities, ek kan nie ’n gassilinder op en af karring nie en ek is nie ’n klein tingerige dingetjie nie, ek is redelik sterk”.

²⁰⁰ “Ek dink dit dra meer gewig as jy man is op die myn, hulle het net meer gesag as ons vrouens. Kyk dit hang natuurlik af waar jy werk op ’n myn, as jy in produksie is kort jy ’n man wat hard is, wat omtrent almal bliksem. Jy kort so ou. Een wat mense uit mekaar uit vloek, jy kort net so ou”.

actually enjoy living here now, we have most of the stores that Pretoria has, except of course Exclusive Books, but oh well.²⁰¹ (Prinsloo, 2012).

Annette says that at first her new home was the cause of much embarrassment to her family but that soon changed: “I was always the miner in Witbank, now all of a sudden I have a good position and I make a lot of money, now all of a sudden people want to give you their CV’s for cousins who have always use to judge you just because they can see I make a lot of money it’s not so bad anymore.²⁰²” (Prinsloo, 2012).

She concludes by saying: “I am very lucky to have a husband who comes from a mining environment, he understands my stress, we worked together for a long time, and he knows exactly what my work involves and that I receive phone calls at night like he does as well, I think it’s very difficult if you have someone who doesn’t understand it. It puts a lot a pressure on a marriage if you have a wife that gets angry, or a husband that gets angry if they have to phone you three times during the night, because it’s not your fault, it is part of your work. It must make it so much more difficult if you have a partner to whom you have to justify or fight over. I also think that’s why my relationship is a success, it’s because we understand each other’s stress. If you don’t have a partner who understands that stress or has gone through it themselves it can make or break a marriage.²⁰³” (Prinsloo, 2012).

²⁰¹ “Nou is dit die plek waar ek bly, en jy maak maar die beste daarvan, dis snaaks, nou as iemand van buite af vir my sê ek is ’n Witbank myner dan raak ek al amper defensive. Want nou is jou lewe hier, jou man is hier, jou werk, jou vriende. Ek dink mens doen dit met enige plek waar jy bly, of jy maak dit vir jouself aangenaam of onaangenaam. Ek moes dit net op ’n stadium aanvaar, kyk ek bly nou in Witbank, ek kan nie heelyd daaroor top nie. En ek bly eintlik nou al lekker, ons het al meeste winkels wat in Pretoria is, behalwe natuurlik ’n Exclusive Books, maar ag wat.”

²⁰² “Ek was altyd die myner in Witbank, nou skielik het ek ’n goeie pos en ek maak baie geld, nou wil mense skielik hulle CV vir jou gee vir niggies of nefies wat nog altyd ge-judge het en net omdat hulle kan sien ek maak baie geld is dit nou nie meer so erg nie”.

²⁰³ “Ek is baie gelukkig om ’n man te hê wat uit die mynbou omgewing kom, hy verstaan my stres, ons het lank saam gewerk, hy weet presies wat my werk behels en dat ek gebel word in die nag net soos wat hy gebel word in die nag, ek dink dis baie moeilik as jy iemand het wat dit nie verstaan nie. Dit sit baie stress op ’n huwelik as jy ’n vrou het wat kwaad raak, of ’n man het wat kwaad raak oor hulle jou drie keer in die nag bel, want dis nie jou skuld nie, dis deel van jou werk. Dit moet dit net soveel moeiliker maak as jy ’n partner het waarteenoor jy nog dit ook moet fight of justify. Ek dink ook dis hoekom my verhouding

CHAPTER 9

THE INTERSECTIONS AT PLAY

“Writing about social existence and change we inevitably face the problem of how to represent a particular social configuration, which for us has become less a question of accuracy or fidelity (to the "truth" of what we describe or seek to understand) than one of "performativity.”

(Gibson-Graham, 1996:206)

1 Introduction

This chapter will deal with very specific themes that frequently emerged from all the interviews and observations. In this chapter I will draw on the literature discussed in Chapter two and three and show whether these findings confirms or disprove the literature discussed earlier. I mentioned in the previous chapters that ‘anonymous’ were used to protect the participant’s identity, especially in this chapter. It will be evident from the direct quotations, that using their real names would have left these participants exposed and vulnerable. I will firstly highlight key quotes from the interviews in relation to gender and relating concepts. Thereafter I will discuss issues of race (whiteness) and class specifically that of black and white women in mining.

2 The Categories of the White Women

The following categories were drawn up from all of the interviews. This was based on the typical women that constitute white women in coal mining, either directly or indirectly involved. This should by no means be stated as fact, but only be based on the interviews conducted. What follows here is a discussion of these three categories: ‘City Girls’; ‘Compound Women’ and ‘*Poppe*’. The

‘n sukses is, dis omdat ons mekaar se stres verstaan. As jy nie ‘n partner het wat daardie stress verstaan of al self daardeur was nie kan dit ‘n huwelik maak of breek.’

names of these categories originated from the participants themselves and proved useful to develop the categories.

I think it is important to state here that it is unconventional to say the least to include categories in feminist research. This has even been critiqued as being a male way of doing research. I would however argue that because there are three very distinct notions of women that emerged from the findings, it was necessary for the sake of explanation and analysis to group them into three categories. These categories emerged from the conversations with the participants. The categories cannot be described as merely different femininities because they are racialized and classed.

Table 2: Categories of White Women in Coal Mining

Category	Level of Education	Professional Drivers	Family & Marital Status	Network
'City Girls'	Post-graduate Degrees and Further specialisation in Mining Qualifications	Financial Success; Status; Senior Management	Mostly Single, Some Married with no children	National and International
Compound Women	Matric, Artisan Qualifications and on-the-job training	Success at climbing the ranks and possibly getting into senior management	Married with Children	Family and Community
'Poppe'	Limited Education; Not higher than Matric Certificates	Housewives; The lifestyle their husbands provide	Married with Children	Family and Community

2.1 The “City Girls”

The first category “City Girls”; includes women who attended university and obtained professional or postgraduate degrees in either engineering or other natural sciences. As students these women were all head-hunted by mining companies and were provided with full bursaries and a guaranteed job in the company. They typically came from large cities situated in the Gauteng province. After completion of their studies they relocated to Mpumalanga to relatively small mining towns closely situated to the mines where they began work.

These women are driven by the status of their jobs (professional career women) and the independence that their financial success affords them. They have a certain air to them, in the fact that they are extremely well taken care of and they dress in fashionable professional clothes. Evidently, the life histories, Annette is the only one that forms part of this category. From her life history one can tell that her personal appearance is very important to her (Prinsloo, 2012). Annette (Prinsloo: 2012) states in her life history: “I will never go to work without wearing make-up or my hair not looking pretty, you have to, you are still a woman, and besides no man would ever want you if you’ve become like those Witbank miners. I look down on a woman who looks like that...”. What is clear from her scorn is how much she values and places emphasis on looking feminine. This links to what Connell (2005) and Butler (1990; 1993) argues for in relation to the maintenance and performance of gender. Although Annette (Prinsloo, 2012) does not view it as such, but rather a class differentiation; that it is because of her class that she would not compromise her feminine appearance. Again, as Platt (2011) argues that determining class is often done by examining the sociocultural background of a person. These ‘miners’ that she is referring to do not come from the same sociocultural background as she does.

I mentioned earlier that they are seemingly feminine, to explain this I will refer to their choice of language and use of crude or cuss words. Although none of them spoke that way during the interviews, and some even told me that they would verbally reprimand men that use that type of language in front of them, it slips through now and again in references made to other workers. During the interviews and observations, when speaking to male colleagues, their tone and choice of words would change. They would speak louder and with a much more assertive tone. They can speak the “male” language spoken on mines. These women can act and speak in exactly same way as their white male co-workers in situations where they choose to. This confirms what Steyn (2004; 2005) refers to with “white talk”. These women have mastered the art of sounding like the men and they perpetuate an oppressive occupational culture in doing that.

The vast majority of the ‘City Girls’ had no children. Annette, however is raising her husband’s son from a previous marriage (Prinsloo, 2012). When asked about this, their answer was that it was a deliberate choice. Their careers are more important to them. They simply state do not have the time to take off from work to start a family, never mind going on maternity leave. Frankly, they are annoyed by women who do decide to fall pregnant, “because production suffers” as one participant put it (Anon, 2012). Another reason is that the time away from their jobs (whilst on maternity leave) would cause someone else to excel and possibly take away their chance at promotion. Everything in mining is measured by outcomes and production. Raising a family will cause an inevitable fierce competition between co-workers. Again, this should point to what Hochschild and Machung (2003) refer to as the burden of the ‘second shift’ or the burden of reproduction that Cock (1980) talks about. These women make a conscious choice not to deal with reproduction. What was interesting was that they all commented on the fact that black women have no problem falling pregnant. As one participant put it: this is a “racial thing” (Anon, 2012). This speaks to the Apartheid workplace regime and how it inevitably shaped race relations in mining (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Fakier,

2006; Buhlungu & Webster, 2006; Webster & Omar, 2003; Von Holdt, 2002). Clearly, these women believe their choice is because they are racially superior.

For the engineers, who are often on standby at night time, the logistical problems that accompany the nurturing of small children are another reason they choose not to start with a family, even though this is expected of them. Most of these women were either in steady relationships with a male partner (also in mining) or single. At least two of these “City Girls” were married. They all said that the only people they are mostly surrounded by are people that work in mining, thus trying to date with their busy schedules proved difficult. Therefore someone that understands the demand of their jobs is almost a necessity. One participant stated that: “what other man would understand it if I left at two o’clock in the morning because there was a break-down?” (Anon, 2012).

The majority of them have completed their mining ticket, a managerial certificate compulsory to all managers, within record time. From my understanding this is not an easy qualification that takes approximately two years to complete from commencement. Perhaps this is indicative of their Afrikaner Calvinistic work ethic that Moodie (1975; 1981) refers to.

Their network consists of people within mining, both national and international. Their friends are mostly co-workers. Their families still reside in the cities from where they originated. All of them mentioned some ambivalence from their family’s side to completely accept the nature of their job and their choice to work in a “dangerous and masculine job”. One participant mentioned that “my mother would prefer that I didn’t live here (Witbank) surrounded by all these common miners” (Anon, 2012). All of them mentioned the huge transition this move initially caused them, but that they have all since accepted their new surroundings and have made the best of the situation. None of them would choose to move back to a city. Their status as an outsider is what in a sense protects them from being totally associated with these mining communities.

They are different because they are not from there, their sociocultural background is different and visible (Platt, 2011), again showing how strong the class differentiation is within the occupational and geographical context.

2.2 The 'Compound Women'

The second category, the 'compound women' are all women who were born either in a mining compound or a small mining town. From the life histories, Marinda (Bekker, 2012), Carola (Alcock, 2012) and Celia (Pieterse, 2012) were all from previous mine compounds, obviously the white staff quarters or family units (in mine compounds) built close to the mines that their fathers worked at. Their fathers, uncles, grandfathers and brothers are or were miners, mostly artisans. They have intimate knowledge of mining and understand the politics that coincides with it. They also understand the racial and gender hierarchy that exists in mining, especially historically. To them, this is something that they say desperately needs to change, but in more subtle nuances of what they say and do, there is a clear contradiction. They maintain and perpetuate the oppressive mining culture as much as the other two categories do. This is clear in their way of referring to 'women in mining nowadays' (Bekker, 2012; Alcock, 2012; Pieterse, 2012). They see themselves as hardworking, even perhaps more than their male counterparts, and are very proud of the fact that they have made it into this male world of mining. In a sense this is something they won't share. These women all gained entry into mining through an artisan route. The majority of these women started their careers in local factories and at some point (with years of experience) persistently applied for artisan jobs on the mines. Although their families were well known in the communities and the companies situated close to them, their entry was not guaranteed. Still to the fact they had family members in long standing positions, with some pull. One participant applied more than 11 times over a period of six years before she was finally accepted as an electrician underground. These women have no tertiary qualifications, but do have matric; artisan qualifications and on-the-job training.

These 'Compound Women' are driven by success, especially promotions and possibly getting into managerial positions. Their lack of tertiary education limit these opportunities; they are predominantly promoted based on years of experience and further in-house training. They are proud of their achievements and the strides they have made in their career. All of them say that this would not have been possible 50 years ago.

The 'Compound Women' dress notably different in comparison to all of the other women that work at the mines (excluding underground). There is nothing feminine about their wardrobe. Compared to the attire of 'City Girls', their dress can be considered to be less "feminine" for instance in comparison the 'City Girls'. They wear loose button-up company shirts, similar to their male co-workers and long pants with the mandatory safety shoes (steel point). They do not wear any make-up and their hairstyles are functional, either ponytails if they have long hair or very short hairstyles. They walk in an assertive, almost masculine manner. This is exactly what Butler (1990; 1993) refers to with gender performativity, and to a certain degree what Connell (2005) refers to with hegemonic masculinity, in that women too can actively be part of the creation and maintenance thereof. Their embodiment of the masculine is not done on a conscious level, but in doing so they derive power from it. These women do not feel the need to be women at work, or as one participant put it "I am a woman at home, for my husband, there I will make myself pretty, but not here, it's not the place" (Anon, 2012). Or as another said: "I sometimes feel bad for my daughter, she doesn't have a mother that wears make-up and nice clothes to work, she only has me" (Anon, 2012). Their choice in clothes for work is intentional and deliberate; this was clear in all the interviews. Their clothes should symbolise that they take their work seriously, just as seriously as the men do. Their work clothes should be practical and not draw unnecessary attention to the fact that they are women.

What was interesting, was that unlike the 'City Girls' these women were all soft spoken and did not swear, cuss, or change their tone when speaking to male

co-workers. They do not feel that their gender should influence their work, but acknowledge the difficulty it caused in the beginning of their mining careers. All of them agreed that not all women are cut-out for this job. “You have to be hard and willing to work even harder” (Anon, 2012). All of them had initial difficulty in their jobs with harassment, teasing and bullying from male co-workers. To a certain extent they feel that they have paved the way for women entering mining now. They had to fight to gain entry. To most of them, this was done in vain, because there is no appreciation or acknowledgement of their suffering. On the other hand it differentiates them from other women, especially the ‘City Girls’ because they won’t mind to get dirty. They have proven themselves worthy of working on a mine. Celia even commented on this in referring to how much more respect she gets from being trained “old school” (Pieterse, 2012). This to a certain degree links to their class position as working class women (Moodie, 1975; 1981) but also the privilege of the whiteness (Steyn, 2004; 2005). They were given a chance to enter mining because they had a network of family members who could assist the process. This was also mentioned by Benya (2009) that white women gain entry through their male family members. Some of these women have worked as artisans and operators on the mines before the Mining Charter (Department of Mineral Resources, 2002) allowed women in these positions as part of an experimental trial group for SASOL in anticipation of the changing legislation. This trial as one can imagine proved extremely difficult for male co-workers to accept. During that time female ablutions was not standard on any mine, except inside buildings where administration staff commonly worked. Female overalls were not available, and ofcourse there was no consideration or special treatment for women.

All of the ‘Compound Women’ were married with children. They had their children while still very young, at the beginning of their careers whilst still working in factories or other previous jobs. Their families are extremely important to them and their financial success is for the benefit of them and the opportunities it can create for them. These women are not married to men that work in mining, but in other industrial sectors of the communities. The fact that

they had their children at a younger age, and that their children are now either grown or of school going age, affords them the flexibility to work long hours. They all have an extensive support structure that helps with raising their kids, everyday chores such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of their families. All of them have at some stage mentioned that their husband fully support them in their job, mostly because of their happiness and the fulfilment that it brings to them. Their husbands are part of the support structure previously referred to. These women completely out-earn their husbands and that does not seem to be a problem. Bradley (2013) mentions that in cases where husbands do ‘help-out’ it is more often than not as result of the fact that they earn substantially less than their wives or are retrenched. Still, the fact that these women mention that it is easier now that their children are older, should point to the burden of reproduction and the amount of responsibility they have to shoulder (Bradley, 2013; Glucksmann, 2005; Hochschild & Machung, 2003). The money they earn is to the benefit of everyone in the family. Their network typically consists of their family, extended family, friends, community members and co-workers. They have limited exposure to an international or a national network of colleagues.

2.3 The ‘Poppe’

Firstly, I would like to clarify, that I have only informally interviewed one woman in this category, because they fell outside of the scope of the study. The conclusions about the women included here are based largely on the perceptions of the previous two categories of women. They spoke at length about these women and how they affect their daily job. It is for this reason that I decided to include them in the categories. Hence, the name of this category ‘Poppe’ (literal translation ‘dolls’). This is the colloquial way that white men from the coal mines would refer to their wives. The term was also mentioned frequently by the participants themselves.

The *'Poppe'* include white women that are married to men in coal mining, these men are typically either artisans or managers who climbed the ranks from artisan level. These are all women who typically grew up in the same mining community that they now reside in. They are familiar with coal mining and what is expected of their husbands. The majority of these women do not work and have limited education. Their husbands' income is enough to support themselves and their families and according to the other categories of women, their husbands would prefer for them to not work. These women married miners because within small mining communities the majority of white men are all employed by either by the coal mines or energy. Their networks consist predominantly of their family and friends within the community. They have limited exposure to women working in mining. What is interesting, is the animosity evident between them and the women working alongside their husbands. One of the participants commented on the fact that when she is in town and bumps into male colleagues she is (unofficially) not allowed to greet or acknowledge their presence (Anon, 2012). She stated that: "If you see them in town, I know this by now, you don't greet or wave, you just walk past as if you don't know them, they will greet you again the next day at work as if nothing has happened"²⁰⁴ (Anon, 2012).

The apparent animosity between the first two categories and the *'Poppe'* was acknowledged by all the women interviewed. It is an unspoken rule that creates a distance between work and private life. There is another point to be made about the *'Poppe'*: It is as though this notion of their femininity plays a psychological role for the *'City Girls'* and *'Compound Women'* to justify their position in the workplace. They consider the *'Poppe'* as passive, male dominated, something for their men to play with, whereas the other two categories consider themselves as the opposite. This I would argue speaks to three things: firstly, their performance of their gender (Butler, 1990; Butler; 1993); their class; and how the other categories view themselves in relation to

²⁰⁴ "As jy hulle in die dorp sien, ek weet nou al, jy groet of waai nie, jy stap maar verby asof jy hulle nie ken nie, volgende dag groet hulle jou weer by die werk asof niks gebeur het nie"

them. Next, the existence of the *'Poppe'* adds to the *'Compound Women'* and *'City Girls'* own status, because it creates a clear division of what they are not. Lastly, it speaks to the fact that these women are viewed as having no sense of agency by the other women (Alexander, 1999; Gibson, 1992). I would however disagree on the matter of their passivity, because if they can assert so much power over their husbands and their female colleagues that they won't even greet each other in town, they cannot be considered passive. They too partake in actively creating and maintaining the mining culture (Alexander, 1999; Gibson, 1992).

I mentioned the physical appearance of both former categories, the *'Poppe'* however are harder to classify, because I only interviewed one woman informally. I can only largely draw from what I observed at a year-end function at a colliery in Witbank and one informal interview with a *"Pop"*. At these type of formal mine functions it is evident that is an important event in their calendar – you dress to impress the other wives. Extravagant jewellery was worn by all of these women. Anon (2012), the only *"Pop"* that I interviewed explained that: "You don't dare to show up in a dress that you wore last year. The women really go all out at these events. You only have to pray that no one is wearing your outfit"²⁰⁵. Anon (2012) commented on that by saying that: "miners (referring to the white men) spend their money on fancy cars, flat screens (television sets) and alcohol, but go into their houses and there is hardly any furniture"²⁰⁶. This was evident when looking at the parking area of the venue where this function was held.

Throughout the evening and during all the speeches made by management a lot of emphasis was placed on responsible drinking, even though it was an open bar and it is common knowledge in Witbank that miners are known for excessive drinking. Alcohol is and has been very much part of the culture of

²⁰⁵"Jy waag dit nie op daar op te daag met 'n rok wat jy laas jaar gedra het nie. Nee die vrouens val uit by so geleentheid. Verder bid jy net dat niemand jou uitrusting aan het nie".

²⁰⁶ "Myners spandeer hulle geld op mooi karre, 'flat screens' (televiesies) en drank, maar gaan in hulle huise in, dan is daar skaars meubels".

mining. This however is not limited to being a man. The women working in mining and the majority of the participants in the study are all self-confessed heavy social drinkers. This is the occupational culture in which they work and spend most of their time. Socialising with colleagues and drinking is almost a given.

3 The Mine, Labour Process and the Actual Job

The overall majority of the women interviewed describe their jobs with fondness. None of them would do anything else, even if they had the choice. Carola (Alcock, 2012), in her life story uses the word ‘love’ a number of times to describe her work and the passion she has for electrical engineering. All of the participants share this passion for mining and their careers. For those with families, this comes at high price though. This will be discussed in more detail further on.

One of the participants described her experience in working with the trade unions as: “I learned this lesson the hard way, it’s tedious to work with them, it’s horrible, but if you go against them, you don’t stand a chance”²⁰⁷ (Anon, 2012). Her statement was confirmed by Anon (2012) and added that the key to working with the unions and maintaining a good working relationship and open communication. “Unions just need to know what is going on at all times” (Anon, 2012). The other participants that are also in managerial positions continually mentioned how working with people and managing conflict are the most exhausting parts of their job. Celia (Pieterse, 2012) and Carola (Alcock, 2012) also highlighted this in their life histories.

The majority of the coal mines in the Witbank coal fields work on a five weeks shift system. This means that an average shift worker will work approximately 12 hours per shift, rotating every two weeks between night and day shifts, and

²⁰⁷ “Ek het daai les hard geleer. Dis tedious om met die unie te werk, dis horrible, maar as teen die unie gaan, jy staan nie ’n kans nie”

in some cases having a few days off in between. This will however depend on the company. Most employees that are in senior management and all other office or surface workers work from seven in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon (this normally coincides with the day time shift workers). This means that in order to arrive on time for work, they must leave their homes before 6am to allow for travelling time. A shift for them could last anything from eight to ten hours, but as indicated by Celia (Pieterse, 2012) and Carola (Alcock, 2012), if you are in a senior managerial position your workday can last much longer. This will be true, especially during shutdown times, auditing or just usual standby's, in case something happened during the night shift. These women have highly stressful jobs, literally making life and death decisions every day. The day to day management of a mine is comprised of a number of meetings, both on the production and engineering side. The amount of coal mined the previous day are discussed as well as devising strategies to meet the coal supply and to set targets for the amount of coal that needs to be mined during a specific time.

The majority of the participants agreed that mining companies are fairly supportive to career advancement and further employee training, for all employees, not just women. Celia (Pieterse, 2012) mentioned this in her own life history. Some of them did however mentioned how hard it was to gain entry at first, especially at an apprentice level, but that once you were in; the mine will support your own personal development. Participants, who have been involved in mining for more than ten years, describe how major mining companies are now more flexible in accommodating specific needs of employees, but especially women. What they mentioned was specific things such as day care at work for the children of employees as well as on site clinics. They do however feel that there is a lack of understanding on the demands of working mothers and maternity leave. Carola (Alcock, 2012) highlighted this in her life history, where she specifically spoke on the issue of maternity leave. She mentioned how difficult it is to get your employer and other male colleagues to be supportive of the choice for a woman to fall pregnant and to understand that unfortunately small children depend on their mothers (Alcock, 2012).

4 Being a White Woman in Mining: The interplay of gender, race and class

The appearance of the majority of these women was in striking contrast to what you would expect the typical coal mining woman to look like. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned the stark difference between the appearance of ‘Compound Women’ and ‘City Girls’. Here I would again like to reiterate this: although this was not true for each and every participant, but the overall impression created by their appearance, was that this is of utmost importance to the ‘City Girls’. Whereas all the ‘Compound Women’, with the exception of Marinda (Bekker, 2012) would totally underplay the fact that they are women, specifically in the way that they would dress for work. Even though Marinda (Bekker, 2012) did talk about how she manually adjusted her overalls to make them more practical. Frankly, some of the participants like Anon (2012) openly mention their irritation with the way that some women dress for work. Whereas, Marinda (Bekker, 2012) specifically referred to the importance of her feminine appearance, and how it is a source of strength, serving as a constant reminder that she is still very much a woman. On the other hand, women like Carola (Alcock, 2012) and Celia (Pieterse, 2012) mentioned the impracticality of wearing jewellery or make-up.

When prompted about ever using their own gender in order to fulfil their work or advance them at work, one participant commented that: “some women can get favours done a lot easier when they show some cleavage [...] so yes, it probably is a tool to get things done”²⁰⁸ (Anon, 2012). This participant adamantly condemns this type of behaviour. She goes on to say that: “I am sometimes surprised how some women rock up for work, with their miniskirts and provocative shirts before they have to change into their overalls. You just shouldn’t do it; it’s not the place for it”. Anon (2012) supports this by emphasising that dressing conservatively at work would make a woman gain

²⁰⁸ “sekere vrouens, as hulle so cleavage wys kan hulle gunsies en gawetjies kry, baie makliker [...] so ja, dis seker ’n tool om reg te kry wat jy moet”.

the respect from men she deserves. Anything else is just a distraction (Anon, 2012).

Everything discussed here relating to their appearance at work I believe all refer to one thing: gender performativity (Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Halford & Leonard, 2006; Butler, 1993) Whether they choose to perform their gender by appearing feminine or masculine, whether they underplay or overplay their sex, these women are in actual fact either contesting and/or accepting the status quo of the gendered power relations within the organisation.

4.1 Sexual Harassment

It should be evident from especially Marinda (Bekker, 2012) and Celia's (Pieterse, 2012) life histories that gender based violence and sexual assault is still very evident in (coal) mining. All of the participants spoke candidly about this, although not everyone has gone through this personally. Most of the participants take a 'blame the victim' stance, in that those women who are harassed must have been complicit in one way or another. This coincidentally is also what two of the white male participants did with women they knew who were assaulted or harassed; they blamed them. The 'City Girls' all distance themselves from sexual harassment and view this as a problem that other women in mining might have; especially black women who work underground or administrative/office workers. They believe because these women "do not understand the mining environment" (Anon, 2012). One respondent commented on the issue of rape on the mines: "I think in most cases it's actually consensual, but you can get attacked, and it does happen, it's scary" (Anon, 2012). She went on to say that:

"We had a young electrical learner who was raped underground. But it was more like... I wouldn't say it was aggressive rape, it was more... they lured her in and then just... even though she said no. So I guess it was actually rape, but it

happens. But she was a small petite little girl who wears about a size six. It's no place for someone like that on a mine, it was a black lady, but really, if you are here, you need to be as tough as your opponent. I don't think a small girl without guts belong here. You need to be strong, you need to have a strong will and you need to be able to defend yourself. Men, it is human nature. They will and they do try".

There are two points of concern with the above quotation, the first is the fact that the race of the woman raped was even mentioned, almost as if her race either had something to do with the fact that she was raped or because of her race it should not be considered as noteworthy. The other point is how ambivalent the participant is to actually classify it as rape. All of the participants view sexual assault as something that women can be safeguarded against and furthermore, if it does happen, then the victim must have done something to provoke it. Moreover, what is significant is that they have taken a very sexist stance on the issue, a typical misogynistic point of reasoning that is indicative of rape culture. They have internalised the way their male co-workers feel about the issue; that is: "it's not an issue, it's not something that happens, and if it does, you were probably looking for it" (Anon, 2012). These women perpetuate rape culture by agreeing and repeating a male point of view on this issue.

It was only the 'Compound Women' that began to unpack how complicated the issues of sexual harassment truly is within mining. How it begins to blur the lines between racism and sexism. In Marinda's (Bekker, 2012) story she begins to explain in her way how her own incident affected the way she views (black) men since then. They are also the only category of women who were willing to share their experiences of harassment, however very few of them would actually class their own experience as sexual harassment; to them it was mostly just a 'bad experience at work' as evident in Celia's (Pieterse, 2012) story.

Rape and sexual assault was viewed by all women as a predominantly “black” problem. This is something that is completely removed from their daily work experience, although as with Celia (Pieterse, 2012) and Marinda’s (Bekker, 2012) story, this is something most women in mining are confronted with at some stage irrespective of race.

4.2 Motherhood and Family Life

From all of the white women interviewed, only 13 women had children and of these 13 women, 11 of them could be classified under the category of ‘Compound Women’. I would argue that this is quite significant. Moreover, that the vast majority of the ‘City Girls’ did not or have chosen not to start a family, yet.

The women, who did have families of their own, view this in a conflicting manner. The majority felt that their total earnings compensate for the fact that they were in their own words absent for most of the child rearing. These women all suffer from extreme guilt, and the money they earn serves only as a means to justify this. All of these women depended heavily on extended family for the primary care giving of their children, especially when their children were still young. This is also evident in the life histories of Marinda (Bekker, 2012), Celia (Pieterse, 2012) and Carola (Alcock, 2012). The option to do something else, in order to have spent more time with their children, was however not there. These women all claim to love and enjoy the work they have done (some up until now) and would not prefer it otherwise, even if they could. It would seem that the largest part of their fulfilment stems from their jobs, and not their individual families.

4.3 Sisterhood and White Women in Coal Mining

I have touched briefly on this issue in the beginning of this chapter. The notion of a sisterhood for all of the women interviewed is basically non-existent. These

women describe other female colleagues as their worst enemies on the mines. This apparent animosity they feel towards other (white) women could stem from a variety of issues, but they highlighted in most cases be professional jealousy. Anon (2012) describes the women she works with as “a bunch of bitches, but maybe it’s an Afrikaner thing, we don’t wish anyone anything”²⁰⁹. She specifically mentioned that she thinks this is different from black women by saying: “White women are more everyone for themselves; we view this as an equal place, where black women would probably protect and take care of one another”. Another participant supported her view by saying: “where have you ever seen women stick together?”²¹⁰. She believes this is an inherent female trait because of the way that different genders resolve conflict. She says that: “when men have a disagreement they sort it out and move on. When women have a disagreement they never sort it out and they always have an agenda”²¹¹ (Anon, 2012).

From my observations I could tell that the non-existent sisterhood was further enabled by the animosity between female administrative staff and the highly skilled women. Two participants explained how the administrative ladies would be the first one to start spreading malicious rumours about any female engineer’s career success. Anon (2012) stated that: “they will hear you got your mining ticket and start telling people that you probably screwed someone to get it” (Anon (2012)).

What is significant here is that these participants attribute the lack of sisterhood to being Afrikaans and white. They both view this as the major contributing to factor as to why white women cannot stick together or support one another. One explanation could be due to a class divide which I will discuss in more detail later on.

²⁰⁹ “klomp tewe, maar miskien is dit ‘n Afrikaner ding, ons gun niemand niks nie”.

²¹⁰ “waar het jy nou al ooit gesien dat vroue bymekaar sal staan”.

²¹¹ “as mans ‘n verskil het met mekaar sort hulle dit uit en hulle gaan aan. As vroue ‘n verskil het sort hulle dit nooit uit nie en hulle het altyd ‘n agenda”.

4.4 Race: The issue of Whiteness on the Coal Mines

From all the interviews with white women, it was clear that their race was something very real and concrete to them. Their race caused a dividing factor between them and women of other races, and in addition between them and men of other races.

Most of the women interviewed viewed their race (and not their gender) as something that for some enigmatic reason gave them a sense of power and authority on the mines. They viewed their race as a discerning factor between their own work ethic and company loyalty in comparison to other races. Anon (2012) states the following:

“The white ladies are here because they want to be here, the white ladies don’t just do something, unless they want to do it, where the black ladies would do it because they can and they know that if they don’t, there are men that they can sweet-talk into doing it for them. I don’t know... it’s harsh to say something like that, but it’s true” (Anon, 2012).

These white women also know that their race combined with their gender makes them a valuable quota that the mines need. ‘We are scarce, they’d say, well let’s get a woman in there and here’s one, we don’t have a white woman and then they’ll bring a white woman in, so it does help to be white” (Anon, 2012). One participant added to this by saying: “But honestly, we were three or four white women that applied, where there were about 20 black women, so the competition is a lot less” (Anon, 2012). Therefore, because white women are by far a racial minority, this to a certain extent is beneficial for their own career advancement, because they are seldom in competition with one another. Earlier I referred to the work of Alexander (2008) where he argued that race was a determining factor in the historical occupational culture of coal mines. The above findings should point to how this has not yet changed.

When talking to the women about their race, the conversations almost immediately are steered towards the issue of racism. One participant's immediate annoyed reaction was: "Oh Jesus, everything is racism on the mine" (Anon, 2012). This is however in contradiction to what they actually talk about. For instance, Anon (2012) tells of an incident at one of the mines where she previously worked where she had to deal with a racism complaint from one of the workers. She was initially baffled because both of the workers involved in the incident were black. It was only when she asked what he thought racism was, that he explained that the accused treats him as if he is white, and that's why it's racism (Anon, 2012). Even though this specific case is perhaps not racism in the true sense of the definition, the fact that the accused felt that he was treated unfairly, especially in a way that a white man would treat him, should indicate that racism or the unintended effects of a racist labour history in the industry is still very prevalent.

Anon (2012) continues to explain that there is a very real racial hierarchy on the coal mines. She goes on to say that: "black women are at the bottom, they are not respected by anyone" and "If I have to be honest, it's white men, white women, black men and then black women". This is exactly what is argued by Hooks (2000); the persistence of institutional (or structural) racism.

At the 9th International Mining History Congress in 2012, Piet Matosa, the deputy president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) stated in his address that "white women are deliberately kept out by white men, they don't want their women working in the mines". This statement by Matosa (2012) is confirmed by what many of the women either explicitly said or indirectly implied. There is another driving force behind the fact of the low numbers of white women manual labourers. Anon (2012) went on to say that:

"White women don't want to do it, they just don't apply for this type of jobs, last year we had 19 000 applications, not one of them was from a white woman [...] I think it's a status thing, I

mean, what white woman would become a domestic worker, it's the same thing, it's a 'black job'"²¹² (Anon, 2012).

Now, although Anon (2012) does not blame the husbands directly, she does however link the status of manual labour to race. From the above quotation, the assumption is that performing manual labour especially in mining, is considered beneath a white woman's dignity, that it is linked to her 'inherent racial superiority' and that in some way it would be demeaning for a white woman to perform manual labour on a mine, but not for a black woman. These subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) are evident in almost all of the interviews. One could argue then, based on evidence of the interviews and the literature that the majority of the white women in coal mining (towns) are then seen as almost 'protected' by their 'whiteness' in combination with their gender from doing labour underground. I use the term 'protected' here with some hesitation. Although the participants in this study prove that white women are quite capable of doing the work, the majority of white women, use their race, gender and class status as an excuse not to. This might not be a decision they deliberately made at some specific stage, it could have been made by a parent involved in mining. The option if you are a white woman from a coal mining town to choose a career in coal mining simply doesn't exist for the majority. It is viewed as demeaning job. One white male participant commented on this by saying: "Mining is a kaffir's job, I will never allow my kids, not even my son to choose a career in mining"²¹³ (Anon, 2012). This could be due to a number of reasons that could be attributed to patriarchal, racist or traditional perceptions instilled in their early socialisation. This is exactly what Cock (1980) refers to in her pioneering work on black maids in South Africa. Cock (1980) argues that certain jobs, such as domestic work are stigmatised and viewed as racially inferior especially considering the racist history of South Africa's past.

²¹² ²¹² "wit vrouens wil nie dit doen nie, hulle doen nie aansoek vir sulke poste nie, in verlede jaar het ons 19 000 aansoeke gehad, en nie een was 'n wit vrou nie [...] ek dink dis 'n status ding, ek bedoel, watse wit vrou gaan 'n huisbediende word, dis dieselfde ding, dis 'n 'swart werk'"

²¹³ "Mynbou is 'n kaffer se werk, ek sal nooit toelaat dat my kinders dit kies as 'n werk nie, nie eers vir my seun nie".

Some participants' perceptions of black women is in direct conflict with one another. For example, Anon (2012) at one stage stated: "look it is strong women that work underground, I couldn't do it. I have a lot of respect for them, I don't know how they do it"²¹⁴. In this excerpt she is referring to black women. Now although it would seem that she admires their strength and determination she goes on to completely disregard this by using the same argument but against black women. She goes on to say that:

"I really just think that white women aren't dumb. Go and look how many black women work underground, and they make big bucks, drive a nice BMW, but the first time they fall pregnant and they start doing surface work, go look at the statistics... they don't go back underground, they are like stubborn mules in that sense. I just think white women can think a bit outside the box"²¹⁵ (Anon, 2012).

Now, without assuming what is meant with the last sentence, it should be clear from this quotation that she clearly differentiates white women from black women. She does this in two ways, firstly by indirectly implying that any woman who chooses a career in mining, specifically manual labour on a mine is dumb, i.e. black women. Secondly, that black women are not as diligent in their jobs after a pregnancy in that they prefer surface work once they have seen what light duty on a mine entails. Even though in the first excerpt from her, she clearly admires black women working underground.

Another participant spoke candidly of how she feels about (black) women in mining, especially from a managerial point of view. In the following quote, she is

²¹⁴ "kyk dis sterk vrouens wat onder grond werk, ek sou nie so iets doen nie,.. Ek het baie respek vir hulle natuurlik. Maar ek weet nie ho hulle dit hou nie"

²¹⁵ "Ek dink regtig net wit vrouens is nie dom nie. Gaan kyk maar, hoeveel van die swart vrouens wat ondergrond werk, hulle kry hulle groot geld, ry 'n mooi BMW, die eerste keer wat hulle swanger is en hulle doen surface werk, gaan kyk maar die stats, niemand gaan terug na dit nie, hulle skop vas soos 'n steekse donkie. Ek dink wit vrouens dink net bietjie buite die boksie".

referring to a specific meeting on the issue of women in mining. This is an excerpt of her interview:

“[...] when we spoke about it, we just said: ‘number one, women should stop selling themselves and number two, they should stop thinking they deserve special treatment just because they are women’. Because in all these women in mining meetings they say they need special treatment, they want mine issued bras and panties now, we don’t issue the men with underwear, so why should we issue the women with underwear [...] plus, they want tampons in the first aid kits, now, number one, that is personal stuff, you take a tampon with you if you know it is your time of the month, we don’t issue the men with it, even if they were to need something like that, we don’t give them toilet paper in the first aid kit, you take it with you if you need it. You can’t expect such things if you are woman in mining, you just can’t, [...] but like special things, you can’t, one of the things mentioned in a meeting, Jeez we were frustrated in that meeting [...] There was a white man with us in that meeting and he told us that if a woman falls pregnant in his section, she does nothing, he won’t even let her cross the road to fetch papers, and I told him: ‘you can’t say that, you just can’t, because then you are encouraging it (pregnancy), do you understand?’ And he just said that he will not be held responsible for a woman who lost her baby [...] now you can’t do that for a woman, you just can’t do it. If you want to be a woman in mining, you can’t expect special treatment, and that’s what they want”²¹⁶ (Anon, 2012).

²¹⁶ “Toe ons daaroor gepraat het, het ons net gesê: ‘vrouens moet ophou om hulleself te verkoop, nommer een en jy ophou om te dink jy moet spesiaal behandel word, want in women in mining meetings word daar gesê hulle soek spesiale, hulle soek mine issued bra en panties, nou ons issue nie die mans met onderbrokee nie, hoekom moet die vrouens issue met panties [...] plus hulle soek tampons in die first aid kits, nou nommer een, dis persoonlike goed, jy vat ’n tampon saam as jy weet dis jou tyd, ons gee nie vir die mans, as hulle iets moet hê, ons gee nie vir hulle toilet papier in die first aid

In the first sentence she mentions that: “they should stop selling themselves”. This was said with specific reference to transactional sex. This was clearly said with no inkling of understanding or compassion; it was said from a point of maximum coal production. From Anon’s (2012) interviews it was evident that this is the most important facet on a mine. Coal production cannot be compromised. She continued to talk about her annoyance with pregnant women, and how her colleague ‘wrongfully’ handled his pregnant staff because in her words, he is ‘encouraging it’. Clearly, from her point of view, pregnancies are something that should be discouraged by all means necessary.

Benya (2009) also highlighted the prevalence of transactional sex on platinum mines in her research. She states that “sexuality, in mines, is used to cope (Benya, 2009: 129). In the interviews that I have conducted I could not establish with any certainty that white women employ the same strategy of transactional sex. What was apparent in this research is that white women very much frown on overtly using their sexuality or sexual favours in order to gain acceptance or lessen their work load. White women would much rather “work themselves to smithereens” as Carola (Alcock, 2012) put it.

Seven of the participants confirmed a common view held on ‘deliberate pregnancies’ on the mine. The women view this as endemic of black women in mining. Anon (2012) says the following: “Especially the black women, the moment they fall pregnant, they are suddenly very sickly and they’re off from work every second day, and if they are not off (from work), they lie on a bench in the change house and sleep”²¹⁷. She relates this form of insubordination or

kit nie, jy vat so iets saam. Jy kan nie sulke goed verwag as jy ’n woman in mining is nie, jy kan nie, [...] maar sulke spesiale goed, jy kan nie, een van die goed in daai meeting, jis ons was gefrustreerd in daai meeting. [...] Daar was ’n wit man saam met ons in daai meeting, en hy’t gesê daai dag as ’n vrou in sy seksie swanger is, dan doen sy niks, sy loop nie eers oor die pad om papiere te gaan haal nie’ en ek het gesê jy kan nie sê nie, jy kan nie, want jy moedig dit dan aan, verstaan? En hy het net gesê wel hy gaan nie verantwoordelik gehou word vir iemand wat haar baba verloor nie [...] nou jy kan dit mos nie doen vir ’n vrou nie, jy kan nie, jy kan dit net nie doen nie. As jy ’n woman in mining wil wees kan jy nie special treatment verwag nie, en dis wat hulle soek.”

²¹⁷ “Veral al die swart kultuur vrouens, as hulle swanger word, is hulle sieklik elke tweede dag af wat hulle nie by die werk is nie en as hulle by die werk is dan lê hulle in die change house op die bankie en slaap”.

laziness, as an inherent black trait by saying that: “black people are just not as willing to work in comparison to white people, especially if it comes down to over time or extra work”²¹⁸.

The white participants all distinguished themselves from the term ‘women in mining’. One even going as far as to say: “when they talk about women in mining, they mean black women” (Anon, 2012). To some extent this corroborates an earlier critique on the work of Benya (2009), because black women are the racial majority of women in mining. What is significant is that these white women do not view themselves as that. Even in Anon’s (2012) earlier quote, when she refers to ‘women in mining’, she is in actual fact only speaking about black women.

4.5 Masculinity: the Relevance and Implication on White Women

Through the life histories it should be apparent how important masculinity is on the mines. It is not that it gives a person a direct sense of power and authority but it is a continued source of power, because with a male gender comes a brotherhood. Anon (2012) explained that she thinks that men assert themselves in various ways, especially the swearing. She explained it as “crude, it is very crude”²¹⁹. In Carola (Alcock, 2012) and Marinda’s (Bekker, 2012) life histories there are numerous examples of how men use their brute strength to intimidate other workers. Furthermore, how they use their physical strength to assert their dominance at work. This is in correlation to what Standing (1999) argues; that men need to assert themselves in order to prove their value to the labour force and to secure their position in the companies.

What is interesting about white masculinity on the mines, is that a white woman’s authority stems indirectly from it. By implication, a white woman (once she has proven herself) is perceived at the exact same level of a white man on

²¹⁸ “swart mense is nie so gewillig om te werk soos baie van die wit mense nie, veral as dit by oortyd en ekstra werk kom”.

²¹⁹ “rof, dis baie rof”

a mine. When talking about her own race, and the (perhaps unintended) effect it has Anon (2012) said that: “we are seen in the same light as white men: ‘just the white bitch’”. This I believe points to what has been mentioned earlier with racialized masculinities and gender performativity (Breckenridge, 1998a; Breckenridge, 1998b; Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993; Connell, 2005; Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994). These women ‘channel’ and perform white masculinity. They understand enough about the occupational culture of mining to know the racial and gender hierarchy that exists and they know that if they want to be successful at their jobs they will have to be like these white men.

4.6 Speaking Afrikaans: a Tool to Simplify your World

In all four life histories and the other interviews the women explained that speaking Afrikaans to older more powerful white men, and addressing them as “Oom” made their work easier. What is interesting is how they use the nuance of a language to evoke some kind of sympathy from white men by deliberately portraying themselves as subordinate. Even though all of this is done at a conscious level for the simple reason to simplify their work, in order to meet production deadlines. Benya (2009:129) also found that black “women use their ethnicity to get favours” especially if they cannot use their sexuality on someone. By addressing the older men as “Oom” these women draw upon stronger ethnic ties, in order to appear younger, less educated and wise, and therefore subordinate. Thereby just further perpetuating the cycle of domination and subordination on the mines. Two participants acknowledged that this is definitely a form a manipulation and that they will continue to use such tactics at work to get the job done. Anon (2012) continues to explain how she deliberately flirts with white men and how she cannot understand how they cannot see though her blatant manipulation. Benya (2009) found the exact same behaviour in the platinum mines with black women. Benya (2009) explains that within a predominantly male environment an exaggeration of femininity occurs, whereby women can use their sexuality to gain favours or lessen their work duties.

Anon (2012) goes on to say that this form of manipulation would not be possible if she was black: “A black woman wouldn’t be able to get away with this; the environment is just too racist. These men do not cross the colour barrier.”²²⁰ Here she specifically refers to a black women flirting with a white man. She talks about an incident a few years ago where her then black boss made unwanted advances towards her, and how sympathetic other white men were towards her once they saw it, but only because her boss was black. This should point to three things, the racial hierarchy mentioned earlier and in previous chapters, the ethnic solidarity for someone of your race (but only once they are threatened by a black man) and the subtle interplay of racism which is still very prevalent in coal mining.

In all of the interviews the women were indifferent on whether their gender was an obstacle or an added advantage. Although some women like Celia (Pieterse, 2012) point to the various ways in which men are able to network and gain invaluable work related knowledge in ordinary social events. In her case, this was something she viewed as a serious barrier to her career, the fact that she does not have the same opportunities because of her gender. Now although, as indicated earlier, many women choose to use their gender to advance themselves, this would not have been necessary if they were just accepted as equals. Therefore, the mere fact that some women employ tactics to get around masculinity means that it is in fact an obstacle. Yet, almost all of the women without hesitation prefer to work with men.

4.7 Classifying Class

This is where I would like to draw upon the categories used earlier. The main reason for dividing the women into different categories is to highlight the different socio-economic classes to which these women belong or belonged to whilst growing up. This is not merely my own choice, but the way that they

²²⁰ “n Swart vrou sal dit nie kan regkry nie, nie in die rassistiese omgewing nie, hierdie mans gaan nie oor die kleurgrens nie”.

would talk about themselves in relation to other women, the town or their own lives.

Now, keep in mind that highly professional ‘Compound Women’, who now share similar job titles or skill level and income as the ‘City Girls’, do not share the same socio-economic background, although they do have their ‘whiteness’ in common. This is an important point that I will come back to shortly. For the ‘Compound Women’, this is very important. They would constantly mention how hard they worked to get where they are now, in comparison to the ‘City Girls’ and black women, who because of their skin colour and their gender could now gain entry into mining. Their understanding of the history of mining and the conflicting empathy they feel for white men is different to that of ‘City Girls’ because they grew up in mining towns and white staff quarters. In both Marinda (Bekker, 2012) and Carola’s (Alcock, 2012) life histories, they openly excuse the men from their sexist behaviour, and to some extent justify their behaviour by using the ‘boys will be boys’ argument. What is significant is that these men, the men that treated them the worst, are men that grew up with them in mining towns, but this is exactly it, they sympathise with them because they feel the animosity and bullying is justified because they shouldn’t actually be taking a man’s job. This is then in actual fact nothing but a racialized class allegiance in the form of their shared whiteness against the ‘others’; including black women (Platt, 2011; Steyn, 2004; Steyn, 2005). This could also refer to the point made by Hooks (2000) earlier, that working class women had a lot more to lose from more women entering the working world. Middle class white women were a direct threat to them.

Anon explains how the managers change house work in comparison to the rest of the mining staff’s quarters. Anon said:

“But we share it, men and women alike. It isn’t all that bad though, we are only three that have to share it, and at least it’s

all educated people or whatever so at least they have [pause],
it's neat"²²¹ (Anon, 2012).

By implication, she is referring to a class difference (Platt, 2011). She is directly relating the level of education and 'neatness' and shares her relief that she does not have to share with other mining staff, even though it is a unisex change house. So in other words, sharing a change house with men, or people of other races is not as bad as sharing a change house with uneducated people. Earlier I mentioned the stark difference, historically in the working conditions between (white) managers and miners and (black) workers. This again, can relate back to the history of coal mining in Witbank (Alexander, 2008). This was a deliberate occupational culture that was created and is maintained even today, even by the white women currently in coal mining.

5 The Intersections of Social Divisions based on the Findings

Bradley (1989) argues that to best theorise the sexual divisions of labour, both patriarchy and capitalism must be used, thus a gender analysis and a class analysis. I would argue for the exact same thing with this research. Throughout this last section of the analysis of the findings, it should be evident by now that one cannot separate, gender; class and race from any analysis concerning mining. Although in my analyses I tried to group various topics and themes together, they continuously overlapped with one another. These social divisions intersect at various levels and add to the complexity of trying to understand the position and experiences of white women in coal mining. For it is not only their gender that plays a role in their subordinate position on the mines but their class as well, especially in the cases of the latter two categories: the '*Poppe*' and 'Compound Women'. Race universally intersected with all of the other social variables, such as class and gender. These are not just 'women in mining', they are 'white women in mining', which elevates them above the status of black

²²¹ "Maar ons deel dit, mans en vrouens managers, dit werk nie te self nie, ons is net drie wat dit deel, en dis darem almal geleerde mense en wat ook al en hulle is darem netjies".

people on the mines. Class is used to divide and differentiate workers from one another, irrespective of race or gender.

Yuval-Davis (2006:200) was quoted earlier, by saying that social divisions are “intermeshed with each other, it is important to also note that they are not reducible to each other”. At the end of all of the social division discussed here, it should be evident that none of these social divisions can be seen as overshadowing the other, but that they are interlinked, and co-exist because of each other. Each of these social divisions are deliberately but socially constructed and each have different meanings to all of these women (AAPF, 2010; Anderson & Collins, 1995; Davis, 2008; López, 2005; McIntosh, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

6 Conclusion

In the first chapter I mentioned the key argument made in this study: that one cannot assume that women in mining are a homogenous group of workers. This is confirmed by the argument made by Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre (2006) in Chapter two where they argue for a new configuration of women in mining, because they argue that women in mining are not a homogenous group of workers. The analyses given in this chapter should serve in support of this argument. The multitude of experiences of these women, and even the categories, should indicate that this. These women all face a variety of hardships at work that require new coping mechanisms and strategies in order to fulfil their duties. The broader category of women in mining includes too many social divisions. The implication of doing this is that it renders any policy in reforming and transforming the current mining culture as obsolete.

I will now conclude this research study with an overall summary of the key findings, highlight the key argument and aim of the study and lastly, make some recommendations for further studies on the topic.

CHAPTER 10

REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

“In many ways mining and social research are parallel activities. Both intervene in and disturb a landscape by probing and digging for a rich lode of ore or layer of stratum that has hitherto lain covered, or unknown, perhaps until now unvalued”.

(Gibson-Graham, 1994:206)

1 Introduction

The aim and objective of this study was to firstly to explore the experiences of white women in coal mining and secondly to consider the implication of their experiences on existing theory. Existing literature on women in mining in South Africa perpetuates the oversimplified idea of what women in mining really are (Alexander, 2007; Benya, 2009; Benya 2011; Burtenshaw, 2005; Calitz 2004; McCulloch, 2003; Ralushai, 2003). These women are a highly diversified workforce. They cannot be grouped together as a homogenous group of workers. These women, as discussed in earlier chapters vary on different social divisions i.e. race, class and ethnicity.

This chapter will conclude the study by firstly discussing some of the major findings that emerged from the fieldwork and literature. I will highlight some of the gaps in the literature. The last section will deal with recommendations that flow from this study.

2 Summary of the Main Findings

It should be evident by now that the South African women in mining situation is quite unique, especially if one considers the implications of race and class on these working women. There are various social divisions which inexplicably

divide the female workforce i.e. race, class and level of education are all interlinked and as Yuval-Davis (2006) argues and this should be viewed together and not separate in any analyses of women. These social divisions affect one another and exist only because of each other.

In addition, the historical effect of the Apartheid workplace regime in effect institutionalised white supremacy in the workplace by allowing white employees to appoint white women (because there is a preference by management to appoint white people, but now they would have to settle for a white woman) and thereby still exclude and by implication discriminate against people of colour. These white women derive a sense of power and protection from their whiteness (Department of Labour, 2013; Hooks, 2000; Steyn, 2004; Steyn, 2005; Steyn & Foster, 2008; Willoughby-Herard, 2007).

There is a racial hierarchy that still exists in mining today. It is because of the institutional racism mentioned above that has launched these white women to the top of a female hierarchy in coal mining (Benya, 2011; Department of Labour, 2013; Hooks, 2000).

The women who participated in the study are active agents in mining. This is evident through their actions, their use of language, and their choice in clothes or appearance, in other words the way they perform their gender. If you think back to the way that Marinda (Bekker, 2012) was altering her uniform while she was still performing manual work. This affirms what Alexander (1999) and Gibson (1992) argue, that women in mining, in whatever capacity are active political agents. These women, whether complicit to or even challenging the status quo of the power relations of the mine, actively choose to do so, for whatever reason. They are not victims of it.

These white women work mostly for monetary reward and not for any emancipatory or feminist reasons. This is in accordance with the literature on

white women who work, especially middle class white women (Hooks, 2000; Bird, 1979).

By examining white women and comparing them to the existing literature on (black) women in South African mining, one can deduce that these women in mining are definitely not a homogenous group of workers. This is in accordance with what Lahiri-Dutt and Macintyre (2006) and Benya (2009) argue; that it would be a mistake to construct a homogenous category of women in mining.

In both Celia (Pieterse, 2012) and Marinda's (Bekker, 2012) life histories, the effect of gender based violence in mining should be viewed as a threat to retaining a female workforce. This affirms what Canadian women said in the RAMP-UP report, about challenging the macho culture of mining, and how it affects their willingness to stay in the industry (WIM Canada, 2010). There are certain gender barriers in employment such as maternity leave, and flexible working hours in order to care for children, all of which make their working life increasingly difficult and for those without children, will continue to deter them from having a family (WIM Canada, 2010).

These white women perpetuate the macho-masculine Apartheid mining culture in the way that they perform their gender and indirectly support and defend the naturalness of the current gender order in mining (Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993; Connell, 2005). This will cause the established power relations within mining to never be challenged or changed.

3 Recommendations

Firstly, I would recommend further studies on women in mining in Sociology, more specifically a comparative analysis of the experiences of black and white women workers in South African mines, to fully grapple with the issues of race and gender in terms of mining.

Secondly, I would recommend that the mining industry be actively involved in fighting the perceptions that people in mining have of women in mining. To change the stereotypical image of women in mining and to help create a more unified and supportive workforce.

Thirdly, to call for research on recruitment practices on women in mining, and in addition, research on retaining the female workforce currently employed within South African mining, in order to make valid recommendations to the industry.

4 Overall Conclusion

This study explored the lives of white women workers in coal mining. The fact that there is a growing number of women working in South African mines now affords us the opportunity to explore changing identities in the workplace. This even more so because mining in South Africa was dominated by men, this has often been called ‘contending racialized masculinities’ (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994; Breckenridge, 1998a; Breckenridge, 1998b; Benya, 2013).

The social divisions like race, gender and class affect and shape peoples’ experiences. This is extensively documented by a number of authors (AAPF, 2010; Anderson & Collins, 1995; Davis, 2008; López, 2005; McIntosh, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Intersectionality is used in this study, as in many similar studies to point to the interlocking categories of social divisions and how they continually interact and affect each other and by implication the experience of people. These social divisions can never be analysed alone. Therefore, Anderson & Collins (1995) called for what they refer to as relational thinking. Only with relational thinking can one begin to see the “social structures that simultaneously generate unique group histories and link them together in society” (Anderson & Collins, 1995:7). This enables us to explore the intersecting relationships of power and privilege within the socially constructed systems of race, class and gender. This is the only type of analyses that will allow us to change the system and structures that we live in.

I show that these social divisions like gender; class; race is the constructed experience of these white women workers.

Furthermore, I identified the institutionalised white supremacy of the workplace, a by-product of the Apartheid workplace regime. This continues to shape their experience, more so because it protects white women and concurrently affords them with a great deal of power, everything rooted in their whiteness. I confirm a shift in the occupational hierarchy, and broaden it not only to race (Benya, 2011) but also to gender. This new hierarchy is overlapping in terms of race, class and gender. This places white women at the top of the gender part of the hierarchy in terms of power. This off course is perhaps also because of the Apartheid workplace regime (Benya, 2013; Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Fakier, 2006; Buhlungu & Webster, 2006; Webster & Omar, 2003; Von Holdt, 2002).

In this study I highlight the extraordinary strengths that these white women have developed within the covertly gender oppressive structures of coal mining. Their stories is a testament of their courage and power to endure. I would hope that their strengths would inspire all women who struggle for equality in the South African workplace.

LIST OF SOURCES

- AAPF. 2010. A primer on intersectionality. http://aapf.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/aapf_intersectionality_primer.pdf. Date of access: 10 Feb. 2011.
- Acts **see** South Africa.
- AFRICOAL. 2015. The history of coal mining in South Africa. <http://www.africoal.co.za/the-history-of-coal-mining-in-south-africa/> Date of access: 20 Apr 2015.
- Alcock, C. 2012. An exploration of the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa [personal interview]. 15 Aug., Standerton.
- Alexander, P. 1999. Coal, control and class experience in South Africa's Rand Revolt of 1922. *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 19(1):31-45.
- Alexander, P. 2007. Women and coal mining in India and South Africa c1900-1940. *African studies*, 66(2):201-222.
- Alexander, P. 2008. Women miners in developing countries: pit women and others. *Pacific historical review*, 77(2):351-353.
- Anderson, M.L. & Collins, P.H., eds. 1995. Race, class, and gender: an anthology. 2nd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Anglo American. 2011. Thermal coal. <http://www.angloamerican.co.za/en/our-operations/thermal-coal.aspx> Date of access: 14 Mar. 2011.

- Anon. 2012. An exploration of the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa [personal interview]. Aug., Witbank.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. The practice of social research. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Barth, F. 1969. Ethnic groups and boundaries. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Barrett, E. 1982. Coal mining women, produced by Appalshop films. Whitesburg: Appalshop. [VHS].
- Bekker, M. 2012. An exploration of the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa [personal interview]. 21 Aug., Secunda.
- Benería, L. 2001. Shifting the risk: new employment patterns, informalization, and women's work'. *International journal of politics, culture and society*, 15(1):27-53.
- Benya, A.P. 2009. Women in mining: a challenge to occupational culture in mines. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand. (Dissertation – MA).
- Benya, A.P. 2011. Women in mining, shifts and contradictions between the apartheid and post-apartheid mining workplace. Paper presented at the WISER and Society Work and Development Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 25 October. (Unpublished).
- Benya, A.P. 2013. Gendered labour: a challenge to labour as a democratizing force. *Rethinking development and inequality*, 2(Special edition):47-62.

- Bezuidenhout, A. 2005. Post-colonial workplace regimes in the engineering industry in South Africa. (In Webster, E. & Von Holdt, K. eds. *Beyond the Apartheid workplace: studies in transition*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press).
- Bezuidenhout, A. & Buhlungu, S. 2010. From compounded to fragmented labour: mineworkers and the demise of compounds in South Africa. *Antipode*, 43(2):237-263.
- Bezuidenhout, A. & Fakier, K. 2006. Maria's burden: contract cleaning and the crisis of social reproduction in post-apartheid South Africa. *Antipode*, 38(3):462-485.
- Bird, C. 1979. *The two-paycheck marriage*. New York: Rocket books.
- Bourdenet, N. 2003. The Mines Act, 1842. University of Paris, 11 October <http://anglais.u-paris10.fr/spip.php?article88> Date of access: 8 Feb. 2011.
- Bozzoli, B. 1983. Marxism, feminism and South African studies. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 9(2):139-171.
- Bradley, H. 1989. *Men's work, women's work: a sociological history of the sexual division of labour in employment*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bradley, H. 2013. *Gender*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity.
- Breckenridge, K. 1998a. "We must speak for ourselves": the rise and fall of a public sphere on the South African gold mines, 1920 to 1931. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 40(1):71-108.

- Breckenridge, K. 1998b. The allure of violence: men, race and masculinity on the South African goldmines, 1900–1950. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 24(4):669-693.
- Brenner, J. 2000. *Women and the politics of class*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Brown, C. 2006. Race and the construction of working-class masculinity in the Nigerian coal industry: the initial phase, 1914-1930. *International labor and working-class history*, 69(Spring):35-56.
- Bryman, A. 2001. *Social research methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Buhlungu, S. & Webster, E. 2006. Work restructuring and the future of labour in South Africa. (In Buhlungu, S., Daniel, J., Southall, R. & Lutchman, J. eds. *State of the nation: South Africa 2005-2006*. Cape Town: HSRC Press).
- Burke, G. 2006. Women miners: here and there, now and then'. (In Lahiri-Dutt, K. & Macintyre, M. eds. *Women miners in developing countries: pit women and others*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd).
- Burnette, J. 2015. Women workers in the British industrial revolution. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/women-workers-in-the-british-industrial-revolution-2/> Date of access: 22 April 2015.
- Burtenshaw, J. 2005. Women miners plunge to new depths. South Africa: The Good News, 25 August. <http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/newsletters/688-women-miners-plunge-to-new-depths.html> Date of access: 17 Feb. 2012.

Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.

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

Calitz, PL. 2004. *Experiences of women in the platinum mining industry*. Potchefstroom: North-West University. (Mini-dissertation – Honours).

Caro, N. 2005. *North country*, produced by Industry Entertainment. Burbank: Warner Bros. [DVD].

CATALYST, 2012. *Women in gas, mining & oil in Australia, Canada, & the U.S.* Sep 24. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-gas-mining-oil-australia-canada-us> Date of access: 9 May 2015.

Coleman, M. 1943. *Men and coal*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

Cock, J. 1980. *Maids & madams: a study in the politics of exploitation*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Connell, J. & Howitt, R. eds. 1991. *Mining and indigenous peoples in Australasia*, Sydney: Sydney: University Press.

Connell, R.W. 2005. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Berkley: University of California Press.

Crenshaw, K. 1999. Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford law review*, 43(6):1241-1299.

Creswell, J.W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. London: Sage.

Davis, E. n.d. Science is not a religion.

<http://attention2attention.deviantart.com/art/Science-Is-Not-A-Religion-192625937> Date of access: 20 Apr. 2011.

Davis, K. 2008. Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes feminist theory successful. *Feminist theory*, 9(1):67-85.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2011. *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Department of Mineral Resources **see** South Africa. Department of Mineral Resources.

Department of Labour **see** South Africa. Department of Labour.

Doniger, W. 1983. *Kentucky woman*, produced by 20th Century Fox Television & CBS Entertainment Production & Walter Doniger Productions. New York: CBS. [TV Film].

Dyer, R. 1997. *White*. London: Routledge.

Fishkin, S.F. 1995. Interrogating "whiteness," complicating "blackness": remapping American culture. *American quarterly*, 3(14):428-466.

- Flyvbjerg, B. 2001. Making social science matter, why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frankenberg, R. 1993. White women, race matters: the social construction of whiteness. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fredrickson, G.M. 1981. White supremacy: a comparative study in American and South African history. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gibson, K. 1992. Hewers of cake and drawers of tea: women, industrial restructuring and class processes on the coalfields of Central Queensland. *Rethinking Marxism*, 5(4):29-56.
- Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1994. Stuffed if I know!: reflections on post-modern feminist social research. *Gender, place and culture*, 1(2):205-224.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 1996. The end of capitalism (as we knew it): a feminist critique of political economy. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Glucksmann, M. 2005. Shifting boundaries and interconnections: extending the "total social organization of labour". (In Pettinger, L., Parry, J. & Glucksmann, M. eds. *A new sociology of work?* Oxford: Blackwell).
- Groenewald, L. 2008. Race and gender: from double burden to acute advantage. *Sociological bulletin*, 57(3):371-387.
- Halford, S. & Leonard, P. 2006. Negotiating gendered identities at work: place, space and time. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Harris, C. 1993. Whiteness as property. *Harvard law review*, 106:1707-1791.
- Hermanus, M.A. 2007. Women in mining in South Africa. (Unpublished).

Hipwell, W., Mamen, K., Weitzner, V. & Whiteman, G. 2002. Aboriginal people and mining in Canada: consultation, participation and prospects for change. Working paper presented at the North-South institute. Ottawa, Ontario, January. (Unpublished).

Hochschild, A. & Machung, A. 2003. The second shift: working parents and the revolution at home. New York: Penguin Group.

Hooks, B. 2000. Feminist theory from margin to center. 2nd ed. London: Pluto Press.

Humphrey, J. 1987. Gender and work in the third world: sexual division in Brazilian industry. New York: Tavistock.

Ignatiev, N. 1995. How the Irish became white. New York: Routledge.

International Labour Organisation. 1935. Convention concerning the employment of women on underground work in mines of all kinds. Geneva: International Labour Organisation <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C045> Date of access: 8 Feb. 2011.

Jacobson, M.F. 1998. Whiteness of a different color: European immigrants and the alchemy of race. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Jeffrey, L.S. 2005. Characterization of the coal resources in South Africa. *The journal of the South African institute of mining and metallurgy*, 105(2):95-102.

John, A.V. 1980. By the sweat of their brow: women workers at Victorian coal mines. London: Croom Helm Ltd.

- Kotz, L. 1992. The body you want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler. *Artforum*, 31(3):82-89.
- Kumar, R. 2011. *Research methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners*, 3rd ed. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lahiri-Dutt, K. 2003. Not a small job: quarrying and women workers in the Rajmahal traps in Eastern India. (In Hilson, G.M. ed. *The socio-economic impacts of artisanal and small-scale mining in developing countries*. Leiden: Balkema Publishers).
- Lahiri-Dutt, K. & Macintyre, M. 2006. Introduction: where life is in the pits (and elsewhere) and gendered. (In Lahiri-Dutt, K. & Macintyre, M. eds. *Women miners in developing countries: pit women and others*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd).
- Lewenhak, S. 1988. *The revaluation of women's work*, New Edition. London: Earthcan Publications Limited.
- Lipsitz, G. 1998. *The possessive investment in whiteness: how white people profit from identity politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- López, A.J. ed. 2005. *Postcolonial whiteness: a critical reader on race and empire*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Love, B. 2012. SA's vanishing gold. *Daily maverick*. 23 Mar. <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2012-03-23-sas-vanishing-gold/#.VZ5TrpRLqo0> Date of access: 9 May 2015.
- Matosa, P. 2012. Conference address at the 9th international mining history congress, Mponeng Gold Mine, Gauteng, 19 April.

Mark-Lawson, J. & Witz, A. 1990. Familial control or patriarchal domination? the case of the family system of labour in nineteenth century coal mining. (*In* Corr, H. & Jamieson, L. eds. *Politics of everyday life*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 117-140).

Marshall, L. 2014. Are women the mining industry's most underdeveloped resource? *Mines Magazine*, Spring. <http://minesmagazine.com/8749/>
Date of access: 10 May 2015.

McCrate, E. 1995. The growing divide among American women. Paper presented at the University of Vermont, Department of Economics, Burlington. (Unpublished).

McCulloch, J. 2002. *Asbestos blues, labour, capital, physicians and the state in South Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

McCulloch, J. 2003. Women mining asbestos in South Africa, 1893-1980. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 29(2):413-432.

McIntosh, P. 1995. White privilege and male privilege: a personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. (*In* Anderson, M.L. & Collins, P.H. eds. 1995. *Race, class, and gender: an anthology*. 2nd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company).

Moodie, T.D. 1975. *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid, and the Afrikaner civil religion*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Moodie, T.D. 1981. Calvinism and Afrikaner nationalism - a comment'. *African Affairs*, 80(320):403-404.

- Moodie, T.D. 2005. Maximum average violence: underground assaults on the South African gold mines, 1913-1965. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31(3):547–567.
- Moodie, T.D. & Ndatshe, V. 1994. Going for gold: men, mines, and migration. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Morrell, R. 1998. Of boys & men: masculinity and gender in Southern African studies. *Journal of Southern African studies*, 24(4):605-630.
- Morrison, T. 1992. Playing in the dark: whiteness and the literary imagination. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mouton, J. 1996. Understanding social research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mphokane, M.S. 2008. Profiles of “successful managers” held by male and female managers in the coal mining industry. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Dissertation – MA)
- Neuman, W.L. 2003. Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches, 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nite, D. & Stewart, P. 2012. Mining faces, an oral history of work in gold and coal mines in South Africa: 1951-2011. Special congress edition. Auckland Park: Fanele.
- Office for National Statistics. 2015. Statistical bulletin: index of production, May. http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_415960.pdf Date of access: 9 May 2015.

- Phoenix, A. & Pattynama, P. 2006. Intersectionality. *European journal of women's studies*, 13(3):277-290.
- Pieterse, C. 2012. An exploration of the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa [personal interview]. 21 Aug., Witbank.
- Platt, L. 2011. Understanding inequalities stratification and difference. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Prinsloo, A. 2012. An exploration of the experiences of white women workers in the coal mining industry of South Africa [personal interview]. 25 Aug., Witbank.
- Ralushai, M. 2003. Experiences of women working on the mines: a case study from Rustenburg platinum mines. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University. (Mini-dissertation – Honours)
- Reinharz, S. 1992. Feminist methods in social research. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Roediger, D.R. 1991. The wages of whiteness: race and the making of the American working class. London: Verso.
- Roediger, D.R. 1994. Towards the abolition of whiteness: essays on race, politics, and working class history. London: Verso.
- Rofel, L. 2007. Desiring China: experiments in neoliberalism, sexuality, and public culture. London: Duke University Press.
- Sarantakos, S. 2005. Social Research. 3rd ed. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sinha, S.S. 2006. Patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism: unearthing the history of Adivasi women miners of Chotanagpur. (*In* Lahiri-Dutt, K. & Macintyre, M. eds. *Women Miners in Developing Countries: Pit Women and Others*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd).

Sone, S. 2006. Japanese coal mining: women discovered'. (*In* Lahiri-Dutt, K and Macintyre, M. eds. *Women miners in developing countries: pit women and others*. Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd).

South Africa. 1991. Minerals Act 50 of 1991.

South African. 2002. Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002.

South Africa. 2003. Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003

South Africa. 2013. Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act 46 of 2013.

South Africa. Department of Labour. 2013. Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2012-2013.

South Africa. Department of Mineral Resources. 2002. Broad Based Socio-Economic Charter for the South African Mining Industry.

South Africa. Department of Mineral Resources. 2010. Amendment of the Broad Based Socio-Economic Charter for the South African Mining Industry.

South Africa. Department of Mineral Resources. 2015. Labour in Service Summary Report January-June.

- Spradley, J.P. 1979. *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Standing, G. 1999. Global feminisation through flexible labor: a theme revisited. *World development*, 27(3):583-602.
- Stanley, L. & Wise, S. 1983. *Breaking out: feminist consciousness and feminist research*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books.
- Steyn, M.E. 2004. Rehabilitating a whiteness disgraced: Afrikaner white talk in post-apartheid South Africa. *Communication quarterly*, 52(2):143-169.
- Steyn, M. 2005. "White talk": white South Africans and the management of diasporic whiteness. (In López, A.J. ed. 2005. *Postcolonial whiteness: a critical reader on race and empire*. Albany: State University of New York Press).
- Steyn, M. & Foster, D. 2008. Repertoires for talking white: resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 31(1):25-51.
- STATSSA. 2015. Mining: production and sales (Preliminary), (Statistical release P2041). Statistics South Africa, Jan 2015
<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P2041/P2041January2015.pdf> Date of access: 9 May 2015.
- Szent-Gyorgyi, A. 1957. *Bioenergetics*. New York: Academic Press Inc.
- Terre Blanche, M. & Durrheim, K., eds. 1999. *Research in practice: applied methods for the social sciences*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Tyler, M. & Cohen, L. 2010. Spaces that matter: gender performativity and organizational space. *Organization studies*, 31(2):175-198.

Van Rensburg, D. 2011. Most SA gold mines to close in 10 years. *Miningmx*, 5 Jun. http://www.miningmx.com/news/gold_and_silver/Most-SA-gold-mines-to-close-in-10-years.htm Date of access: 9 May 2015.

Von Holdt, K. 2002. Social movement unionism: the case of South Africa. *Work, employment & society*, 16(2):283-304.

Weber, M. 1930. The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. London: Taylor & Francis e-Library
<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/1095/The%20Protestant%20Ethic%20and%20the%20Spirit%20of%20Capitalism.pdf> Date of access: 9 May 2015.

Webster, E. & Omar, R., 2003. Work restructuring in post-apartheid South Africa. *Work and occupations*, 30(2):194-213.

West, M. & van Vuuren, H. 2007. The universal sanctity of whiteness: Antjie Krog's negotiation of black responses to white transformation in a change of tongue. *Current writing: text and reception in Southern Africa*, 19(2):210-230.

Willoughby-Herard, T. 2007. South Africa's poor whites and whiteness studies: Afrikaner ethnicity, scientific racism, and white misery. *New political science*, 29(4):479-500

WIM Canada. 2010. RAMP-UP: a study on the status of women in Canada's minerals and metals sector. Toronto: Women in Mining Canada

WIM UK. 2015. Mining for talent 2015: a review of women on boards in the mining industry 2012 – 2014 <http://www.womeninmining.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/WIM%20MINING%20FOR%20TALENT%20FINAL%202015.pdf> Date of access: 10 May 2015.

World Coal Association. 2012. Coal mining. <http://www.worldcoal.org/coal/>
Date of access: 10 Jun. 2012.

Yuval-Davis, N. 2006. Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European journal of women's studies*, 13(3):193-209.

Zaretsky, E. 1976. *Capitalism: the family and personal life*. London: Harper & Row.

APPENDIX

LETTER OF CONSENT



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study on white women workers experience in the coal mining industry. The purpose of this study is for academic purposes, the material gathered will be used in a masters dissertation to be submitted to the University of Pretoria.

The interviews will be conducted wherever and whenever you prefer (e.g. in your home), and will be recorded. Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity if that is your desire.

The interviews will be recorded. The transcribed interviews will NOT contain any mention of your name, and any identifying information from the interview will be removed. The tape recordings and interview transcripts will also be kept at the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria, and only the researchers will have access to the interviews. All information will be destroyed after 15 years time.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If you do this, all information from you will be destroyed.

If you require any information about this study, or would like to speak to me, please call me at 082 827 9876. If you have any other questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, you may also contact the supervisor of the research at the University of Pretoria, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu at 012 420-3302 or sakhela.buhlungu@up.ac.za.

I _____ have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study and consent to participate in this study.

_____(Signature)

_____(Date)

TOESTEMMINGSBRIEF



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Geagte Deelnemer,

Jy word uitgenooi om deel te neem in 'n navorsingstudie oor wit vroue werkers se ervaring in die steenkoolmynbedryf. Die navorsing sal gebruik word vir 'n meestersgraad verhandeling wat ingedien sal word by die Universiteit van Pretoria.

Die onderhoude sal gedoen word op 'n plek en tyd wat jy verkies (bv. in jou huis), en sal opgeneem word. Verskeie stappe sal geneem word om jou anonimiteit en identiteit te beskerm as jy dit so verkies.

Die opname van die onderhoud sal getranskribeer word. Die getranskribeerde onderhoude sal NIE enige melding van jou naam bevat, en enige identifiserende inligting van die onderhoud sal verwyder word, as dit jou behoefte is. Die transkripsies en opnames sal gestoor word by die Departement van Sosiologie by die Universiteit van Pretoria, en slegs die navorsers sal toegang tot die inligting hê. Alle inligting sal vernietig word na 15 jaar.

Jou deelname aan hierdie navorsing is heeltemal vrywillig. Jy kan egter enige tyd vir enige rede uit die studie onttrek. As jy dit doen, sal al die inligting van jou vernietig word.

Indien u enige inligting oor hierdie studie, of wil om te praat met my, bel my asseblief by 082 827 9876. As jy enige ander vrae het oor u regte as 'n deelnemer in hierdie navorsing, kan jy ook kontak met die promotor van die navorsing aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, prof Sakhela Buhlungu by 012 420-3302 of sakhela.buhlungu @ up.ac.za.

Ek, _____ het die bogenoemde inligting gelees (of is dit voorgelees) met betrekking tot hierdie navorsing en gee my toestemming om deel te neem in hierdie studie.

_____ (Handtekening)

_____ (Datum)

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Kindly respond to all questions
2. The interview schedule consists of seven sections
3. Mark with an 'X' where relevant

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

SECTION A: BIOGRAPICAL INFORMATION

1. How old are you: _____

2. What is your race?

African		White		Coloured		Indian		Asian	
---------	--	-------	--	----------	--	--------	--	-------	--

3. What is your home language?

English	
Afrikaans	
Sesotho sa Leboa (Sepedi)	
Sesotho	
Setswana	
IsiXhosa	
IsiZulu	
SiSwati	
IsiNdebele	
Tshivenda	
Xitsonga	
Other (Please specify)	

4. How many languages are you fluent in?

5. What language do you prefer talking to your friends in?

English	
Afrikaans	
Other (Please specify)	

6. How would you describe the residential location?

Suburb	
Township	
Informal Settlement	
Inner City	
Rural	
Mine Village	
Other (Please specify)	

7. Please indicate your highest level of education.

Completed Junior Primary (Gr 3)	
Completed Senior Primary (Gr 7)	
Completed Secondary School (Gr 12)	
Completed Tertiary (Diploma)	
Completed University (Undergraduate)	
Completed University (Postgraduate)	
I don't know	
Other (Please specify)	

8. Please indicate your parents' highest level of education. Please mark only one category for each parent:

	9.a. Father:	9.b. Mother:
Completed Junior Primary (Gr 3)		
Completed Senior Primary (Gr 7)		
Completed Secondary School (Gr 12)		
Completed Tertiary (Diploma)		
Completed University (Undergraduate)		
Completed University (Postgraduate)		
I don't know		
Other (Please specify)		

9. Please indicate your occupational category.

Executive Management (Director)	
Manager (shops, hotels)	
Professional (doctors, academics)	
Semi-professional (teachers, nurses)	
White-collar (bank, office clerks)	
Supervisors	
Artisans (electricians, plumbers)	
Manual labourers (domestic gardeners, foreman, farmers)	

SECTION B: OCCUPATION AND WORK HISTORY

1. How did you choose this profession?
2. Have you ever interested in mining before you started working here?
3. Can you describe a day at work?
4. What does your job entail?
5. Do you belong to a union?
6. Do you enjoy the work you do?
7. What do you enjoy most about your job?
8. Are there any challenges at work?
9. What would you see as the biggest challenge at work?
10. How do you cope with it?
11. Did you taught yourself any coping strategies?
12. Have you changed something of yourself to adapt to your work environment?
13. How does you colleagues treat you?

SECTION C: WORKING WITH MEN

1. How do men treat you at work?
2. How do you address men at work (first name, "Uncle", "Sir" - especially older men, or seniors)
3. Within is the mining culture the fact that you're a woman, does it plays a role at social events or functions? And how?
4. Do men adapt their behaviour, (swearing) or behaviour in form of you? Do you expect them to adapt?
5. Is there a difference between how men of different races treat you?
6. How would you describe the average white man on the mine?
7. How would you describe the average black man at the mine?
8. Do you think masculinity is important in the mine?
9. How do you think men assert their masculinity on the mines?
10. How does the fact that you are a white women affect you working with men?
11. Do you feel they would have treated you differently if you were a man?
12. Do you think your job would be easier if you were a man?

SECTION D: BEING A WOMEN IN A MALE ENVIRONMENT

1. What does it mean to you to be a woman in mining?
2. How would you describe the way that you dress?
3. Is your appearance important to you at work? And why?
4. Did any of you change your behavior today on the mine?
5. Do you think there is room for femininity in mining?
6. Do you think the fact that you're a woman, you deprived of any power in the workplace or your power?

SECTION E: PERSONAL AND FAMILY LIFE

1. What does your family think of the work you do?
2. Are you currently in a relationship?
3. What is the person's occupation? Whether they are also involved in mining?
4. What does the person think of the fact that this is your career, and you are surrounded mainly by men?
5. Does this person understand the environment in which you work?
6. Did it ever cause problems in your relationship?
7. Do you think your partner would prefer that you have another profession?
8. Do you have any children?
9. Is this something that you still would want to pursue in you life?
10. Was it a deliberate choice to fall pregnant?
11. Tell me about your pregnancy leave?
12. How does your job affect your children?
13. Would you want your children to one day work on the mines?

SECTION F: RACE ON THE MINES

1. Race has always played a role in mining ...
2. Does race play a role on the mines? And how?
3. Have you ever witnessed any racism?
4. Does your race make your job easier, more difficult or does it play no role?
5. How much have you to do with people of other races?
6. Is there a difference in how people of other races treat you?
7. Do you think the fact that you are white carries any weight or advantage working on the mine?

SECTION G: SISTERHOOD

1. Do women stick together?
2. Is there a sisterhood among women?
3. Is it limited to race? Or profession?
4. Would you encourage other women to get a job in mining?
5. Do you think this is a good career for a woman?
6. How do you feel about the fact that women was deliberately excluded from mining?
7. Do you think women have a future in mining?
8. What do you think is the plus point to be a woman in this environment?
9. What do you think will make work life on the mine easier for women?
10. How do you feel about women who work full shifts underground?
11. Would you want to work underground?
12. Why do you think women choose a career in mining?
13. Do you think women belong in the mines?
14. What do you think are the implications for women in mining?
15. What do you think are the implications for white women in mining?

PHOTOS



Picture: Photo of me at the “face” at the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me with the miner in charge of blasting that day at the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me at the 'Long wall'vat the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me sitting next to the structural roof support at the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me next to the underground transport vehicles at the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me washing my boots before going back to the surface at the Okhozini Shaft, New Denmark Colliery.



Picture: Photo of a dragliner at work at the Isibonelo Colliery.



Picture: Photo of a bulldozer at work at the Isibonelo Colliery.



Picture: Photo of miners working at the coal crusher at the Isibonelo Colliery.



Picture: Photo of me at the Isibonelo Colliery, with the dragliner in the back.