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**POWER, PRIVILEGE AND IDENTITY AT THE MARGINS: IDENTITY WORK
TRANSITIONS OF LOWER ECHELON MANAGERS**

by

LAUREEN VAN ASWEGEN

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

in the

FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Professor S.M Nkomo

Co-Supervisor: Professor N.M.H Carrim

PRETORIA

JUNE 2020

Abstract

This study explores the hitherto unexamined role of national, cultural, societal and historical dynamics of power and privilege in the identity work of the lowest level of managers in organisations. The current study explored how the managerialism of first level managers transitioned within the context of the dramatic national political power shifts in South Africa from pre- to post-apartheid, and to what extent their managerialism and the changing national political context was tied to their construction of self. I used a multi-method qualitative research approach to understand how life, work and managerial experiences influenced the identity work of fourteen first level managers with varying tenure, differing racio-ethnicities, from different types of organisational settings. A particular strength of this study is that it integrates constructivist grounded theory with narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis in a way that privileges the experiences of the participants through their stories about being first level managers in post-apartheid South Africa, while revealing a richly textured theoretical construction of identity work at the margins in the context of significant societal and political change.

This study revealed that so-called ‘post-apartheid’ South African organisations remain sites for perpetuating social injustice through physical vestiges of segregation as well as complex societal-organisational interdiscursive practices that serve to maintain an unequal distribution of power, social oppression and exclusion. Within this context, first level managers expressed their managerialism variously through contested and coercive agentic strategies of power and resistance, while finding themselves implicated and relationally complicit in invidious discursive practices, veiled as post-apartheid speak. Their social location at the ‘power margin’ between

management and working classes educed a constant contested process of identity substitution, as they redefined themselves in the face of the loss and gain of socio-political power and privilege.

This research contributes to and extends theory on identity work, intersectionality theory and whiteness in management and organisation studies. Prior studies of managers' narrative and discursive identity work have privileged those at senior and occasionally middle management, suggesting that mutually antagonistic discourses of selves could be responses to the unpredictable effects of organisational control practices. I extend this thinking to beyond the boundaries of the organisation showing that the first level managers' antipodal constructions of self were responses to the impact of organisational, societal and national political transformations on their variously politicised selves, as subjectively positioned within each of the multiple relational power exchanges inherent in their managerial lives. Ultimately, it is hoped that this study will contribute towards improving working lives in organisations by drawing attention to the everyday struggles of those managers at the lowest level of the management hierarchy in organisations, those at the margins of managerial power, for whom expression of their managerialism and acceptance of their authority as managers is a tenuous process, constantly contested within an organisational context where political power and societal privilege remain dominant mechanisms for influencing organisational behaviour. In so doing this research helps South African organisations to better understand the complex challenges of achieving transformation in the workplace.

Keywords: power, privilege, identity work, discursive practices, first level managers, South Africa

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Contact Details

Student Information

Student name	Laureen van Aswegen
Student number	15354319
Email address	laureen.vanaswegen@icloud.com
Contact number	+27 82 924 2163
Qualification	PhD Organisational Behaviour

Supervisor Information

Faculty	Economic and Management Sciences
Department	Human Resource Management
Supervisor	Professor S.M Nkomo
Supervisor's email address	stella.nkomo@up.ac.za
Supervisor's contact number	+27 82 416 6308
Co- supervisor	Professor N.M.H Carrim
Co-supervisor's email address	nasima.carrim@up.ac.za
Co-supervisor's contact number	+27 72 465 2654

Acknowledgements

To God be all praise and glory!

Completing this PhD research project would not have been possible without so many who blessed my path along this journey, some of whom I acknowledge here:

- To my husband, Kurt, and our sons, Joshua and Jesse, thank you for your immense love and all your sacrifices throughout this endeavour. And likewise, to our parents, brothers, sisters and friends, thank you for your continuous prayers and encouragement.

- To my supervisors. Wow! Prof Stella and Prof Nasima, I cannot articulate in these few words how thankful I am for your wisdom, support, guidance, challenge, encouragement and perseverance. Prof Stella, to have been under your tutelage is a rare privilege for which I will always be immensely grateful. Thank you both for believing in me through it all!

- To Dr Elizabeth Archer for sharing your incomparable methodological prowess with such clarity during our sessions. I was blessed not only by your superior acumen in your field but also by your humility.

- To Professor Jenny Hoobler, Ms Christa Smit, my fellow PhD students in the department, and the rest of the department staff, thank you for being there to teach, guide, support, encourage and to listen.

- A very special thank you to the participating organisations who allowed me in, and the participants who allowed me to see, hear and feel their experiences, and who through their candour have contributed to this worthy scholarly conversation.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Contextualising the Study

Negotiating identity, work and life are messy prospects. Doing so within a political context characterised by decades of tumultuous struggles over power, privilege and social justice could perhaps be argued to be even messier than tackling such pursuits in relatively more stable political contexts. The next nine chapters captures the management lessons from fourteen such undertakings within South Africa. From these undertakings, I develop a process theory of identity work at the margins of power and privilege in organisations situated within a macro context of dramatic identity salient political power shifts. In this chapter I provide an introduction to the research embedding its purpose and contribution within relevant theory and literature. In addition, I provide an overview of the methodology of the research and conclude with its contributions.

1.1 Research Background

There is widespread and growing scholarly interest in the concept of identity work in organisations, owing to its theorized centrality in organizing processes and outcomes (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Brown, 2015). The burgeoning research defines identity work as the mental processes underlying individual efforts to shape and maintain a coherent sense of self-identity that answers a variety of questions such as: “who am I?” and “who are we?” (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, p.1164); “what’s [my] story?” (Ibarra & Lineback, 2005, p.65); “who am I not?” (Carroll & Levy, 2008, p.75) and “who might [I] become?” (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010, p.11). Scholars have paid special attention to management and leadership identity work and its role in

individual and organisational outcomes (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Carroll & Levy, 2008; DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2016).

However, the research on managerial and leadership identity work to date has centred predominantly on leaders at middle and top management levels. Is it plausible that the identity work of junior, first level, frontline managers follows the same processes as that for middle and senior managers? Or could this identity work involve processes, triggers, determinants, correlates and outcomes not yet explored? Furthermore, in their review of identity work scholarship, Alvesson et al. (2008) concluded that more research is required that recognizes the complexity arising from the multiplicity of “materials” used in the construction and maintenance of work identities including work content, formalized institutionalisms (e.g. hierarchies, job titles), social relations and group memberships, combined with the multiple forces (actors/agents other than the individual) that influence the identity work of individuals including organisational actors (e.g. top leadership, policy makers), identity salient ideological discourses (e.g. leadership, strategy, authenticity, citizenship) or societal/cultural patterns and institutionalized norms (e.g. value systems, morality, distribution of power).

In answering this call, many scholars have focused on the role of several of these identity salient influences on the identity work of organisational members. For example, Farmer & Van Dyne, (2010) showed how work role behaviours and multiple work role occupancy influenced identity work when organisational members sought confirmation of expressed identities. DeRue & Ashford (2010) studied the reciprocal and relational mechanisms of leader and follower identity work and showed how the organisational context became salient in the creation of situated

identities over time, through organisational processes of endorsement and reinforcement of leader versus follow identities. Herrbach & Mignonac (2012) revealed the salience of perceptions of organisational social identity discrimination on organisational members' professional identity work and the subsequent impact on their perceived career success. Another example is provided by Ashforth, Schinoff, and Rogers (2016) who articulated an organisational model that showed the impact of organisational climate variables (such as a climate for psychological safety and a positive relational climate) on identity work associated with organisational members' personal identification pathways.

Notwithstanding the growing scholarly focus on the multiplicity of influences on identity work processes, the role of shifts in power and privilege in identity work has been largely absent. Power is implicated as the keystone concept of social sciences believed to be the central organizing mechanism in almost all societies (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). In their review of the psychological and organisational literatures on power, Anderson and Brion (2014) noted that scholarly interest in the psychological and organisational determinants and consequences of power gain, maintenance and loss was increasing due to the importance of power to the organisational actor. However, the predominance of literary work on the determinants of power gain or loss, and the deleterious psychological consequences to the power holder, has resulted in a dearth in scholarly focus on other potential consequences of power gain or loss, such as the impact on an individual's self-concept. Fleming and Spicer (2014, p.248) conducted a review of the concept of power in the management and organisation science literature, concluding that the extant literature could be organised around four major concepts of power in organisations, namely, "coercion", "manipulation", "domination", and "subjectification". They proposed the concept of

subjectification to describe how organisations exert power and influence over the construction of organisational members' self-identity, arguing that apparent agentic processes such as professional identity work are facades for organisationally controlled expressions of personhood. However, there remains little focus on how a change in power could impact the work to maintain the former self-concept or transition to a new one. As such it is plausible that identity work may be impacted by power loss or gain in ways not yet theorized.

A particular form of socio-political power relevant to this study is Whiteness. Whiteness theory studies how Whiteness is produced and maintained in everyday, taken for granted ways, allowing White people to be seen as race-less (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2003; Sue, 2004). Alcoff (2015) further argues that attributes such as intelligence, attractiveness, competence or honesty are associated with Whiteness in an unearned taken-for-granted normative manner. Under apartheid legislation White South Africans were legally granted superiority over Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans and, by virtue of their Whiteness only, enjoyed racially exclusive privileges such as access to separate amenities, better jobs, higher wages, property ownership and many more economic privileges (see Chapter 2). However, until very recently, research on Whiteness enjoyed almost no scholarly attention from human resource management, industrial psychology and organisational behavioural scholars. This trend has been bucked by a few scholars notably Grimes (2001), Nkomo & Al Ariss (2014), Samaluk (2014) and Al Ariss, Özbilgin, Tatli, & April (2014), who call for the examination of White privilege in organisations and its implications for identity scholarship in organisations.

Relatedly, in a recent review of the identity work literature Brown (2015, p.31) concludes that “There is much we still do not know about how contexts – particularly organisational and national cultural settings – affect individuals’ identities and identity work”, calling for more research on the identity work that connects individuals’ past, present and potential future identities with the historical context in which they are embedded. A recent contribution to this call is the important research into the impact of the historical socio-political context on Indian women’s leadership identity work by Carrim and Nkomo (2016). Moreover, Dhamoon (2011) argues for the importance of moving beyond focusing on the processes that produce subjectivities and social differences to examine the interaction between these subjectivities and the macro forces of systems of domination, in order to uncover the intersectional power dynamics at play between subjective identity work processes and systems of domination. Such an examination emphasises the multiplicity of the individual’s intersectional experiences of society owing to the various social positions that individuals occupy within what Collins (2012) refers to as matrices of domination. Collins (2012) further argues that the reward of adopting such an intersectional approach is a deeper understanding of the heterogeneity of power and privilege, the coincident experience of privilege and disadvantage, and the overall effect of intersecting systems of power on identity work. Interestingly, the research of Atewologun, Sealy, and Vinnicombe, (2016, p.231) revealed how relational power asymmetry influenced the identity work of organisational members, who engaged in a process of “intersectional identity work”, whereby individuals negotiate powerful social identities at the interstices of simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged social locations. They call for more research that examines socially salient identities on order to develop “empirically grounded process theories of identity construction at multiple intersecting identity locations” (Atewologun et al., 2016, p.242).

In this vein, the present research explores the hitherto unexamined role of national, cultural, societal and historical dynamics of power and privilege, in the identity work of the lowest level of managers in organisations: the front-line supervisors. Within corporate South Africa, first level managers, often referred to as front-line supervisors, represent an interesting social location for experiencing intersecting systems of power, not only because first level managers are at the margins between those with managerial authority and those without, but because during apartheid, first level management also represented the margin between majority Black workers and majority White male managers. When political power shifted to Black South Africans after the abolition of apartheid legislation, Black employees started to enter predominantly White management ranks. Twenty-five years on, this research seeks to understand the experiences of White and Black first level managers who occupied a unique social location during this epochal national political transformation.

1.2 Research Problem Statement

This research problematizes the overt focus by management and organisational scholars on top management (and occasionally middle management) for generating knowledge about management and leadership in organisations. Locating this research in the critical scholarship domain, I challenge the normativity of managerialism, the notion that all managers have equal individual power (equal personal agency to access resources to fulfil needs and achieve goals), equal positional power (equal access to the institutionalized power structures in the hierarchy to fulfil needs and accomplish goals), equal relational power (equal enjoyment of dyadic exchange with subordinates, peers or significant others to fulfil needs or achieve goals) and equal

transformational power (equal leadership and influence over contexts and others to accomplish change), that all managers at all hierarchical levels behave in accordance with management and leadership theories grounded in seniority.

This study is borne out of curiosity about whether generally accepted theories of leadership and management, applicable to some invisible unmarked norm of the “typical manager”, hold up at the extreme case of managers with lowest managerial power. I therefore propose diverting attention away from top management in order to theorize about the managerialism of managers at the margins of so-called blue collar and white-collar status, at the margins of hierarchical power between management and the working class. To do this I introduce the idea of a ‘managerial power margin’ - a metaphorical social location at the bottom of the managerial pyramid. It is simultaneously the location of lowest managerial power in a typical command and control western style organisation and yet paradoxically also the position with the highest span of control. In most typical hierarchal organisational structures, this first level manager has the highest number of direct subordinates compared with any other level of manager above them, implying that this individual has direct managerial power over the highest number of employees compared with any other manager higher in the hierarchy.

Unlike the glass ceiling that represents an invisible barrier for progression from middle to upper levels of management, the power margin is metaphorically speaking much more of a socio-psychological space than a single barrier. It is not intended to be a target line to break through during career ascendancy nor a lower limit to fall through during career failure. Instead it is a place that occupants use in very different ways to achieve their goals and where occupants are viewed

by others in a variety of ways. Those at the margins are at the nexus of many other intersecting social markers of identity including but not limited to race, ethnicity, class, status and privilege. Most importantly this level of manager is in direct contact with the majority of people in any hierarchical organisation and perhaps in a unique position to enable or inhibit transformation.

A reasonable starting point for studying a group that has hardly received any scholarly attention is to enquire who they are and more importantly who they think they are. Therefore, this study focuses on the identity work of the lowest levels of management in organisations and from a critical scholarship perspective, on the role of power and privilege in their identity work.

1.3 Research Purpose

The overarching purpose of this research was to theorize the hitherto unexamined role that dramatic changes in national, cultural, societal and historical power and privilege, plays in the identity work of the lowest level of managers in organisations. The research objectives of the study were:

- i) first, to understand the subjective life story narratives of how first level managers make sense of who they are and who they might become;
- ii) second, to understand the lived experiences of being a first level manager during and after apartheid;
- iii) third, to understand how these experiences influenced their sense-making process of who they were, who they are and who they might become;

iii) fourth, to understand how first level managers made sense of their variously privileged or marginalized social positions, how this changed over time in response to a radical societal shift in political power and how it shaped their self-concept.

1.4 Research Questions

It is acknowledged that research questions in a grounded theory inquiry are refined throughout the project. I initiated this inquiry with the following questions:

Research Question 1. How do first level managers engage in identity work? How has this changed or not changed over time?

Research Question 2. How are they negotiating and reconstructing their identities as first line managers in the face of changes in the political, social and historical context of the societies within which they live and the country as a whole?

Research Question 3. How do differences in their social identities shape the nature of their identity work?

1.5 Research Approach and Scope

The research in this thesis takes a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2016) aimed at constructing emergent theory of first level management and identity work. A particular strength of this study is that it integrates constructivist grounded theory with narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis in a way that privileges the voices of the participants through their stories about being first level managers in post-apartheid South Africa, while revealing a richly textured theoretical construction of identity work at the margins. By combining grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), narrative inquiry (Bruner, 1991) and critical discourse analytical methods

(Wodak & Meyer, 2016), I was able to produce thick descriptions and deep analysis of the complex cognitive, discursive and embodied identity work practices of the participants. Other scholars have also examined the potential of combining the methods of grounded theory and narrative inquiry, concluding that combining the two approaches “creates possibilities for developing a richer understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Lal, Suto & Ungar, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, within the national socio-political context for this research, the combination of methodologies allowed for an in-depth study of the unexamined role of changing national, cultural, societal and historical dynamics of power and privilege in the identity work of the lowest level of managers in organisations.

Notwithstanding the strength of the methodological approach, there were some limitations related to the research method. In particular, finding first level managers with high tenure (more than 25 years in the role) to capture the transition period from pre to post-apartheid proved difficult. After a long search I eventually found White and Coloured first level managers with high tenure. However, I could not find Black managers with high tenure despite a yearlong search. Black people mainly had access to management ranks after the implementation of the Employment Equity Act which was promulgated in 1998. Furthermore, this research purposively privileges the voices of men within the theoretical sample. In order to understand the transition of power I chose to study those who had managerial power, lost managerial power and gained managerial power in organisations during the political transition. Women had no managerial power during apartheid and at the time of the study, twenty-five years post-apartheid, still comparatively few women had risen to extremely high levels of power in organisations and institutions (although slightly better in government) and even in broader society for a variety of complex reasons not in scope for this

study. This study therefore purposively omits the study of the effects of gender as a key design element. Nevertheless, being a grounded theory study, the data revealed gendered identity work practices from which I draw conclusions and recommendations for further study in Chapter 9.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

The research proposal was submitted to the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences ethics committee and ethical clearance obtained in December of 2016 (see Appendix A). Each organisation approached was invited to participate via a formal request for participation letter, followed up by a meeting with myself as researcher to explain the purpose and methods of the study. A duly authorized member of the senior management for the organisation signed a consent letter (see Appendix B) that provided me formal permission to invite organisational members to participate in the study. Each potential participant had the opportunity to have the study explained to them. Upon agreement to participate each participant had the opportunity to sign the informed consent letter (see Appendix C). All participants chose a pseudonym (alias) before commencing with the interviews to protect anonymity. I conformed to the university's data storage requirements, ensuring that all recordings, transcriptions and field generated data such as notes and reports were protected and secured. Furthermore, I anonymized all data records arising out of the research including the completed interview transcripts and field notes as well as all reported data.

I allowed all participants the opportunity to respond to my interview questions (see Appendix D) in the language that they felt most comfortable to express themselves in. Given that I am fluent in English and Afrikaans, no translation services were required. Nevertheless, to ensure

rigour, I sent a narrative segment to a member of the university academic staff who is also fluent in Afrikaans for an independent translation. The results produced excellent similitude (see an extract in Appendix E).

Furthermore, to ensure quality and rigour in the analytical approach, and in agreement with my supervisory committee, I enlisted the input of academics and industry experts during the data analysis and theory building phases of the research. All such contributors were only provided with anonymized data.

1.7 Research Contribution

The results of the research show that first level managers express their managerialism variously through contested and coercive agentic strategies of power and resistance, while finding themselves implicated and relationally complicit in invidious discursive practices, veiled as post-apartheid speak. Their social location at the ‘power margin’ between the management and working class foregrounds their everyday managerialism, which plays out as a constant contested process of identity substitution, as they seek to redefine themselves in the face of the complex dynamics of historical and nascent societal power and privilege loss and gain in relation to how they by manage “them (down there)” to “run the numbers” for “them (up there)”. This research makes several significant scholarly contributions:

- i) Brown (2015, p.31) observed that “There is much we still do not know about how contexts – particularly organisational and national cultural settings – affect individuals’ identities and identity work”. This study has answered this call by presenting

new theory on the identity work that connects individuals' past, present and potential future identities with the historical contexts in which they are embedded.

ii) By expanding on the critical role and the detailed mechanism of subjective temporality in narrative identity work this study also contributes to narrative identity work scholarship (Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006; Watson, 2009 and Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

iii) The emergent theory contributes to the 'stable-fluid' debate in identity construction by showing a context where 'fluid' is more precisely described as high intensity, episodic identity work and 'stable' more precisely described as active continuous discursive performativity (Ashforth, 2016; Atewologun, Kutzer, Doldor, Anderson & Sealy, 2017; Corlett, McInnes, Coupland & Sheep, 2017).

iv) The emergent concept of episodic identity work as identity substitution extends Ibarra and Barbulescu's (2010) narrative repertoire evolution model of work role transition identity work by illuminating the complex role that shifts in societal power plays in identity narrative revision and the alternatives available to organisational actors through identity substitution processes when their contested identity pathways remain incomplete or fail to achieve acceptance.

v) The findings of this study also contribute to current scholarship on identity regulation in organisations by contributing additional ways that organisations are instruments of identity regulation and additional individual outcomes of identity regulation in organisations (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Adams & Crafford, 2012; Gagnon & Collinson, 2014; Knights & Clarke, 2014; Gill, 2015; Knights & Clarke, 2018).

vi) Finally, this study contributes to the critical race, Whiteness and intersectionality scholarly conversations by theorising how the societal and organisational processes and systems of domination intersect (Dhamoon, 2011) to create complex contexts for the formation, revision, maintenance and reproduction of power and privilege; how the pursuit for powerful social locations (Booyesen, 2018) keeps first level managers engaged in identity substitution and how the reproduction of Whiteness in post-apartheid South African organisations (Steyn & Foster, 2008) is accomplished through every day, unmarked discursive performativity practices that serve to maintain an unequal distribution of power, social oppression and exclusion.

1.8 Glossary of Terms

Table 1 Glossary of selected specific terms used in this thesis

Term	Description
Apartheid	Apartheid was a legal system of racial discrimination that granted White South Africans political, economic and social domination over people currently racially classified as Black (African, Coloured and Indian). See works such as Terreblanche (2002) or Botha and Bekink (2018) for more on apartheid legislation. See Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of the history of apartheid. See Chapter 5 for the way participants spoke about apartheid.
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment refers to legislated socio-economic strategies introduced in South Africa to redress the socio-economic

	consequences to Black people of apartheid and its predicating legislation (see Republic of South Africa, 2014)
Black people	The terms Black people and Blacks refers collectively to South African citizens who are racially classified as African, Coloured and Indian (Republic of South Africa, 2014).
Discursive Performativity	In this thesis I use the term discursive performativity in the Foucauldian sense to denote both the linguistic and non-linguistic ways that everyday expressions (performances) of discourses are deliberately engaged in to achieve the reality that the discourse describes, for example, to reproduce asymmetric power relationships (Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman, 2009, 2016; Jäger and Maier, 2016; Huault, Kärreman, Perret & Spicer, 2017).
Post-apartheid and ‘post- apartheid’	Historically speaking, post-apartheid refers to the period since June 1991 when the first tranche of apartheid legislation was repealed and is consistent with how the term is used in this thesis. See Terreblanche (2002), South African History Online (2011) or Botha and Bekink (2018). However, the participants (and society at large) generally consider the post-apartheid period to be the time since April 1994 when the first democratic elections were held in the Republic of South Africa. See chapter five for more on the subjective perception of the timing of the post-apartheid period. Drawing on critical discourse theories, this thesis also takes a critical stance towards ideologies underpinning labels such as ‘post-apartheid’ that serve to maintain unequal power distribution between social groups (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) by espousing that the racial segregation, hegemony and social ramifications of

	<p>apartheid are over (Steyn & Foster, 2008) whereas the facts are that the project of dismantling apartheid laws are still in progress (Botha & Bekink, 2018), apartheid spatial geography remains a feature of South African life (Statistics South Africa, 2016).</p>
Power	<p>In this thesis I draw on three concepts of power. First, Bertrand Russell's classical definition of power that emphasises the ubiquity and essentialism of power in social interaction: "The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense that Energy is the fundamental concept in physics ... The laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power." (Russell, 1938, p. 10, as cited in Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003, p.265). Second, I draw on German philosopher Max Weber's relational notion of power as the potential of an individual in a social relationship to exercise their will despite resistance from others (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Third, I use a critical lens and draw on a Foucauldian concept of power that transcends the relational domain and sees power as the everyday taken for granted, often undetected, systematic institutional subjectification of societies and social groups through the exertion of discursive control over their beliefs, ideologies and actions. Power is diffused, rendered invisible, rather than concentrated in the hands of a few visible cohesive forces, making both dominant and subjected complicate in the reproduction of unequal power distribution. This hegemonic power as subjectification is rendered visible mainly by studying its resistance (see Foucault, 1982; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).</p>

Race	The term race in this thesis is understood in the context of South African legislation referencing racial classifications in particular the the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a). See Posel (2011) for more on the wide variety of ways that race and racial categories were defined during apartheid.
Racio-ethnicity	In this thesis racio-ethnicity is taken to mean the combination of race and cultural ethnicity as indicated by home language. For example, White Afrikaans people or Black isiZulu people. This is in line with the South African census classifications (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

1.9 Chapter layout – how the rest of the thesis has been organised

The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows:

- **Chapter 2: National Political Context**

This chapter describes the most salient feature of the national political context for the research being the radical shift in political power pre- and post-apartheid from the White minority to the Black majority.

- **Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundation**

This chapter provides a brief literature overview of the scholarly conversations about theories of identity and identity work, theories of power in organisations, and theories of societal privilege and power, within which this research is broadly located.

- **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

This chapter sketches the methodological approach, presents the extant methodological theories relevant to this study and provides a detailed description of all aspects of the methods and analytical strategies employed during this study.

- **Chapter 5: Key Findings**

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings and explains how the emergent substantive theoretical categories were conceptualised from the data and how they integrate conceptually into a theoretical model that represents how first level managers engage in identity work at the margins of managerial power in the context of societal and organisational transformation.

- **Chapter 6: Episodic Identity Work Transitions**

This chapter focusses on the findings related to the episodic identity work practices of the participants.

- **Chapter 7: Continuous Identity Work Transitions**

This chapter focusses on the findings related to the participants' continuous identity work practices. The findings in both chapters six and seven are supported with thick descriptions of the details pertaining to these identity work processes.

- **Chapter 8: Discussion – Power, Privilege and Identity Work Transitions at the Margins**

This chapter discussed the findings in relation to existing theories about the identity work of managers in organisations.

- **Chapter 9: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter summarises the theoretical contribution, practical implications and limitations of the study and recommends areas for future research.

- **Chapter 10: Reflections**

In this chapter I share personal reflections about my experience of conducting this research and compiling this thesis.

Chapter 2. National Political Context

This study was conducted in South African organisations twenty-five years after the repeal of the apartheid legal framework. The most salient feature of the national political context for the research was the radical shift in political power pre- and post-apartheid from the White minority to the Black majority. Apartheid was legal system of racial discrimination practiced in South Africa, widely historicized as having been introduced by the National Party in 1948. However, the subjugation of Black people goes back prior to apartheid to 1652 when European colonialism began, which ushered in a period of slavery and slave trade from 1653 to 1834 (South African History Online, 2011). Already during the early decades of their occupation of South Africa, the Dutch had elevated the economic and political status of Dutch slave overseers known as the Free Burghers (Farmers), the forebears of White Afrikaners, allocating them land through expropriation from the local indigenous people and supplying them with labour by enslaving the local indigenous people as well as through the through the Indian Ocean slave trade (South African History Online, 2015). By the time that British laws enabled emancipation of slaves in 1834, the domination of White European settlers over Black people in South Africa had lasted close to 200 years.

According to legal historians, although the political system of apartheid in South Africa was ushered in from 1948 during the term of the then ruling party, the National Party, the legal system of apartheid had been in force during the early 1900's, shortly after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, and was premised primarily on reserving the majority of the country's land for the White minority as promulgated in the Natives Land Act No. 27 of 1913 (South African History Online, 2013). The precursors to the Union's apartheid legislation were a

litany of existing provincial laws that legalised racial segregation and oppression in the then British colonies and Dutch republics in South Africa (Posel, 2001), for example, the Kaffir Employment Act No. 27 of 1857 and the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance of 1904 (O'Malley, 2009). Racial segregation intensified after 1948 and in 1950 the National Party passed the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950 that enforced the classification of all South Africans into three racial classes, namely, White, Black and Coloured. Later those who originated from India were also given citizen rights and were classified racially as Indian (South African History Online, 2015). The racial classification registration process was administered and regulated by the Department of Native affairs, with the criteria being largely subjective although judgements about the correct race classification for an individual were mainly made according to physical appearance (skin colour and type of hair) and general life customs (religious observations, lifestyle) and in some cases known ancestry (Posel, 2011).

Subsequent to the enactment of the Population Registration Act, a series of legislation was promulgated that enforced racially segregated geographies through the forced removals of people from their homes to racially designated areas as legislated by the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 and several related pieces of legislation (SOHO, 2015). Other legislation fundamental to apartheid included the inhibition of freedom of movement of Black people to specific places and within specific times of day (the Pass laws), the restricted segregated access of non-Whites to public spaces through legal signage (the Separate Amenities laws), the economic restrictions on non-Whites to occupy certain job levels and job types (Job Reservation laws), restricting the right to equal education (Education Separation laws), restricting the right to ownership or the right to enter commercial contracts, the outlawing of mixed raced marriages (Immorality Legislation) to name

a few. Following decades of anti-apartheid civil struggles internally and international political pressure externally, apartheid legislation such as the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Group Areas Act of 1950 were repealed by the South African government in 1991. Since then many other apartheid laws have been repealed but the legal process of undoing apartheid legislation remains a project even several years after the political system of apartheid was ended (Botha & Bekink, 2018).

During the period following the repeal of South Africa's apartheid laws, the South African government promulgated several pieces of legislation aimed simultaneously at racial equality and economic redress (Terreblanche, 2002). Beyond the legal restructuring of South African life that began in 1991, the newly elected Government of National Unity developed a comprehensive reform program in 1994 known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The introduction chapter to the RDP sketches the South African context in 1994 as follows:

Our history has been a bitter one dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour practices. ... Our income distribution is racially distorted and ranks as one of the most unequal in the world. ... The economy was built on systematically enforced racial division in every sphere. Rural areas were divided into underdeveloped bantustans and well-developed, white-owned commercial farming areas; towns and cities were divided into townships without basic infrastructure for blacks and well-resourced suburbs for whites. Segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency. ... In commerce and industry, very large conglomerates dominated by whites control large parts of the economy. Cheap labour policies and employment segregation have concentrated skills in white hands. ... The result

is that in every sphere of our society — economic, social, legal, political, moral, cultural, environmental — South Africans are confronted by serious problems.

...No political democracy can survive and flourish if the majority of its people remains in poverty, without land, without their basic needs being met and without tangible prospects for a better life. ...A programme is required that is achievable, sustainable and meets the objectives of freedom, and an improved standard of living and quality of life for all South Africans ...The RDP is designed to be such a programme, in full knowledge of the challenges and obstacles facing the country. Not every expectation will be met immediately but the RDP provides the framework within which choices can be made.

(Republic of South Africa, 1994, p.7)

Of particular relevance to this study is the effects of the job reservation laws during apartheid and the post-apartheid policy shifts towards employment equality. The apartheid job reservation laws literally reserved skilled, supervisory and managerial positions for whites (and combined with patriarchy), white men (Horwitz, 1994). Despite amendments to labour legislation allowing Black workers the legal right to collective bargaining that resulted from the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission of Enquiry in 1979, racial discrimination in employment remained pervasive (Horwitz, 1994). Kraak (1995) observed that White middle-class males monopolized skilled work, professional occupations and management positions during apartheid. Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain, and Taggar (1998) estimated that Whites occupied 93 – 94 percent of management positions at the time of the historic 1994 elections with Black Africans estimated to have occupied 2.5 percent of management positions, Asians, 2.14 percent and Coloureds 2.02 percent of such positions (Bowmaker-Falconer & Horwitz, 1994). Kraak

(1995, p.672) further observed that despite labour legislation amendments in 1979, the advancement of Black people in organisations during the 1980s remained minimal “primarily due to White worker, White supervisory and White middle management resistance”. Furthermore, those Blacks who were promoted into management positions were largely concentrated in occupational fields such as Human Resources, Personnel, Industrial Relations and Communications, attracting scholarly criticism as being merely token or “cosmetic” advances (Kraak, 1995, p.673). The inertia against Black advancement into management roles is on the one hand, a direct result of the legacy of apartheid legislation but, on the other hand, is also the result of an ideology of segregation that functioned through deeply held beliefs of socio-cultural difference between Blacks and Whites and that served to reinforce the job reservation laws by the actively excluding Blacks from skilled work, as Gradín (2019, p.554) argues, “especially if it involved supervisory functions over whites”.

Despite the wide ranging impact intended by the RDP programme, the political power shift that occurred in 1994 has arguably been felt mostly within corporate South Africa given that racial integration in societies remains inhibited by the legacy of apartheid spatial geography, the result of which sees most South Africans still physically living in racial segregation (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Therefore, for the context of this study in particular, the most direct impact of the political power shift on South African organisations resulting from the RDP has undoubtedly been the promulgation of employment equity and skills development legislation, accompanied by legislated regulatory reporting, compliance and financial consequences for those organisations that do not comply. Most notably, the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a), and the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998b)

were introduced to enable the then recently promulgated Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Employment Equity Act in particular, was promulgated with the purpose of:

- “Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workplace.” (Republic of South Africa, 1998a, p.5)

The term “designated groups” in the above excerpt is defined as “black people, women and people with disabilities who – are citizens of the Republic of South Africa by birth or descent; or became citizens of the Republic of South Africa by naturalisation – before 27 April 1994; or after 26 April 1994 and who would have been entitled to acquire citizenship by naturalisation prior to that date but who were precluded by apartheid policies” (Republic of South Africa, 2019). Furthermore, the Employment Equity Act defines “black people” as those racially classified as African, Coloured and Indian citizens since 1994 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a).

However, despite legislation and stiff penalties by the South African government for non-compliance, the 19th Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2018 – 2019 revealed that more than twenty five years after the end of apartheid and notwithstanding the promulgation of employment equity legislation, the representation of Whites at top management levels in South Africa was 66.5% which is more than seven times the economically active population percentage of Whites in South Africa, currently at 9% (Republic of South Africa, 2019). One of the early

reports prepared by the Commission for Employment Equity, showed that for the 2002 to 2003 period, Whites occupied 81.5% of top management jobs in South Africa, and represented 13.7% of the economically active population of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 2003). Ironically, the percentage of White occupancy of top management positions has increased from roughly six times to more than seven times the economically active White population levels, over the roughly 20 years of Employment Equity reports by the Commission for Employment Equity. While the absolute statistics appear to be shifting, the power in South African organisations remains firmly in the hands of the White group.

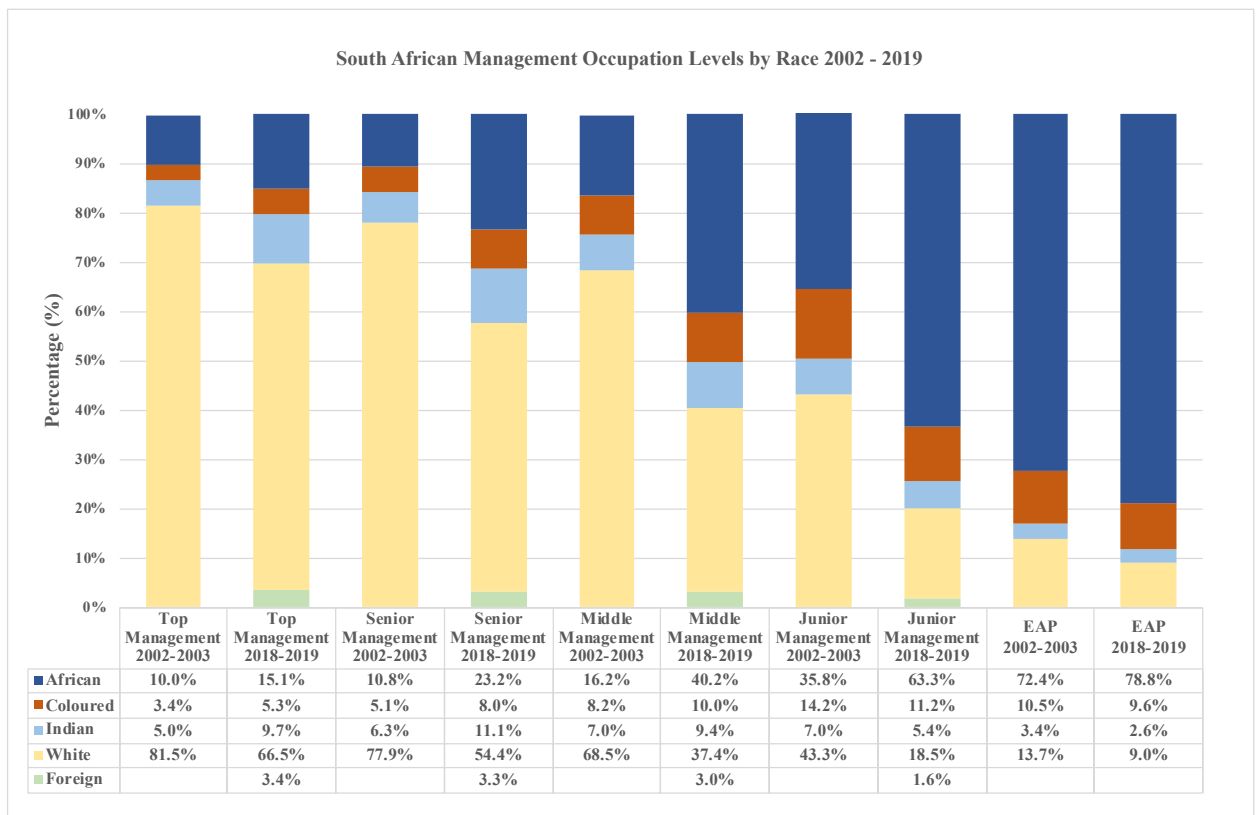


Figure 1: Racial demography of South African managers 25 years post-apartheid

[Notes: The Economically Active Population (EAP) of South Africa is included for reference. Compiled from source data as extracted from the Commission for Employment Equity Reports (Republic of South Africa, 2003, 2019).]

Moreover, examining the details of employment equity statistics as shown in figure 1, reveals that while little transformation has taken place at top management levels, there have been relatively major shifts in the lower levels of management. Specifically, the racial demography of those in the lowest levels of management has shifted more over the preceding twenty years than any other level of management. This is the only level of management where the racial demography is approaching the racial profile of South Africa's economically active population, and thus the only level of management that mirrors the post-apartheid political power shift nearly twenty-five years later. This research is curious about the impact that these power shifts at the lowest levels of management in organisations have had on the everyday working lives of lower level managers.

Beyond labour statistics at junior management levels in South African organisations, however, very little evidence of economic progress is available twenty-five years after the declared end of apartheid. South Africa's economic growth rate had deteriorated so markedly that the Standard & Poor's credit rating for South Africa stood at BBB minus with a negative outlook, only one level above junk or non-investment status during 2019. The Gini coefficient, a measure of economic inequality, remains extremely high for South Africa at 0,67 (Statistics South Africa, 2019, p.166), placing South Africa within the top five most unequal nations in the world. Furthermore, Gradín (2019) conducted differential statistical analysis on available Gini trends between 1996 and 2015 and concluded that low paying jobs remain occupied by Blacks while Whites occupied disproportionately higher paying jobs, and that the explainable differences in labour characteristics such as differing educational levels between Blacks and Whites explained less than one third of job pay segregation. The barriers to equality in the workplace and to

economic power, it could thus be argued, were largely ideological including factors such as “white fear” as noted by Booysen (2007, p.68).

On the ground, South Africans were still deeply divided as evidenced by widespread mass action by various groups in South Africa as reported in various media publications and also as experienced first-hand by the author, notably:

- prolonged violent strike action by organised labour for living wages that is hoped will reduce the growing division between the lowest earners and top earners
- violent protests by university students for inclusive access to university education to eliminate the divide between those who can afford education and those who can not
- violent service delivery protests by the un-serviced poor against government for non-delivery of access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and public policing as well as the growing housing crisis
- widespread violent xenophobic attacks on foreign business owners who are perceived to have easier access to business rights in local communities than do local emergent potential business owners
- increasing incidents of public racism and hate speech

While these were the societal experiences of South African citizens (like the researcher) of the national context at large, corporate South Africa was characterized by other contextual dynamics.

The context within South African organisations was such that workspaces remain characterised by the constant implementation of post-apartheid transformation interventions and practices through policies designed to meet the requirements of post-apartheid legislated reforms. These reforms have impacted organisations in three waves of transformative policy changes. The first wave of transformation accompanied the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act, and the associated regulatory compliance reporting for all organisations. This was followed five years later by the promulgation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act No. 53 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2004) which made provision for measurable codes to be introduced for declaring the levels to which businesses had achieved Black Economic Empowerment. Notably, economic transformation through preferential procurement, share ownership in businesses and direct management control at top levels of business were required to demonstrate transformation, which was to be measured by a scorecard in line with codes of good practice for measuring how economically transformed a business was. Nine years later, the Employment Equity Amendment Act No. 47 of 2013 (Republic of South Africa, 2014a) was issued which clarified the law with respect to unfair discrimination related to unequal wages in the workplace and imposed the right of government to fine non-compliant companies. At roughly the same time the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No. 46 of 2013 was promulgated that made provision for the establishment of a Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Commission for administration and regulation of the legislation including the power to enforce compliance and hand down punitive measures for non-compliance (Republic of South Africa, 2014b). Furthermore, at the time of the research study in 2018, a further amendment to the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment codes was being introduced, designed to accelerate the racial transformation of business owners and top management.

With each of these waves of political and economic transformation legislation, South African organisations responded by implementing employment equity committees, affirmative action programs and even diversity management programs (Steyn & Kelly, 2009). Although Steyn and Kelly (2009) criticized the diversity management efforts by South African organisations as lacking in any real transformation towards equality, they noted that a few examples of change (not transformation) were reported by diversity practitioners in organisations where top leadership bought into the diversity management programs. Likewise, Nkomo (2011) concluded that the dominant response to Employment Equity legislation was compliance, and despite their best intentions, organisations struggled to move from the letter of the law to embracing the spirit and intent of the law. More recently, Daya (2014) pointed to the lack of leadership driven transformation strategies in favour of overt focus on recruiting historically disadvantaged individuals to meet employment equity targets. Furthermore, the difficulty and complexity of Employment Equity transformation efforts have been highlighted by diversity scholars (Booyesen, 2007) and Steyn and Kelly (2009) who note that white fear and the reproduction of white privilege in organisations remain deeply rooted barriers to effective transformation of South African work places.

Given this context, what are the experiences of those in lower management and how has their sense of self been shaped by the dramatic political power shift in South Africa? As those at the margins of hierarchical power between management and the working class, and additionally as those who have experienced such a major shift in access to managerial power, how have first level managers made sense of these transitions? How has this impacted their identity work? Has their potentially

heightened experience of these political changes, and how they have dealt with these changes, equipped them to play a greater role in the future of transformation in organisations and society? Should scholars and policy makers be paying more attention to the low power leaders for sustainable social transformation?

Chapter 3. Theoretical Foundation

The unique historical socio-political power context for studying identity work in so called “post-apartheid” South African organisations is messy and often times the answers to the questions “who am I?” and “who might I become?” are too complex to approach from any one vantage point, namely an organisational and management theoretical stance. In particular, any study interested in the self-concept of South Africans has to consider the impact of the dramatic shifts in the societal dynamics of power, privilege, oppression, disadvantage, exclusion and marginalization.

In this section I present the seminal theoretical and empirical literature in management and organisation studies as well as the sociology and social psychology arenas that will help to locate this research and to which this research hopes to contribute. The broad theoretical location of this study does not imply that the research will be directed in such a way as to find evidence for the existing theoretical models nor that hypotheses emanating from these theories will be tested. Instead, as a grounded theory study, I provide here a rather brief literature overview for locating this research broadly within the scholarly conversations about theories of identity and identity work, theories of power in organisations, and theories of societal privilege and power (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014). These theories allowed me to explore how the first level managers’ antipodal constructions of self are responses to organisational (in) action related to national political transformations, societal expectations of redress and the impact of the (re)distribution of power on first level managers’ variously politicized selves as subjectively positioned in each of the multiple relational power exchanges inherent in their managerial lives.

3.1 Identity and Identity Work

Enquiring about the processes that post-apartheid South African front-line leaders engage in to answer the questions “Who am I?” and “Who will I become?” situates the study within the scholarly conversation of the concept referred to as identity work. Identity work is situated within the broader theoretical arenas of Social Identity Theory, Self-Categorization Theory and Identity Theory. These theories posit that the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process is defined as self-categorization in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) and as identification in Identity Theory (McCall and Simmons, 1978).

There is widespread and growing scholarly interest in the concept of identity work in organisations, owing to its theorized centrality in organizing processes and outcomes (Alvesson et al., 2008; Brown, 2015). The burgeoning research defines identity work as the mental processes underlying individual efforts to shape and maintain a coherent sense of self-identity that answers a variety of questions such as: who am I? and who are we? (Alvesson, et al., 2008); what is my story? (Ibarra & Lineback, 2005); who am I not? (Carroll & Levy, 2008) and who might I become? (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003, p. 1165) define the concept of identity work as “... forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness”, emphasizing the fluidity of identity itself and so doing opposing scholarly views that identity is stable once formed during developmental years (Helms, 1986) and thereafter only subject to minor ongoing adjustments. Watson (2008) usefully extended this definition to include the work done to reconcile the internal

personal self-concept with the socially available external discursive social-identities and then in addition the work done to shape the external discourse of the identified social-identity, suggesting significantly more agency by individuals in identity work than that suggested by the proponents of the notion of institutionalized structural control of identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Management and leadership identity work and its role in individual and organisational outcomes has received growing scholarly interest. Sveningsson & Alvesson (2003) studied the processes of managerial identity construction through the in-depth examination of the case of one manager in one organisation. They found that both identity and anti-identity discursive constructions were vital for managerial identity negotiation when confronted with organisational discourses about being a manager, arguing that identity construction processes are more complex than merely using available social identity categories as materials for identity construction. In a similar vein, Carroll & Levy (2008) explored the interplay between a baseline identity (such as a management identity) and an emergent identity (such as a leadership identity) through semi-structured interviews with 53 senior and upper-middle managers, concluding that identity work to construct new emergent managerial or leadership identities are not merely exercises in anti-identity but additionally involves the construction of new linkages between prior management and emergent leadership identities. DeRue & Ashford (2010) studied the reciprocal and relational mechanisms of leader and follower identity work and showed how the organisational context became salient in the creation of situated identities over time, through organisational processes of endorsement and reinforcement of leader versus follow identities. More recently, Sveningsson & Alvesson (2016) report on the findings of several senior and middle management cases of identity

struggles between being a manager and being oneself, what such struggles reveal about the complexity of identity work processes.

However, the research on managerial and leadership identity work to date has centred primarily on leaders at middle and top management levels with scant attention to first level managers barring a few exceptions, for example, Down and Reveley (2009). Is it plausible that the identity work of junior, first level, frontline managers follows the same processes as that for middle and senior managers? Or could this identity work involve processes, triggers, determinants, correlates and outcomes not yet explored? By focusing on the lowest level of management in organisations, this research aims to contribute an answer this question.

3.2 Intersectionality

Privilege and its relation to power has entered the management and organisational literature via critical scholarship. Identity research in particular has been used as a lens for examining the role of problematic social behaviour in organisations such as stereotyping, bullying, gendering and several forms of oppressive ‘othering’ (Nkomo, 1992; Smith, 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Van Laer and Janssens, 2014). Arguably the most significant critical scholarship contribution to elucidating the role of oppression in identity work in organisations in recent times has been the application of intersectionality as a research framework (Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher, & Nkomo, 2016). Intersectionality was introduced in the late 1980s to expose how the multiplicity of oppression experienced by black women was undermined in ‘raceless’ gender studies (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). An intersectionality lens has also been applied to understand identity work in organisations for the cases where individuals negotiate their identities at the intersections

of multiple axes of difference (Acker, 2006; Atewologun & Singh, 2010; Acker, 2012; Joshi, Neely, Emrich, Griffiths, & George, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Ruiz Castro & Holvino, 2016; Carrim & Nkomo, 2016).

However, while intersectionality has done much to raise the prominence of the nature of identity work in organisations by individuals who are located at multiple axes of oppression, the field of intersectionality is largely silent on the identity work of those with power and privilege, largely treating this group as homogenous. There are a few notable exceptions where intersectional scholars have started to study the identity work where heterogeneity of power and privilege exists (Steyn & Conway, 2010; Levine-Rasky, 2011) and where power, privilege and marginalization intersect in transitory ways (Atewologun & Sealy, 2014; Atewologun et al., 2016). Furthermore, this study also takes cognizance of Dhamoon's (2011) view on intersectionality, who draws attention to an analysis of the interactions between processes that produce subjectivities and social differences, and systems of domination such as racism, colonialism, patriarchy and so on, in order to uncover the intersectional power dynamics at play between subjective identity work processes and systems of domination. Similarly, Collins (2012) called for intersectional research that emphasises the multiplicity and relationality of social positions within matrices of domination in order to develop a deeper understanding of the overall effect of intersecting systems of power.

3.3 Power and Privilege

In their review of identity work scholarship, Alvesson et al. (2008) concluded that more research is required that recognizes the complexity arising from the multiplicity of "materials" used in the construction and maintenance of work identities including work content, formalized

institutionalisms (e.g. hierarchies, job titles), social relations and group memberships, combined with the multiple forces (actors/agents other than the individual) that influence the identity work of individuals including organisational actors (e.g. top leadership, policy makers), identity salient ideological discourses (e.g. leadership, strategy, authenticity, citizenship) or societal/cultural patterns and institutionalized norms (e.g. value systems, morality, distribution of power). In answering this call, many scholars have focused on the role of several of these identity salient influences on the identity work of organisational members. For example, Farmer & Van Dyne, (2010) showed how work role behaviours and multiple work role occupancy influenced identity work when organisational members sought confirmation of expressed identities. DeRue & Ashford (2010) studied the reciprocal and relational mechanisms of leader and follower identity work and showed how the organisational context became salient in the creation of situated identities over time, through organisational processes of endorsement and reinforcement of leader versus follower identities. Herrbach & Mignonac (2012) revealed the salience of perceptions of organisational social identity discrimination on organisational members' professional identity work and the subsequent impact on their perceived career success. Another example is provided by Ashforth et al. (2016) who articulated an organisational model that showed the impact of organisational climate variables (such as a climate for psychological safety and a positive relational climate) on identity work associated with organisational members' personal identification pathways.

Notwithstanding the growing scholarly focus on the multiplicity of influences on identity work processes, the role of shifts in power and privilege in identity work has been largely absent. Power is implicated as the keystone concept of social sciences believed to be the central organizing mechanism in almost all societies (Keltner et al., 2003). In this thesis I draw on three concepts of

power. First, Bertrand Russell's classical definition of power that emphasises the ubiquity and essentialism of power in social interaction: "The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense that Energy is the fundamental concept in physics ... The laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power." (Russell, 1938, p. 10, as cited in Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003, p.265). Second, I draw on German philosopher Max Weber's relational notion of power as the potential of an individual in a social relationship to exercise their will despite resistance from others (cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Third, I use a critical lens and draw on a Foucauldian concept of power that transcends the relational domain and sees power as the everyday taken for granted, often undetected, systematic institutional subjectification of societies and social groups through the exertion of discursive control over their beliefs, ideologies and actions. Power is diffused, rendered invisible, rather than concentrated in the hands of a few visible cohesive forces, making both dominant and subjected complicate in the reproduction of unequal power distribution. This hegemonic power as subjectification is rendered visible mainly by studying its resistance (see Foucault, 1982; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

In their review of the psychological and organisational literatures on power, Anderson & Brion (2014) noted that scholarly interest in the psychological and organisational determinants and consequences of power gain, maintenance and loss was increasing due to the importance of power to the organisational actor. However, the predominance of literary work on the determinants of power gain or loss, and the deleterious psychological consequences to the power holder, has resulted in a dearth in scholarly focus on other potential consequences of power gain or loss, such as the impact on an individual's self-concept. Interestingly, Guinote et al. (2012) researched high power- and low power-individual's differential ability to act in line with their self-concept, but not

how a change in power, which is a focus of this research, could impact the identity work to maintain the former self-concept or construct a new identity.

3.4 Whiteness

Whiteness studies is a parallel research arena in critical scholarship in sociology and social psychology, preoccupied with the production and maintenance of power and privilege in identity formation processes. Whiteness theory defines whiteness as the phenomenon of White privilege, which allows White people to take their race for granted, as morally neutral, and without any historical meaning being attributed to their Whiteness. The theory holds that the phenomenon of Whiteness allows White people to see themselves as race-less, seeing only others as having race (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2003; Sue, 2004). White privilege extends to more general stereotypical stances in that subjectively valued “positive” attributes such as intelligence, attractiveness, competence or honesty are associated with Whiteness in an unearned taken-for-granted normative manner (Alcoff, 2015). Furthermore, White racial identity theorists in the developmental psychology field, have theorized extensively about White racial identity as a construct, and the process of white racial identity development (Helms, 1986, 1997; Behrens, 1997; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Other scholars argue that Whites are, metaphorically speaking, invested in Whiteness both as a source of material rewards and as a resource for their identity construction (Lipsitz, 2006). Early on W.E.B. Du Bois argued that even working-class employees who were White derived power from being the dominant racial group in the broader society despite occupying low status in the work place (Roediger, 1999). Yet, another body of work points to the need for examinations of Whiteness to attend to the covert processes that reproduce racial privilege, especially those that do so without appearing to (Lewis, 2004; Reitman,

2006). Scholars have also drawn attention to the structuring properties of racialised social systems and how Whiteness functions through formal structures such as organisations (Owen, 2007; Ray & Purifoy, 2019).

However, until very recently, research on Whiteness enjoyed almost no scholarly attention from human resource management, industrial psychology and organisational behavioural scholars. This trend has been bucked by a few scholars notably Grimes (2001), Nkomo & Al Ariss (2014), Samaluk (2014) and Al Ariss, Özbilgin, Tatli, & April (2014), who call for the examination of White privilege in organisations and its implications for identity scholarship in organisations.

3.5 Conclusion

In a review of the identity work literature Brown (2015, p.31) concluded that “*There is much we still do not know about how contexts – particularly organisational and national cultural settings – affect individuals’ identities and identity work*”, calling for more research on the identity work that connects individuals’ past, present and potential future identities with the historical context in which they are embedded. This research study aims to answer this call by providing a uniquely situated context for studying how the shifts in societal power and privilege play out in identity work in organisations, namely, post-apartheid South African organisations twenty-five years after the national political power shift.

I suspend the literature review at this rather high level in order to honour as closely as possible the tenets of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) which privileges the richness of the findings over finding specific gaps in the literature. Through this study, I seek to

hear, understand and make audible the voices of the most marginalised class of managers in the scholarship of hierarchical organisations: the first level manager. My primary interest is to understand how they make sense of their work experiences as first level managers and how their working lives are shaped by their everyday lived experiences as South Africans within the context of the dramatic national political power shifts from pre- to post-apartheid, and to what extent their managerialism and the national political context is tied to their construction of self. There are thus no specific testable a priori hypotheses.

Nevertheless, in recognition that there is an ongoing scholarly conversation about how managers' identities are shaped and revised in organisational contexts, I am also aware that the emergent theory I have developed joins existing scholarship. I therefore present an in depth, targeted review of the relevant literature in Chapter 8 where I discuss how the findings of this study converge with, diverge from and cognate with existing theories about the identity work of managers in organisations. Moreover, the literature review pertaining to the theoretical foundations of the methodologies deployed in the research design and the analytical strategy for this study is presented in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology

In this section I describe my methodological approach, the extant methodological theories relevant to this study as well as a detailed description of all aspects of the methods and analytical strategies employed during this study.

4.1 The methodological approach

First, I state my position as a researcher, providing an overview of the ontology and epistemology anchoring my choice of methodologies and methods.

My position as researcher is situated under the large umbrella of pragmatism insofar as it rejects the notion of reducing the multiplicity and complexity of the world to simple formulaic prescriptions. I am however equally sceptical of postmodernists who claim the world is *only* pluralistic and complex and who fail to see that at times there are rather simple explanations available to us. These postmodernist perspectives are in my view simply applying rationalism with fresh labels to enforce a new type of determinism. In any event, notwithstanding the complexity of our world, we as researchers are not in my view merely armchair critics but we are obliged to conduct projects that yield credible explanations that drive transformative action in the pursuit of humanity.

My ontological position then without the 'isms' or 'ologies' is that we exist in unique yet integrated, different yet shared worlds, fully lived and comprehensible through all ways of being in the world that being cognitive, emotive, embodied, the understanding of which is (for the most part) extraordinarily complex, yet (reasonably) simple conceptualisations are possible, provided

we acknowledge at all times that such explanations are at best probabilistic. On being understood my position is simply that there are many valid ways of knowing and therefore many valid truths. Moreover, I believe that as researchers we have the ethical obligation to pursue deep (going beneath the surface), equitable (including multiple social perspectives), respectful (serving society rather than presiding over it in the name of science) understandings of our worlds in order to enable action for societal good.

My lived experiences as a Coloured female living in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, my professional qualifications and work experiences as an engineer, an OD practitioner, a business improvement specialist, and a first level, middle-level and senior manager in corporate South Africa and global teams, as well as my research experience in organisations, have all had a major influence on my methodological approach and stance as a researcher. It is my preference that research in organisations should yield both an explanation for an organisational phenomenon and an actionable proposal to improve working lives.

At the outset of this study, I sought to hear, understand and make audible the voices of the most marginalised class of managers in the scholarship of hierarchical organisations: the first level manager. My primary interest was understanding how they made sense of their work experiences as first level managers and how their work lives were shaped by their everyday lived experiences as South Africans. I was specifically interested in understanding how first level managers did management in the past and how they do management now within the context of the dramatic national political power shifts in South Africa from pre- to post-apartheid, and to what extent their

managerialism and the national political context was tied to their construction of self. There was thus no specific testable a priori hypotheses.

Considering my stance as a researcher and the objectives of my study, I approached the research broadly as a grounded theory study but combined grounded theory methods with critical discourse analytical methods and narrative inquiry in order to understand the cognitive, discursive and embodied social practices of first level management and identity work.

4.2 Relevant methodological theories

I reviewed the nascent qualitative methodological scholarly conversations pertaining to classical and constructivist grounded theory, narrative inquiry and critical discourse studies. I restrict the conversation to these topics given their relevance to this study.

4.2.1 Grounded Theory: key debates about what it is and does.

According to Glaser (2002) grounded theory is a process for surfacing theoretical concepts and theorizing their integrated relationship from coded data, which codes have themselves emerged from the data. The quintessential premise of grounded theory is that all analysis, concept derivation and identification of patterns of relationships, are induced from the data and not deduced from existing models, theories or hypotheses. Conceptualisation for theorising in particular should arise inductively from the data and not be forcibly introduced from theories or theoretical categories (Glaser, 2002).

This view of grounded theory as an inductive, flexible, emergent methodology for crafting new theory grounded in data, has been contested even by those credited as being the originators of this method of inquiry. According to Charmaz (2014) grounded theory emerged from the successful collaboration between two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s. Charmaz (2014, p. 5) notes that while others were applying these methods of inquiry in the field of sociology for several years, they had not codified their analytical strategies in a way that other researchers could access until Glaser and Strauss published their seminal work entitled *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967). Furthermore, Charmaz (2014) credits Barney Glaser with the analytical rigour of the grounded theory method owing to his education at the Columbia University with their strong positivist traditions, while she credits Anselm Strauss with the philosophical depth of the grounded theory inquiry approach owing to Strauss's roots in the Chicago School traditions of pragmatism, symbolic interactionism and social construction.

Grounded theory (and qualitative research methodologies more generally) gained increasingly wider scholarly acceptance towards the end of the twentieth century, (Charmaz, 2014) despite the two founding scholars, Glaser and Strauss taking divergent paths that resulted in two seemingly different versions of grounded theory (Rennie, 1998; Thornberg, 2012). Corbin (1998, p. 122) explains how she and Anselm Strauss set out to clarify the grounded theory methods for their students and other budding grounded theory researchers in their book entitled *Basics of Qualitative Research* (1990), and how surprised they both were that this book “brought out discrepancies in Anselm Strauss's and Glaser's way of thinking”. These discrepancies revolved principally around i) Strauss and Corbin's introduction of a theory verification step, dismissed by

Glaser as a fundamental departure from the grounded theory method which he believed was to generate not test emergent theory (Corbin, 1998; Rennie, 1998; Charmaz, 2014) and ii) Strauss and Corbin's introduction of a conditional matrix which Glaser strongly opposed (Rennie, 1998) claiming it forced coding conditions onto the data, inhibiting conceptualisation and resulting in qualitative descriptions rather than theory development (Glaser, 2002).

Notwithstanding these diverging views, Glaser and Strauss and Corbin continued to agree on several fundamental tenets of the original grounded theory method including the constant comparison method, coding, emergent category development, conceptualisation of theoretical codes and categories, theoretical memo writing, theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation (Rennie, 1998; Charmaz 2014). However, some of their own students and later adopters of the grounded theory method raised fresh criticisms of both the Glaser version and the Strauss and Corbin version of grounded theory in the early part of the twenty first century, choosing to accentuate the American pragmatist roots of classic grounded theory to give rise to what is now known as constructivist grounded theory (Gross, 2009; Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014, 2016).

Constructivist grounded theorists problematize the idea of pure induction, labelling it as naïve empiricism which assumes a so-called tabula rasa approach to research, arguing that the very act of conducting scientific discovery is theory laden (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2016). On the other hand, they also problematize the idea of a fixed a priori research question as feature of positivism which therefore can have no place in conceptualizations of grounded theory (classical or constructivist). Classical grounded theory advocates that the researcher begins a study agnostic to the research problems, allowing them to be uncovered from within the data such that the

participants are the architects of the problems researched (Glaser, 2002). However, constructivist grounded theory recognises that most researchers have some initial research question(s) in mind for entering a field, but nevertheless remain open and willing to change those research questions when other questions emerging from the field have greater significance (Charmaz, 2014).

Furthermore, constructivist grounded theory (in common with classical grounded theory) advocates doing research in the interests of answering a question or resolving a problem important to those being researched and not solely in the interests of the researcher or the scholarly community represented by the researcher, or indeed science in general, but acknowledges (contrary to classical grounded theory) that the researcher's "ability to draw good abductive inferences is dependent on the researcher's previous knowledge" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 248).

Therefore, constructivist grounded theorists recognise that most researchers have had some exposure to the theory in their field of research, acknowledging that extremely few topics of interest to researchers will have no theoretical background whatsoever. Moreover, while most grounded theory is employed to generate new theory, in some instances the very objective may well be current theory building or expansion (Flick, 2007; Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014, 2016). This applies particularly to management and organisational studies which essentially examine social phenomena with roots in the theoretical arenas of humanities, sociology and social psychology, albeit that the phenomena of interest may appear anew in an organisational setting.

Rather than avoiding exposure to extant literature, or denying its influence, constructivist grounded theory methods therefore include protocols for engaging with extant literature using

techniques such as theoretical agnosticism, theoretical pluralism, theoretical sampling of literature and constant reflexivity by memoing extant knowledge associations (Thornberg, 2012). This approach relies on pragmatic abductive reasoning, that requires the researcher to move from the data to emergent theory to theoretical sampling, back and forth between new and prior data and new and prior theoretical conceptualisations, rather than on pure induction from data to new theory.

According to some constructivist grounded theorists, this is perhaps the main point of departure from classical grounded theory, although others point to the fact that classical grounded theory heavily emphasised what Glaser referred to as theoretical sensitivity, suggesting that interaction with emergent and extant theory was always a key part of the grounded theory method and that perhaps constructivist grounded theory only makes the process more overt than Glaser's ambiguous rendering of it (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014, 2016).

Constructivist grounded theory is therefore particularly relevant for this study given that my aim was not to test established theories of management, organisation, managerial power or managerial identity work, but to problematize the assumption of managerial normativity and ubiquity underlying established theories of management and leadership. I am specifically interested in understanding how first level managers – as distinct from the normative managers in management scholarship (usually top or senior, occasionally middle) – do management and identity work given their specific social location within the South African organisational landscape. My aim is therefore to construct a new theory of how first level managers construct their first level management through identity work that additionally extends existing theories of 'normative' management and identity work.

I grounded the emergent theory in data generated in the main from the life and work history narratives about the lived experiences of first level managers. Therefore, I also drew upon theories of narrative inquiry and ultimately critical discourse which I discuss next.

4.2.2 Theories and debates about narrative inquiry methodologies.

While the link between narrative and life history has a long tradition in anthropology and metaphysics, and while Sigmund Freud's psychodynamic perspective recognised the critical role that narrative played in human psychology well over a century ago, the methodology of narrative research within psychology is considered to have been pioneered in the second half of the twentieth century by narratology scholars, notably Theodore Sarbin, Jerome Bruner and Donald Polkinghorne (Atkinson, 2007; Josselson, 2011; Hiles, Čermák & Chrz, 2017). Of these, it is Jerome Bruner who is credited with proposing a narrative theory of knowing, recognising the importance of narratives in conveying the lived experience (Clandinin, 2006; Atkinson, 2007; Josselson, 2011; Hiles et al., 2017).

4.2.1.1 Narrative theory of knowledge.

Bruner (1991) presents an interesting thesis concerning narrative and identity where narrative aids the construction of identity, the use of which, he argues, becomes necessary when the prevailing discourse (texts, novels, paintings, observed others, life stories in general) fail to provide suitable potential models of self that one could aspire to. He further develops this conceptual argument of the personal story in the construction of self, through the introduction of a simultaneous inward-outward identity journey that employs (inward) self-narratives for constructing a reasoned version

of one's life while constructing one's own (outward) version of and interacting with other available narratives of one's world (Bruner, 1991). Bruner viewed the narratives of a life story as inseparable from life's experience and that of a world story as inseparable from the world "as it is" (Bruner, 1991, p. 1), with the cognitive process that produced the narrative similarly difficult to distinguish from the discourse it produced.

Specifically, he proposed that the way that the mind constructs a story and comprehends a story can be laid out as cognitive pathways for memory creation and also cognitive patterns for making sense of experiences (Bruner, 1991). Thus, his theory of knowing through narrative studies is premised on an epistemological thesis that the human ability to tell and comprehend stories pointed indelibly to the possibility that the mind had the capacity to "process knowledge in an interpretive way" (Bruner, 1991, p. 8) and not only the capacity to reason as the rationalists contended or only the capability to verify as the empiricists claimed. He argued that:

neither of these procedures, right reason or verification, suffice for explicating how a narrative is either put together by a speaker or interpreted by a hearer...[despite]... compelling evidence to indicate that narrative comprehension is among the earliest powers of the mind to appear in the young child. (Bruner, 1991, p.9)

4.2.2.2 Narrative research methodologies.

Having put forward his theory of narrative ways of knowing, Bruner (1991) then drew on the theoretical and philosophical foundations of narrative scholars outside the fields of psychology, where narrative approaches to inquiry was significantly more mature, such as the work of Paul Ricoeur (hermeneutic and judicial philosophy), Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz (symbolic

anthropology), and Hayden White and Michel Foucault (historical narrativity and literary criticism) to develop his theory of the narrative construction of reality. This theory rests on ten properties that Bruner (1991) credits narratives with which, as distinct from other linguistic expressions, makes them capable of constructing reality but also importantly enables the reciprocal capability of narratives to organize the structuring of human experiences. Bruner highlights these ten narrative properties as a reflection of the mind at work when constructing narrative expression or interpreting narrative meaning. Herewith my interpretation of Bruner's (1991) narrative properties:

“Narrative diachronicity” (Bruner, 1991, p. 6): The most basic property of a narrative is that it is a story, containing time-sequenced events (e.g. a bullet list of chores may not suffice as a Bruner narrative), occurring in subjective human time (not strict factual clock-timed reports), according to recognisable repeatable patterns within narrative convention (e.g. start, middle, end or read from left to right, top to bottom).

“Particularity” (Bruner, 1991, p. 6): narratives make reference to specific, uniquely peculiar elements embedded in recognisable storied patterns (e.g. in the recognisable pattern of terminal illness diagnosis, is followed by suffering, is followed by death, the type of illness or length of suffering or place of death may be particular to a given narrative but remain cognitive markers within a familiar pattern). This pattern-particular embeddedness is the reason Bruner claims narrative thinking has the power to cognitively fix how one experiences one's experience.

“Intentional state entailment” (Bruner, 1991, p. 7): Narratives endow actors, subjects and objects (in the case of anthropomorphism) variously with intent or agency but with only a tenuous link between intentionality and action. Therefore, Bruner holds that narratives can be analysed to identify justifications or understand reasons for actions but never to provide causal explanations.

“Hermeneutic composability” (Bruner, 1991, p. 7): Narratives are expressed in parts that serve for expression of the whole and reciprocally their expression as parts are dependent on the expression of the whole narrative, but while the interpreted meaning of the parts and whole is destined to be different from that expressed, such interpreted meanings can only be viable when the meaning of the whole is understood in relation to the parts and the meaning of the parts in relation to the whole (so called hermeneutic circle).

“Canonicity and breach” (Bruner, 1991, p. 11): This property of a narrative sets it clearly apart from societal discourse in that Bruner sees prevailing discourse (canons) as necessary background for narratives, because the essential purpose of a narrative in the context of discourse is to disrupt the expected canonical flows of the discourse so as to delegitimise it.

“Referentiality” (Bruner, 1991, p. 13): Narratives are constructed with references to experiences of a ‘natural world’ such that depending on the classification of the narrative as fiction or non-fiction, and given that there is no such thing as validation or verification of a narrative, the degree of referentiality serves as verisimilitude in both the expression and interpretation of a narrative.

“Genericness” (Bruner, 1991, p. 14): Bruner uses this property to mean more than just the recognisable style of a story or the genre. In addition to overall story style, he sees various styles of telling as it relates to plot and progression and ensemble, all denoting various patterned modes of expression and receiving narrative experiences, and thus ‘training’ the mind in narrative construction and sense making.

“Normativeness” (Bruner, 1991, p. 15): Narrative construction follows implicit norms shaped by the culture and present era which change with changing societal focus and differing circumstances of production. This property of contested normativity makes narrative the product of not only the author’s creation but of society’s creation. The canonical feature of the underlying discourse, the normativity of the narrative and the story’s requirement for breach provides the mind of the interpreter with cognitive clues for narrative interpretation.

“Context Sensitivity and negotiability” (Bruner, 1991, p.15): The narrative is interpretable by a recipient based on their background knowledge, values, presuppositions, their interpretation of the narrators intentions and their assessment of the narrators background knowledge and values. This context sensitivity is a feature of narrative discourse that Bruner (1991) believes renders it interpretable as a means of everyday cultural negotiation. He argues that the human mind is quite satisfied to negotiate various versions of a story, even competing ones, because we are able to comprehend that different contexts yields differing points of view. Through negotiation then we arrive at one suitable for pragmatics purposes, one that makes the most sense given the prevailing contexts. This is in stark opposition to how the mind deals with verification or reason and thus

Bruner (1991) claims that context sensitivity in narrative negotiation is perhaps the most important principle for arriving at shared social or cultural meanings.

“Narrative Accrual” (Bruner, 1991, p. 18): Perhaps the most salient of all Bruner’s (1991) narrative properties is the property of many in society to more or less synchronously and continuously work as if we are all of one mind, in perpetual construction and reconstruction of a whole coherent social discourse through a process of narrative accrual. Bruner (1991) holds that this is the process by which histories, traditions and institutional systems are constructed and their legitimacy sustained, permitting the creation of canonicity, which when breached may be readily recognised and interpreted. Bruner’s (1991) narrative accrual is strikingly similar to Michel Foucault’s “bricolage” (Kincheloe, 2005, p.329) for the construction of societies through discourse.

The preponderance given to psychological theories of narrative in this study is supported by Mishler’s (1995) narrative typology, an effort which organised the multitude of burgeoning narrative theories of enquiry into three alternative approaches depending on the key purpose for narrative research, namely: i) inquiry into the verisimilitude of narrative representation of time sequenced events, ii) inquiry into the narrative strategies employed in the structure of texts and iii) inquiry into the “ psychological, cultural, and social contexts and functions of narrative” (Mishler, 1995, p. 87). The purpose of this study into the identity work of front-line managers was best served by the third approach, that is, the psychological, cultural and social approach to narrative inquiry, which privileges the personal life story narrative. I therefore use Mishler’s (1995) typology as a analytical guide and Bruner’s (1991) theory of narrative knowing as methodological episteme to conduct a narrative analysis of the front line managers’ personal narratives.

Furthermore, I approached this study from the stance that personal narratives interrelate with broader societal narratives, larger stories that have come to have social significance which are recognisable by social actors and available for use in the rendering of their own personal narratives. I then turned to the methodology of discourse analysis, specifically critical discourse analysis, to understand how such larger narratives influence social action. Critical discourse analysis, in particular, is sceptical of ‘neutral’ discourse arguing that much dominant discourse is propagated by those with the political power to use available communication channels to shape societal thinking. I drew on critical discourse analysis to explain the link between the first level manager’s personal life history narratives and prevailing societal discourse. In the next section I present a review of the methodological theories underpinning the critical discourse analysis methods employed in this study.

4.2.3. Key debates about critical discourse analysis / studies.

Although the term ‘critical discourse analysis’ was coined in the 1980s by Norman Fairclough (Breeze, 2011; Liu and Guo, 2016), the literature attributes the development of critical approaches to discourse analysis to a group of scholars (rather than any one scholar) who simultaneously worked on different critical approaches to discourse analysis more or less simultaneously (Fairclough, 1985; Van Dijk, 1990; Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). According to Meyer (2001), the term CDA and its theoretical principles for a critical approach to discourse analysis evolved alongside and in some part from Critical Linguistics (CL). There were similarities between CL and CDA in as far as both examined textual units larger than sentences

(sentences being the dominant unit of analysis in linguistics) and both approaches were concerned with hidden and transparent constructions of power and ideology in language as social practice.

However, acceptance and adoption of the term Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was a contested process, requiring deliberate multi-institutional collaboration by a ‘founding’ group of scholars, notably Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress and Ruth Wodak, who first met in Amsterdam in 1991, later joined by Ron Scollon and Siegfried Jäger. This group of scholars referred to as the “*CDA network*” (Meyer, 2001, p. 5) collaborated over the period of a few years to yield a loosely common view of CDA “which [was] bound together more by a research agenda and programme than by some common theory or methodology” (Meyer, 2001, p. 5). The result of this work was the collection of chapter contributions by most of the CDA network scholars into the book entitled *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* edited by Wodak and Meyer (2001).

Wodak and Meyer (2009) revised this earlier work during the years following the publication of the first edition to release a second edition with contributions from a similar group of CDA scholars. The various approaches to CDA, each with rather different philosophical underpinnings, theories and analytical methods in both editions of this treatise on CDA bears testimony to the audacious nature of the project to find a unifying methodology of CDA. The second edition saw the disappearance of any reference to CL, firmly espousing CDA as the collective term of choice, however, with a passing reference to some scholars preferring the term critical discourse studies (CDS), but without much elaboration.

Tracing historical developments in CDA beyond the edited volume by the CDA network of scholars, the project to unify diverse approaches to discourse analysis within critical scholarship then resulted in the launch of the journal *Critical Discourse Studies* in 2004, where Fairclough, Graham, Lemke & Wodak (2004, p.3) argue in their introduction:

We can discern here the emergence of a field of critical discourse studies which draws upon but goes beyond established enclaves of specialized work on discourse, such as critical discourse analysis, attracting scholars from a considerable range of disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities who are beginning to develop new syntheses between discourse analysis and a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. (Fairclough et al., 2004, p.3)

Close to a decade later, in the latest (third) edition of the edited work by Wodak and Meyer (2016), while most of the contributing scholars remain the same, the term critical discourse studies (CDS) has directly replaced the term critical discourse analysis (CDA) in all the editorial sections including the title of the book which now reads “*Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*” (Wodak and Meyer, 2016, front cover). The central concern with the continued use of the term CDA relates to what the editors argue is the fallacious conception of CDA by those who claim to apply it as a method or tool when it should instead be seen as an orientation towards the critical examination of social thought, actions and relations, such examination drawing on various theories, conducted using various methods. They see CDS as a new ontological construction of CDA claiming that the term CDA is one that “was the term used in the 1990s and 2000s” (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p.3) for what is now widely accepted to be critical discourse studies (CDS).

In particular, Van Dijk (2013) exhorts researchers to conduct critical discourse studies by formulating critical goals for their research and then to apply any relevant method to achieve the aims of this project so as to avoid the trap of claiming to conduct CDA as though it were merely a method. The key shortcoming of CDA from Van Dijk's (2013) perspective is therefore that whereas discourse analysis is a set of diverse methodologies each with its own aims, theories, underscoring philosophies and methods, *critical* discourse analysis has no comparable alternative set of methodologies, rather it is a problem-orientated movement or a school of thought.

I recommend to use the term *Critical Discourse Studies* for the theories, methods, analyses, applications and other practices of critical discourse analysts, and to forget about the confusing term "CDA." So, please, no more "I am going to apply CDA" because it does not make sense. (Van Dijk, 2013, para. 6, emphasis in original)

However, the renaming of CDA to CDS is in fact contested among the originating scholars of the CDA network. While Fairclough (2013) supports the idea of thinking broadly about discourse analysis within the critical tradition, he maintains that the term CDA refers to a specific methodology which is not reducible to CDS in the broader sense that some of his fellow scholars propose. Presumably as a result of the CDA network meeting in Amsterdam in 1991, Fairclough has explicitly alluded to the fact that there are multiple versions of CDA. In all his subsequent writing he has been consistent about clarifying at the outset "the version of critical discourse analysis" that he draws on (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002, p. 185) or, "...more specifically, that particular version of CDA which I have developed..." (Fairclough, 2004, p.204). What is meant by 'that particular version' is the dialectical approach to discourse analysis where Fairclough (2004, 2013, 2016) locates critical discourse analysis in the Foucauldian poststructuralist tradition

which emphasises the dynamic, relational, co-construal power of language in social practice. Furthermore, Fairclough (2013) states clearly that the philosophical foundations of (his) CDA are in critical realism and contrary to Van Dijk's (2013) version of CDA, is a methodology with its own analytical methods able to be applied in order to analyse the dialectical patterns of micro, meso and macro-level discursive social constructions.

Other members of the original CDA network such as Kress (2005) had distanced themselves from CDA and CDS preferring to further their work in multimodal linguistic analysis (Kress, 2005; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). Moreover, it is clear that only the minority of authors who contribute to the third edition of Wodak and Meyer (2016) have adopted the term CDS, with most continuing to use CDA, while Ruth Wodak herself chooses to use the plural form CDA/CDS on occasion. The latter is a trend evident within nascent critical discourse literature signalling that, for emerging scholars at least, the ongoing debate about nomenclature of the methodology has become tiresome as evident in this example by Block (2018, p. 391) who refers to "...critical analysis of discourse, independent of whether it travels under the acronym CDA or CDS". For the remainder of this chapter I will use the convention CDA/CDS when referring generally to critical analysis of discourse, using CDA or CDS as separate terms only when referring to specific versions as used by the authors of these methods.

4.2.3.1 Key debates about what CDA/CDS does and how it does it.

Notwithstanding the debates surrounding nomenclature of the methodology (be it CDA or CDS), three decades on, the various analytical methods of CDA/CDS continue to face theoretical and conceptual challenges (Macgilchrist, 2016). Nascent scholarly debates revolve around the

concepts and theories of ‘critique’, ‘discourse’ and ‘analysis’ among the founding scholars themselves and the academic schools they originally represented, as well as in emerging scholarly circles.

4.2.3.1.1 The debates about critique in CDA/CDS.

Scholars trace the critical ‘turn’ in linguistics to the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and the work of Jürgen Habermas (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Macgilchrist, 2016) who saw language as a medium for social domination, power abuse and as such in need of critique. It is presumed that Habermas was mostly influenced by Max Horkheimer, of the same philosophical school, who took the position that “social theory should be oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented solely to understanding or explaining it” (Wodak and Meyer, 2016, p. 6).

However, some CDA scholars problematize the rationalism of the Frankfurt School, arguing that this critical theory subsumes a normative ‘good society’ as the (implicit) standard against which critique of social practice is relevant, thus implicating critical theorists in the very practices they seek to transform in society (Macgilchrist, 2016). They instead locate their theories of critique in Michel Foucault’s post-structuralism and Roy Bhaskar’s critical realism, (Boyer, 2001; Meyer, 2001; Haig, 2004; Fairclough, 2016).

Moreover, according to ‘positive’ discourse analysis scholars, if critique is indeed related to rendering the invisible (ideologies) visible, explicating the mechanisms of (re) production of inequitably distributed power and a force for social justice, then CDA/CDS’s tendency to do so with an almost exclusively negative orientation risks marginalisation of critical analysis of

discourses that are generative or restorative of good in society (Macgilchrist, 2016). CDA scholars in the Foucauldian tradition counter this criticism by arguing that when rigorously applied, CDA illuminates the mechanisms of resistance in discourses while explicating abuse of power in dominant discourses (Fairclough, 2004; Jäger and Maier, 2016; Van Leeuwen, 2016).

4.2.3.1.2. Debates about the nature of discourse and analysis in CDA/CDS.

The debates central to scholarship in CDA/CDS revolves around the nature of discourse and how the various conceptions of discourse should be analysed. Wodak and Meyer (2016) posit that critical discourse analysis evolved from critical linguistic analysis applied to a textual unit that was larger than that traditionally analysed in linguistic studies (usually a sentence). However, over the past three decades CDA/CDS scholars have positioned discourse in ontologically diverse ways and certainly more ontologically complex than merely a larger size of text than a sentence. Consequently, scholars also employ a wide variety of ‘material’ or data as discourse, select such various materials in varying ways, and how and why they employ their various analytical strategies has developed in somewhat divergent ways. Most, however, give predominance to text and talk when they refer to discourse. From the various ontologies of discourse as contributed in the chapters of their edited collection, Wodak and Meyer (2016, p.3) conclude: “Thus, discourse means anything from a historical monument, a lieu de mémoire, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language per se”. Notwithstanding the apparent variety, even this definition privileges text (or talk which is reducible to text) over other forms of data considered to be discourse.

4.2.3.1.3 The dialectical-relational approach to CDA.

Fairclough's (2004) aim in developing (his version of) CDA was to bridge the gap between methods of discourse analysis grounded in the Foucault tradition on the one hand, which paid undue attention the relationship between societal power and language at the expense of deeper analysis of the linguistic properties of the texts studied, and those methods on the other hand that overemphasised the analysis of the language in texts while neglecting the underlying social meanings. Fairclough (2016) furthermore emphasised that in his method of CDA discourse is not only defined as text but rather as semiosis in the C.S. Pierce tradition, where semiotic data includes texts, speech acts, visual communication and other discursive acts such as body language. The Fairclough analysis of these semiotics emphasises a transdisciplinary investigation of how members of social structures (societies, nations, organisations, institutions and so forth) behaving as actors, actively shape social discourse and are shaped by prevailing social discourse, while simultaneously being implicated subjects of discursive structures with implied social meanings.

This dialectical-relational approach to CDA seeks to expose both how actors abuse power and how such abuse of power is resisted through the production of dialectically related structural and discursive (semiotic) social elements (Fairclough, 2004; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; Fairclough, 2016). Critical to the dialectical-relational approach to CDA is "interdiscursive analysis" (Fairclough, 2004, p.3), by which is meant the selection of multiple sources of data subjected to transdisciplinary analysis (with roots in various theoretical traditions). However, Fairclough has been widely criticised as narrowly selecting textual material (or talk reduced to text) related principally to neo-liberal politics in his rendering of CDA contrary to what he claims his intentions and methods in CDA does (Haig, 2004). Indeed, in my own reading of the

dialectical-relational CDA literature, I found that a predominance of Fairclough's publications uses neo-liberal political speeches as material for his CDA methodology.

4.2.3.1.4 The discourse-historical approach to CDA/CDS.

In a similar vein, Reisigl and Wodak (2016, p. 30) define discourse as “a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action”. They propose a discourse-historical approach (DHA) to CDA/CDS, and likewise emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to semiotic analysis, seeking to explore the relationship between discourse and society. Like the dialectical-relational approach of Fairclough (2016), DHA scholars Reisigl and Wodak (2016) also advocate the use of multiple data sources for discourse analysis as interdiscursivity and intertextuality are key to the DHA method. However, they place far greater emphasis on the historical macro-structural context of discursive practice and less emphasis on the relationship between society and discourse at any one particular point in time. This overt foregrounding of the historical, situational and circumstantial contingency of the use of language in power relations appears similar to Foucauldian theories of language and power in society (Foucault, 1982), although the authors locate their work in the Frankfurt School of critical theory.

Notwithstanding the claimed roots of their method, Reisigl and Wodak (2016) advocate their CDA method when the study aims to analyse changes in semiotics and society over time specifically “how discourses, genres and texts change in relationship to sociopolitical change” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016, p. 28). The DHA method begins with an analysis of the macro structure of the discourse data, followed by an analysis of the micro structure using critical linguistic techniques to highlight the nominations, predications, perspectivizations and argumentation of the

discourse and interrelated discourses to ensure interdiscursive and intertextual validation, followed finally by a context analysis to highlight the impact and implications of the wider economic, social, political, psychological and historical context on the discourse construction.

4.2.3.1.5 The sociocognitive approach to CDS.

Van Dijk (2016) also uses the term semiosis in his interpretation of discursive practices but in a way that treats semiotics as additional to text and talk. He refers to the use of visual communication acts (pictures, videos, dramaturgical acts, and so forth) as semiosis while reserving the term discourse for the text or talk elements of a discursive practice. He is specifically interested in understanding the use of discourse and semiotics to exercise power, domination and polarization through social cognitive mechanisms (Van Dijk, 2016). This sociocognitive approach to critical discourse studies differs from the aforementioned approaches in that Van Dijk (2016) emphasises the role of social cognition as mediation between discursive practices and social domination. Therefore, his analytical approach explicitly explores the role of mental models, mental schemas and social representations as strategic means of manipulating or otherwise controlling subjects in everyday routine talk and text (Van Dijk, 1993).

The method of the sociocognitive approach to CDS is firstly to analyse the sociocultural knowledge structure with respect to explicit or implicit declarations of knowledge sources, implicated subjects, and knowledge articulation in the form of argument, topoi, lexicon and metaphors. Secondly, the ideologies, attitudes, norms, values and interests implied in the sociocognitive structure of the discourse is conceptualised in terms of their underlying cognitive models. Finally, the outputs of the first two steps are integrated to postulate the conditions and

functions of the cognitive and discourse structures that contribute to the maintenance of the social system in question (Van Dijk, 2016).

4.2.3.1.6 The Foucauldian approach to discourse and dispositive analysis.

Like Fairclough (2004), the CDA scholars Jäger and Maier (2016) also view discourse in the Foucauldian tradition and likewise recognise gaps in the rigour with which Foucauldian social scientists analyse discourse. However, unlike Fairclough (2004), they do not attribute these gaps to shortcomings in Foucault's discourse-power theory but rather to the way it was interpreted, claiming that scholars missed a crucial third dimension of discourse which appeared in Foucault's later work. Jäger and Maier's (2016) version of CDA gives equal power to three inextricably linked discursive practices namely, i) the linguistically performed practices, ii) the non-linguistically performed practices and iii) the materializations of the discursive practices. According to Jäger and Maier (2016), the first two dimensions collectively are recognised by most scholars as discourse, but the third dimension of materialisation is often missing in conceptualisations of discourse, and so too the relationships between all three dimensions to form a whole have been missed by discourse analysts.

In addition to a method of critical discourse analysis, they therefore introduce a method of "critical dispositive analysis" Jäger and Maier (2016, p. 114) for analysing a dispositive, where the concept of a dispositive constitutes the whole represented by interrelationships between all three dimensions of text and non-text discourse and their materialisation in a given context. Critical discourse and dispositive analysis includes methods for analysing the structure of discourse, discursive events and discursive contexts; analysis of the history (genealogy), present and future

(prognosis) of discourse; analysis of the subject positions (ideologies) evident in discourse; analysis of the knowledge that enables and accompanies non-linguistically performed discursive practices; and artefact and multimodal analysis of materialisations of social discourse.

4.2.3.1.7 Multimodal approaches to CDA/CDS.

Van Leeuwen (2016) and Jancsary, Höllerer & Meyer (2016) define discourse as performative discursive practices, including principally visual communication (with or without text) made apparent through multimodal means. These scholars emphasise visual linguistic analysis in balance with textual analysis in CDA/CDS, problematizing the overt privilege afforded text and talk in most approaches to CDA/CDS. 'In balance' is taken to mean providing the correct level of attention to various discourse modalities, not equal attention. Thus, when doing multimodal discourse analysis, the picture foregrounding an article, the font size used in a heading or the visual effect of the layout may demand more attention than the actual text in some instances (Jancsary, Höllerer & Meyer, 2016).

Moreover, in addition to emphasising the importance of visual modalities of discourse, Van Leeuwen (2016) advocates analysing actions, performance modes, the role of actors, their presentation styles, the role of time, the role of spaces and settings, the resources employed, and the eligibility of actors, settings and resources as depicted through the discursive acts. Therefore, through the systematic analysis of these performative discursive acts, the researcher is able to analyse discourse as the recontextualization of social practices.

4.2.4 Summary

The overarching inquiry approach I used in this study was constructivist grounded theory according to the methods of Saldaña (2009), Thornberg (2012) and Charmaz (2014) as the purpose of the research was to extend existing theory on managerial identity work by accounting for the influence of national socio-political power dynamics in identity construction. Therefore, constructivist grounded theory formed the golden thread through all analytical stages of the study as well as forming the framework for the study itself. However, early in the analysis it became clear that the participant's identity constructions were storied within their narratives. In order to build a process theory of how these identities were constructed, I integrated the grounded theory methods with narrative inquiry using the theories and methods of Bruner (1991), Mishler (1995) and Josselson (2011) to further analyse any emergent storied themes. Other scholars have also examined the potential of combining the methods of grounded theory and narrative inquiry, concluding that combining the two approaches "are theoretically commensurable" and that their integration "creates possibilities for developing a richer understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Lal, Suto & Ungar, 2012, p. 16).

It also became apparent that the nature of the discourse used in participants' narrative identity constructions mirrored that of larger societal narratives with socio-political significance. I analysed theoretically sampled identity narrative segments using the critical discourse analysis methods of Fairclough (2016) to understand how relational power was constructed and maintained in the personal narratives, the methods of Reisigl and Wodak (2016) to identify which historical societal discourses dominated identity narrative construction and the methods of Jäger and Maier (2016)

to understand how physical materialisations as symbols of political domination interacted with discursive identity work practices.

I now present my sampling, data gathering and analytical strategy for this study.

4.3 Sampling Strategy for This Study

I begin this inquiry by conducting in-depth semi-structured life and work-history narrative-style interviews. I used the in-depth interview as my primary data gathering method in acknowledgement that stories of self and identification are deeply personal, and participants would thus benefit from the reflective time and space such as that afforded in open ended semi-structured private interviews (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, as Watson (2009, p. 425) argues, the working self is only a part of the whole self and to study only work identities is to miss the opportunity to “...understand people’s working lives and organisational involvement in the context of their whole lives and in the context of the societal culture in which they have grown up and now live”.

He therefore advocates for life story narratives that reveal the construction of the whole socially embedded life experience in order to understand the part of that life that is made meaningful by work experience. Moreover, this research aims to surface and understand the participants own narratives about being first level managers in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. It was therefore important to design the research in such a way that participants felt safe to speak about their experiences in the workplace without risk of judgement by colleagues, subordinates or leaders. The private interview was therefore chosen as opposed to focus groups.

4.3.1 Sample design.

This study aimed to trace the lived experiences of those managers at the lowest levels of the management hierarchy within corporate South Africa, a context characterised for the most part by the extraordinary national political power shift in the early 1990s and its consequential socio-political reverberations throughout all aspects of South African society (including organisational life). Arguably the biggest change in the South African work context over the twenty-five years since the repeal of apartheid legislation began in 1991 was the dramatic increase in number of non-whites appointed into management levels, which for the most part, gained momentum after the implementation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act and the associated B-BBEE codes.

According to South African Labour statistics reproduced in the graph in figure 1, the racial diversity of workers at the lowest levels of management had changed substantially more than that of top management over the period following the introduction of the B-BBEE codes. Not only had the racial demography of first level management changed but I wondered how the experiences of managerial life varied. In particular when comparing the experiences of those from the white racial group who occupied the majority of first level manager positions in 1991 (despite being the minority racial group in South Africa) with the experiences of those from the black racial group who were in the minority of management positions at the time (despite being the majority racial group in the country). I also wondered how their respective experiences may have changed from then to now given that whites occupying first level manager roles today are in the minority while blacks occupy the majority of first level management positions (see the 19th Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report, Republic of South Africa, 2019). I also wondered how the

political power shifts from whites to blacks over the preceding twenty-five years and the accompanying workplace transformation efforts resulting from the Employment Equity legislation may have shaped white and black first level managers' experiences of management as well as their identities.

4.3.1.1 Hierarchical position: the first level manager.

The target population for this study was the group of managers at the lowest managerial level in organisations. As such, the targeted participants were those with so called "front-line" or "shop floor" employees as direct reports meaning that none of the participants could have any managers reporting to them. The typical kinds of management titles at this level in corporate South Africa includes shift supervisors, front-line supervisors or team leaders. Together with the senior management representative of the organisations who agreed to participate, I carefully reviewed the organograms to ensure we were indeed inviting participation from only those managers at the margins between blue collar and white-collar status, at the margins of hierarchical power between management and the working class.

4.3.1.2 Tenure: the relevance of historical context for managerial experience.

Carrim & Nkomo (2016) found that the first cohort of Indian female managers who made it to top leadership did so via a passage from one form of restricted living to another. Economic and positional power may have shifted in their favour, but relational power remained elusive, contested through a constant struggle for managerial identities as Indian females in post-apartheid South Africa, an identity struggle that began deep in the apartheid era but was equally shaped by the

gendered religious rites and customs they were bound by as young girls within their family households.

It is clear from studies such as these that historical context matters in South Africa perhaps more so than in relatively more stable political contexts and that any attempt at understanding management life in this context needed to treat historical political events as inextricably linked to subjective perceptions of management experiences. I considered that a reasonable start to such an ambitious project might be to understand how managerial life had changed (or not) for those first level managers who were in their roles at the time of South Africa's transition from an apartheid regime to a democracy, who still occupied those roles at the lowest levels of management twenty-five years on, and to compare such experiences with the experiences of those who entered first level management more recently at the turn of the quarter century of South Africa's democracy, having grown up in a democratic South Africa.

I therefore invited participation from at least two groups of first level managers:

i) Those who were first level managers during apartheid, who had lived through the power shift from White Afrikaner political rule to Black political rule, who were still in first level management positions four decades later.

ii) Those who were relatively new entrants to the management ranks, not having experienced the national power shift as adults, negotiating work and management as one with no "obvious" historical baggage, yet having to make sense of how these historical events may have shaped their current managerial lives and future careers.

These two extremes of tenure variation presented a unique opportunity to understand just how messy and complicated questions of identity can be in the South African context. I therefore considered intensity versus novelty of experience at the managerial power margins to be the most important in this study. The central purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of those first level managers who lived through the abolition of apartheid twenty-five years prior to the start of the study as a first level manager and who continued in that role for several years (minimum fifteen years) thereafter, but ideally participants that were still in that role at the time of the study. In short, I aimed to target participants who were the older supervisors or foremen.

The contrast would be provided by targeting participants who had entered managerial ranks into a first level manager role ideally less than five years prior to the study such that they had no personal experience of the abolition of apartheid laws nor the early years of the political power shift during their tenure as a manager. I expected that these younger managers would have to rely on accessible narratives in order to make sense of the political changes and what that meant for their construction of self. I anticipated these managers to be a mix of younger usually more educated team leaders who had recently graduated from management or technical training programs, as well as employees who were promoted from the shop floor through internal development programs.

Having identified those job titles that fitted the definition of first level manager, the senior management representatives of the participating organisations then used time in job records from the payroll data to identify those first level managers with tenure greater than twenty years and those with tenure lower than five years.

4.3.1.3 Race and sex as purposive sampling criteria.

This study sought to trace the experiences of the lowest levels of managers in corporate South Africa as they navigated the post-apartheid power transitions. In apartheid South Africa the epitome of power in organisations was the White male manager. As a consequence of the dismantling of apartheid laws, political power in South Africa (as represented at national government level) transitioned from the White (Afrikaner) people to the Black people. As such this study was designed to understand the experiences of power loss and gain by White (Afrikaans) and Black first level managers. However, as per the statistics presented in figure 2, exceptionally few women were represented at extremely high levels of power in government and organisational institutions and even in broader society for a variety of complex reasons not in scope for this study. As such the study did not aim to elucidate the concepts of political and societal power loss or gain from the perspectives of women leaders.

Furthermore, as detailed later in this chapter, it proved extremely difficult to find Black men who were in management positions in the early 1990s for this study and none of the organisations that participated could find records of any Black females in management or supervisory positions at that time and only one industry, retail banking, reported having White females employed as managers in the apartheid era.

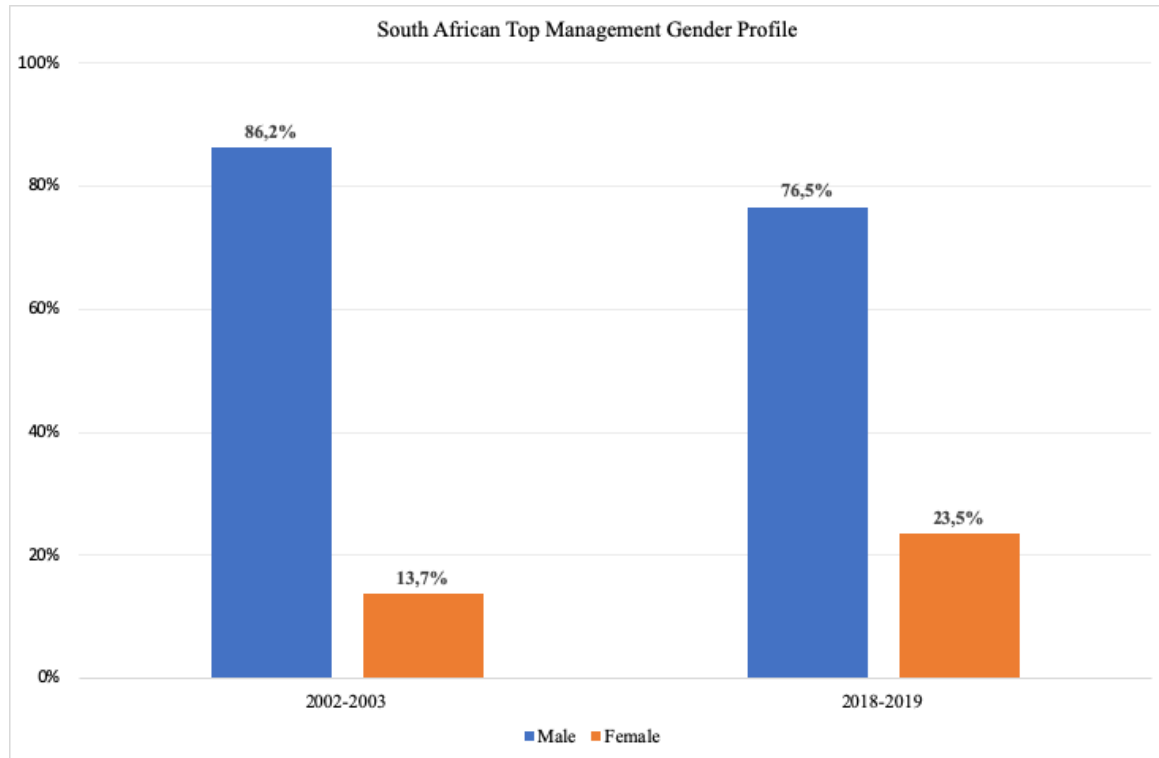


Figure 2: South African Top Management Gender Profile 25 years post-apartheid

Notes: Compiled from source data as extracted from the Commission for Employment Equity Reports (Republic of South Africa, 2003, 2019)

Moreover, even if future studies should aim to understand women first level managers' experience of the power shift in the preceding twenty-five years, the statistics in figure 3 sourced from an earlier study on women in management (Agenda No.24, 1990 as cited in O'Malley, 2009) shows that the likelihood of finding a sample to study would be extremely low. I therefore excluded gender as a purposive demographic sampling criterion for this study. This also made sense from a propositional perspective in that I am interested in studying managerial identity work in the face of socio-political power loss or gain which in South Africa for the most part can be understood as a power transition between White and Black men despite efforts by the new government to address

gender inequality (Hassim, 2005; Gouws & Galgut, 2016). I do however discuss how the inclusion of women’s voices could be incorporated into future research in Chapter 9.

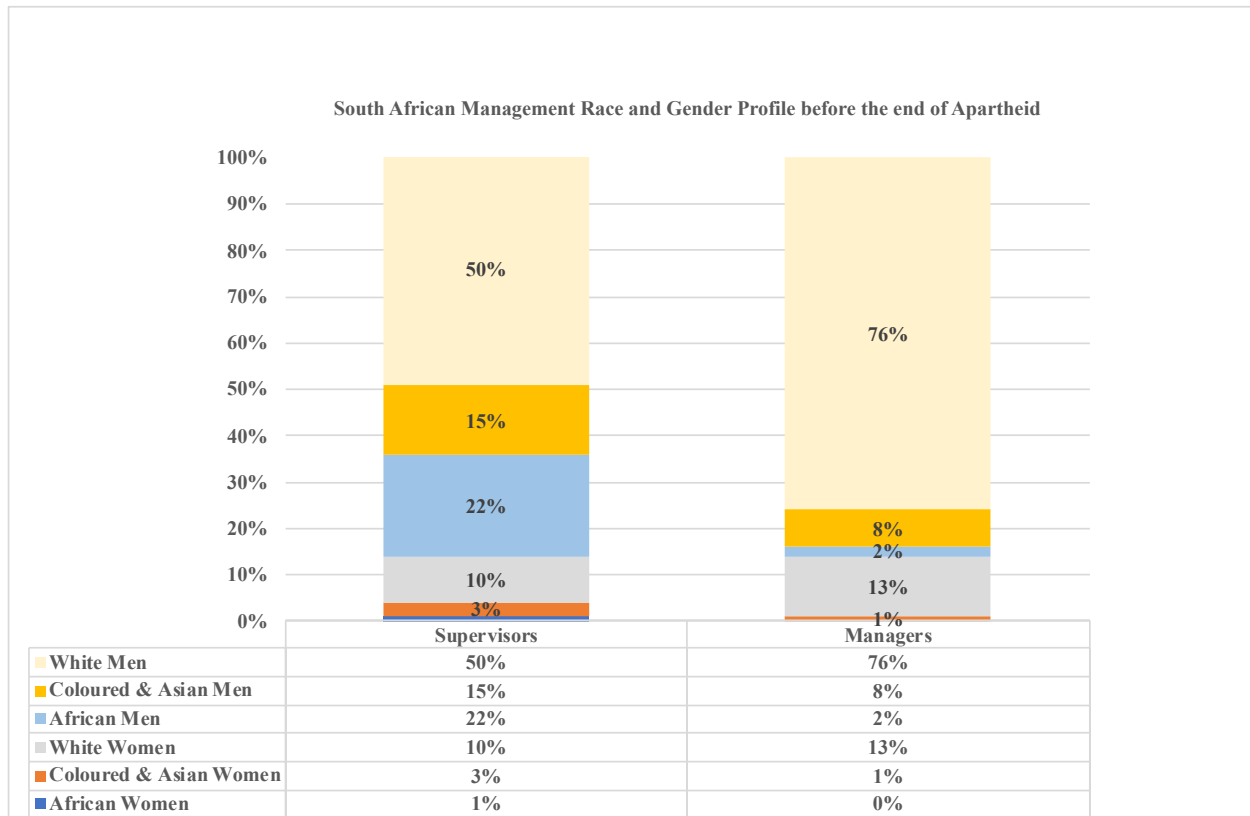


Figure 3: South African Managerial and Supervisory Level Race and Gender profile 1990

Notes: Compiled from source data extracted from Agenda No.24 (1990) as cited by O’Malley (2009)

The demographic group targeted for this study was White and Black male first level managers. The aim was to understand how these managers made sense of the associated experiences of power loss and gain that may have accompanied the loss and gain of managerial occupancy and thereby economic and positional power and how this may have shaped their managerial identity work.

4.3.1.4 Work context: the case for sampling variety.

I adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach. Grounded theories are developed by theorising about the events, activities and processes of the phenomenon “while situating them in the context of their construction” (Charmaz, 2014, p.232). Therefore, understanding the context within which the phenomenon was relevant was of great importance to explicate its contingent influence on the phenomenon. Moreover, I aimed to research the phenomenon of managerial identity work at the margins within different contexts to enable richer theoretical construction.

I selected industries that typified corporate South Africa yet represented a reasonable variation in work contexts at the lowest levels of management, these being: manufacturing, government/state-owned, retail and business services sectors. These four industry contexts represent work arrangements with sufficient points of difference to enable interesting comparisons, yet not so disparate as to render any analysis of similarities futile.

Some work contexts such as manufacturing have a predominance of first level managers working a shift rotation as shift supervisors or shift team leaders, whereas in the business services industry while shift work is uncommon, work outside of normal office hours is more or less expected as part of the leader’s day job, providing very different work life experiences. I however needed to balance the search for differences in work context with the practical reality of gaining access within the available time for conducting the research.

Gaining access to manufacturing and government services organisations was easier because I could access senior managers within my network. However, finding participating companies in

retail trade and finance / business services proved to be significantly harder due to a combination of cold-calling on companies who felt that they were already overwhelmed with research studies, and the actual existence of first level managers on their payrolls who met the sampling criteria. After several months of constant searching I finally gained access to two retail banks and an IT business services company who agreed to participate and who between them could find participants that came close to satisfying the sampling criteria. These five companies provided four different work contexts where first level managerial experience could be studied.

4.3.1.5 Final sample design.

I aimed for sufficient sampling variety in the initial sample to compare similarities and differences in experiences. It was therefore important to invite participation from first line managers who spanned a range of sampling criteria relevant to the study objectives as per my initial research questions. I had hoped that I would then be able to explicate the unique ways these managers made sense of their managerial experiences as well as the common ways these managers made sense of the political power shift and their changing organisational realities. The constant comparison technique is the core analytical aspect of the grounded theory methodology.

However, a grounded theory study calls for thick descriptions. Therefore, I also needed to limit the number of initial participants to a manageable size to enable deep and rich analysis of each story rather than shallow broad descriptions of too wide a range of experiences, allowing room for further theoretical sampling later based on how the analytical processes unfolded. The key dimensions of my sampling design were tenure, racio-ethnicity and work context.

High tenure was ideally twenty to twenty-five years in the role so as to capture experiences from as far back as the end of apartheid legislation up to the current democratic era. Racio-ethnicity variability would include variation in race and ethnicity. I purposively looked for participants who were white Afrikaner men and black African men in management to capture the experience of those whose racial groups lost and gained political power in South Africa over the twenty-five years in focus.

For variation in work context I looked for participating companies from among the top industry sector contributors to South Africa's GDP. As shown in figure 4 the top sectors are i) finance, real estate and business services, ii) general government services, iii) trade, catering & accommodation and iv) the manufacturing sector. I expected that managerial experiences in these different sectors would vary not only in relation to work content and context but would also vary depending on each sector's variable response to employment equity legislation, placing first level managers within these different sectors at varying levels of experienced power.

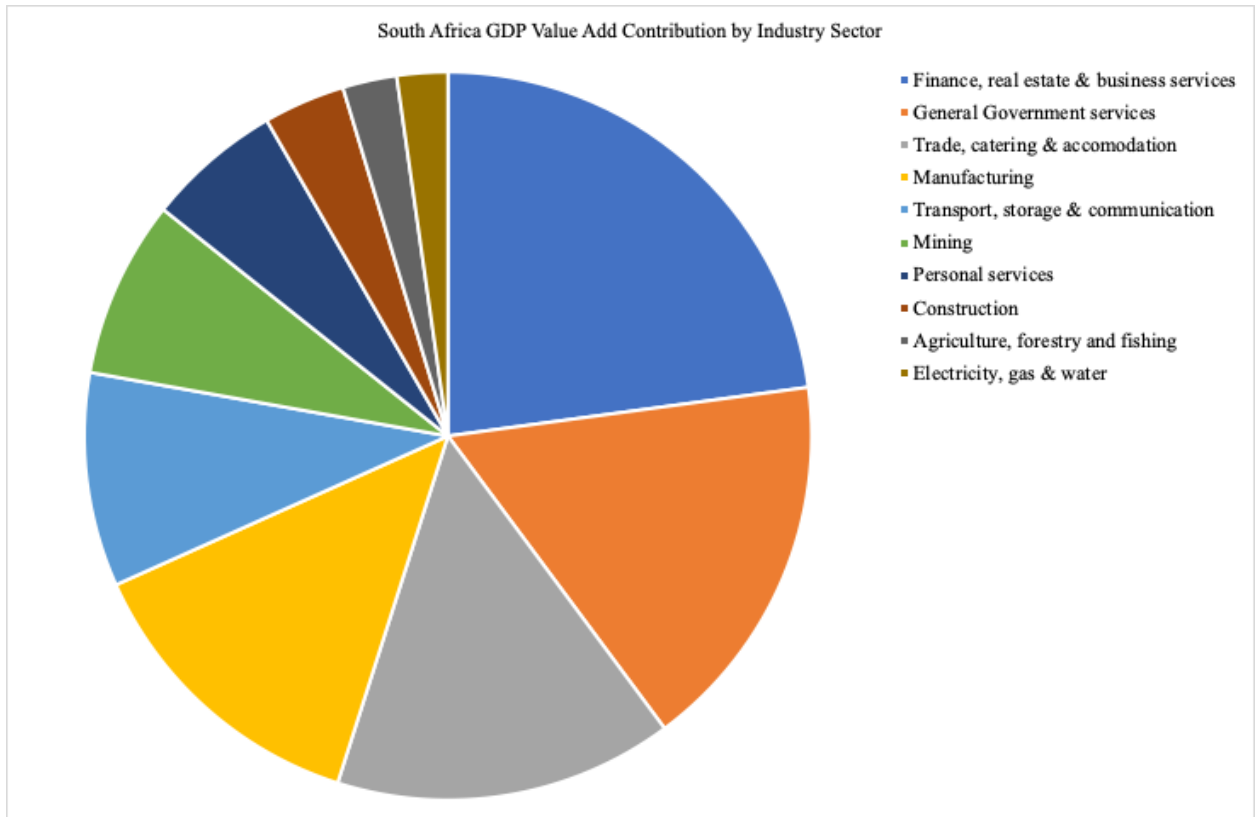


Figure 4: GDP sector contribution pie chart

Notes: Compiled from source data published in the Gross Domestic Product report by Statistics South Africa (2020).

4.3.2 Recruiting participating organisations and first level managers.

I recruited organisations into the study by personally meeting with the most senior Human Resources and Operations Managers of organisations within the targeted industries. I gained access to these managers via referrals from mentors, fellow PhD students, and colleagues who knew about my research. Of the seven organisations approached, five agreed to participate and their senior leadership completed formal consent documentation (see example in Appendix B) which allowed me to recruit participants from within their organisations. All five organisations provided administrative and facilitation support for sample selection and later for interview logistics.

Together with the senior management representative in the five participating organisations (four from Human Resources and one from Operations), I reviewed the organograms to ensure that we invited participation from only first level managers. For example, some middle managers or specialists often times appear at similar organisational levels with similar job grades to first level managers, but in the former case they have at least one junior manager reporting to them or in the latter case they have no employees reporting to them. Having jointly identified the list of eligible job titles, the senior management representative then applied the remaining criteria being tenure and race in order to identify individuals that could be invited to participate in the interviews. I was not involved in this step of the participant selection process as this required a review of personnel records which are confidential.

The participating companies faced various challenges finding the participants that would match these exact criteria. Interestingly the companies mostly struggled to find high tenure black participants and low tenure white participants. Ultimately, I managed to recruit Coloured and White first level managers with high and medium tenure and White and Black first level managers with low tenure, the last participants being recruited one year after the first. As I had adopted a constructivist grounded theory approach, I was able to analyse the data from earlier transcripts while pursuing recruitment of additional participants, allowing me to gather data from companies and participants added later on in the sampling process in purposive search of theoretical adequacy. In this way, I was able to treat those participants whom I recruited later as theoretical samples allowing me to carefully “include new lines of inquiry in later interviews that reflect our developing analyses” (Charmaz, 2014, p.103). I stopped the search for participants after one year

of being in the field, when in consultation with independent coders, I had reached the theoretical saturation of my major conceptual categories (see table 3 in chapter 5).

Table 2: Biographical, role and work data of the sample

Alias	Race	Home Language	Age range (years)	Job Title	Tenure range (years)	industry Type
Uncle	Coloured	Afrikaans	55-60	Shift team leader	25 -30	Manufacturing
Bruce	White	Afrikaans	30-35	Shift team leader	0-5	Manufacturing
George	White	Afrikaans	55-60	Site Controller	25-30	Manufacturing
Xolani	Black	Zulu	30-35	Shift team leader	0-5	Manufacturing
Sanza	Black	Zulu	25-30	Pre-Sales leader	0-5	IT Business Services
Kyle	White	Afrikaans	40-45	Sales Leader	20 - 25	IT Business Services & Retail Sales
Goodwin	Black	Zulu	30-35	Supervisor	0-5	State owned enterprise: transport services
Ojay	White	Afrikaans	50-55	Shift team leader	25-30	State owned enterprise: transport services
Garth	Coloured	Afrikaans	50-55	Shift team leader	20-25	State owned enterprise: transport services
Petrus	White	Afrikaans	30-35	Shift team leader	5-10	State owned enterprise: transport services
Khosi	Black	Zulu	30-35	Supervisor	0-5	Financial Services: Retail Banking
Donovan	White	Afrikaans	40-45	Supervisor	20-25	Financial Services: Retail Banking
Blue	Black	Zulu	30-35	Team Leader	0-5	Financial Services: Bank contact centre
James	Coloured	Afrikaans	45-50	Team Leader	11-15	Financial Services: Bank contact centre

Table 2 depicts the biographical, role and work data of the sample of men who participated in this study from the initial sample up to the final theoretical sample. The names have been replaced by pseudonyms. In addition, ranges rather than exact data have been provided for tenure and age in order to protect the anonymity of the participants.

4.4 Data Gathering

I gathered data over a period of one year, travelling to various parts of South Africa including a city in the north, a city in the east, a town in the central region and a town in the southern region of the country to conduct semi-structured life story narrative interviews with fourteen (14) participants at their places of work. In this section I describe how I gathered the data for both the pilot and main phases of the study and describe how the iterative process of analysis resulted in a multiple methods analytical strategy for this study.

4.4.1 The interview process.

The following statement by Charmaz (2014, p.87) reflects exactly how I approached the interviews, including the initial interviews and the theoretical sample interviews: “Grounded theory interviewers start with the participant’s story and fill it out, often by attempting to locate it within a basic social process, which may be implicit.” I invited all interviewees to begin their story by telling me about their background, where and how they grew up, how they first entered the world of work and all their experiences of work life leading to the jobs they occupied currently. I listened to their stories largely uninterrupted and once they had concluded I went back to fill out areas that were glossed over too briefly, or were not sufficiently clear, or that presented surprising, interesting revelations where I sought deeper descriptions, or wanted answers to why participants

held a view or examples of how they behaved. By “largely uninterrupted” I mean that I would gently probe or prod for depth or expansion by asking how, when, why, what did that mean to you kind of questions at specific points in the story where it I felt I needed to hear more.

I invited a second round of story-telling related to their experiences of their work as first level managers from the time they first got appointed to the current point. Upon concluding this part of their story, I once again used probing questions to fill out what participants meant, believed, saw, felt, did and how and when they did it. And finally, I invited then to tell me their stories of how they saw their career unfolding into the future sharing how they hoped and planned for their work lives to pan out from this point forward. Upon concluding this part of their story, I once again asked questions to fill out what participants meant, believed, hoped, planned, wanted, would do and how and when they would do it.

The style of all the interviews was easy and conversational. I acknowledge my role in the co-construction of data beyond the probing questions. I am by nature an empathising listener even in normal conversation. I struggle to have a dead pan uninvolved role in conversations. I purposefully toned down my usual conversational mode and made myself acutely aware of even the manner in which I made acknowledging sounds (such as uhum), or disapproval (such as a soft “no way” under my breath when hearing of deep injustice) or giving visual cues such as nodding, smiling, shaking of the head, raised eyebrows and in some cases it was impossible to avoid laughing out loud with the participants at particularly humorous parts of their stories. I analysed my own involvement in the data creation through constant reflection and continuous journaling. I present some of these reflections in chapter 10.

4.4.2 Lessons from the pilot interviews.

While in discussion with fellow scholars of identity work, I was cautioned that understanding detailed processes of how people do identity work may require more specific structured questions to get at the dynamics and properties of these processes that may not be offered up in the required detail in narratives as broad as life stories.

To be sure that the life story narrative approach would adequately surface the answers to the research questions of the study in relation to the identity work that first level managers do, I conducted four pilot interviews using tenure (high and low) and race (white and black) as the key sampling variables. I designed the interview questions presented in Appendix D to serve as a guide for conducting the pilot interviews.

4.4.2.1 Pilot interview sample.

I chose to conduct the pilot study at the Wattle (alias) company where I was employed due to ease of access and availability of a relatively large population of first level managers (supervisors) from which I could draw a sample. The national Human Resources Director provided permission for the study to be conducted at Wattle. I chose a pilot site in Johannesburg for convenience as I was resident in Johannesburg. Of the three large Wattle sites in Johannesburg I chose the Rosedale (alias) site as the pilot site because I had previously sampled participants from the other two sites in Johannesburg (North and South Site – both aliases) for a previous research project on diversity. I was concerned that participants from these two sites may logically assume that the new study was in some way connected to the previous one and could have been predisposed to direct their

responses in a way that connected their management experiences and diversity issues far more than participants who had no knowledge of the previous study, thereby skewing the data.

Furthermore, I had been the senior executive in charge of South Site for a few years and enjoyed a very good rapport with the front-line supervisors. Much of my deep interest in the well-being and leadership development of this level of managers was sparked by working closely with this particular group of people. I feared that by going back to them to test the quality of the pilot interview questions I would risk having them simply tell me what they thought I wanted to hear because they knew my views of the world and my social justice motives all too well. I had not worked on many projects at Rosedale over the 17 years in the company so the likelihood of getting “cold call” type of data was high. While I acknowledged that I would play a role in co-creating the data and that the same interview conducted by someone else would always yield a different narrative, I nevertheless wanted to avoid overtly skewing the version of the story that would result from careless misdirection of the narrative.

Gaining access to Rosedale site was relatively easy. I met with the senior executive in charge of Rosedale in May of 2016 to explain my research interests and request permission to conduct interviews. At that stage I had a broad idea of the research area but had not yet completed a research proposal. In December 2016, after receiving ethical clearance, I returned to Rosedale to confirm their participation and to agree sample selection with the senior executive in charge and the Rosedale human resources manager. The sample selection was guided by the sampling criteria I presented during the proposal defence with the main criterion being that the participants were front line supervisors or had been front line supervisors until very recently (no further back than one

year ago). The two variables for selection were tenure (high:20-25 years and low: less than 5 years) and race (white and black). A further criterion, ethnicity, was imposed on the white participants: I was mainly interested in the experiences of Afrikaans speaking white front line supervisors.

The Human Resources manager at Rosedale mapped the sampling selection criteria to four specific targets. She recruited the targeted participants through direct conversation using the informed consent letter that I had given her. All four agreed to participate. The following participants were recruited for the pilot:

i) Bruce (alias), a white Afrikaans shift team leader at Wattle's Rosedale site for the past eighteen (18) months.

ii) Xolani (alias), a black African shift team leader at Wattle's Rosedale site for the past five (5) years.

iii) Uncle (alias), a Coloured shift team leader with twenty-eight (28) years tenure as a team leader at Wattle's Rosedale site

iv) George (alias), a white Afrikaans site controller who was a shift team leader with seventeen (17) years tenure. Prior to Wattle he was a maintenance supervisor at Staalkor (alias) for twelve (12) years. Hence a combined twenty-nine (29) years tenure in a first level manager role.

4.4.2.2 Pilot interview logistics.

The pilot interviews were planned for two days but scheduling challenges extended the time needed to conduct the pilot interviews. All names of people and businesses quoted by participants during the interview were given pseudonyms by the researcher.

Each participant indicated free willingness to participate, chose their own alias and signed the ethical participation form in the presence of the researcher. They were all willing to have the interviews recorded and transcribed and welcomed the opportunity to receive copies of the transcript. The pilot study participants were recruited by the Rosedale HR manager and the participants confirmed that the only information she shared with them was that the research was focused on the experience of front-line leaders. The interview time slots were based on the participants' availability and time of day preference.

4.4.2.3 Reflections on the pilot interview process.

In this section I present the reflective notes from my research journal that I made after the pilot interviews. I reflect on the approach to the interviews and highlight the key ways that I adjusted the approach based on the learnings from the pilot. I reflect on the nature of each participant's participation in the interviews and the potential impact on research quality. Finally, I reflect on the suitability of the interview protocol to surface answers to the research questions.

4.4.2.3.1 Pilot Interview 1, Bruce.

I had never met Bruce (alias) before so this was a great opportunity to do a "cold call" interview. In the preamble to the interview I introduced myself, the research topic, the ethical clearance process and thanked him for his willingness to participate. This was the first time he had heard of research about front line supervisors and was very pleased that someone from a university was interested in this level of management and that he was asked to share his experiences about being a front-line team leader. His energy levels were high at the start of the interview but approximately

forty (40) minutes into the interview he was exhausted, battled to concentrate and mentioned that he had been awake just after 04h00 am for the shift which had commenced at 06h00. It was clear that the time of the interview within the work-day needed to change in order to improve the participation of interviewees in the interview. Notably, Bruce steered clear of sharing his views about how the national political context influenced his work as a team leader, even when indirectly prompted.

4.4.2.3.2 Pilot Interview 2, Uncle.

Uncle and I had worked together successfully on a project which concluded about six years previously and we had not spoken since then. He was pleased that he was selected to participate as he really wanted his story to be told before his retirement in a few months' time. Like Bruce before him, Uncle had heard from the Human Resources manager who invited him to participate that the study was about the experiences of the front-line manager. Both Bruce and Uncle had similarly limited information about the study objectives. However, Uncle's responses to similar questions yielded significantly more depth and openness compared with Bruce's surface level answers. Uncle had just arrived at work for an afternoon shift and was fresh and full of energy. The first interview lasted well over 90 minutes.

4.4.2.3.3 Reflecting on the interview approach.

Upon reflection this could have been an indication that Uncle and I shared a rapport that I did not have to work at creating in the interview as it stemmed from a prior mutually successful, trusting, partnering, working relationship as well as the assumed similarities in our backgrounds owing to both of us being Coloured. While reflecting after the two very different interviews it occurred to

me that Bruce's answers about the external political influences on his career were guarded perhaps due to the lack of rapport we shared. Furthermore, we are very different demographically (younger white male compared with middle aged non-white female) and I was a rank unknown outsider to him hence he likely experienced low levels of trust to expose his inner feelings. I would have to find a way to establish rapport with this group or get a similar looking person to conduct the interviews.

The time of workday may also have been a major contributing factor. Uncle remained energised for nearly two hours and did not once appear fatigued, compared with Bruce whose interview was scheduled after his shift where he admitted feeling tired and mentioned he had been up since 04h00 in the morning. I decided to make more of an effort to establish a rapport upfront with future participants and tried to get participants to make time either before their shifts or very early into their shifts to ensure their energy levels remained high.

A further difference could be the age and experience between the two. Previously (in the course of a prior research study on diversity) I noticed that the older participants shared more generously and freely about socio-political issues, almost not wanting you to go until you had heard all they wanted to share. While the younger group were much more reserved. They spoke freely about 'neutral' issues but not about 'politically charged' issues. Back then I managed to get this younger group to open up to me very easily only when I asked the questions more directly (e.g. what is your view of affirmative action? Or do you think affirmative action is working? etc.). When they realised that the topic was not taboo and that in fact their input on this 'politically charged' topic was sought, they would speak volumes. So, it could simply be a case of asking more directly how

the political changes in the country have impacted their experience of front-line management and their outlook for management advancement.

This would however mean I would be co-creating some of these conversations even more than others and I wanted to steer clear of overtly leading the participants. I still had two pilot interviews left and felt that adjusting the questioning approach was perhaps pre-mature.

4.4.2.3.3 Reflecting on the transcribed data collected from the first two pilot interviews.

Once I had transcribed the first two recorded interviews, I reflected on the quality of the narrative to reveal answers to the research questions. Despite the shorter than expected interview, Bruce's story was rich with data about his life growing up in South Africa, his life as an operator and a team leader and his future career plans. He spoke about his struggles and his strategies for expressing his managerialism, replete with examples and his own reflections on his choices and behaviours. He did not speak about how the changing political, social and historical context of the country impacted his experience of management, his career development or future aspirations. Instead he cited organisational and individual factors as far more important than the external context for managing others and for career progression.

I realised at this point that what I initially felt was a shortcoming of the interview was in fact my expectation that the participants would 'naturally' express a link between the socio-political context and their work-life experiences. Reflecting on why I expected this response made me realise that I was in danger of wanting to hear what I had pre-conceived rather than genuinely being curious about their experiences even if it was completely different to what I had expected.

The difference in length of the two transcripts did not compromise the quality of the data of one versus the other. Instead the ability to draw comparisons between the experiences was a strength. I had to remain conscious of my biases and needed to keep a completely open mind. I journaled about this reflection and discussed my reflections with my supervisory committee.

I also noted Charmaz (2014)'s response to critics of the interview method who claim that interviewee's place boundaries on what they are prepared to reveal, rendering interviews incomplete accounts and therefore limiting the usefulness of interviews. Charmaz (2014) counters this argument by asserting that when grounded theorists observe such content reservation (as I did with Bruce's interview), then rather than discard this interview as incomplete, they would seek to understand why this interview differs from others and use the insights as important data. "Such interviews can offer important leads about silences, forbidden topics, and vulnerabilities" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 80).

4.4.2.3.4 Pilot Interview 3, George.

George was interviewed mid-morning. He was energized, enthusiastic and very pleased to have been selected to tell his story. He was especially pleased that someone was interested in front line team leadership. The interview was conducted in Afrikaans. Having learnt from my reflection on the differences between Bruce's and Uncle's interviews, I also took the opportunity to briefly share my own background at the shop-floor and why I was interested in the front-line leader. I shared no more information about the study objectives than had been shared with Bruce or Uncle. The interview lasted for close on to ninety minutes with an open invitation by George for follow up

interviews. George shared generously and provided deep level responses throughout. He did not appear guarded nor did he exercise brevity in his responses.

Upon reflection, the time taken to explain my career background and why research about the first line manager was important to me may have improved the openness of the responses. I adopted this as a change in approach for all the interviews that followed.

4.4.2.3.5 Pilot Interview 4, Xolani.

Xolani is a young black African team leader and as was the case with Bruce, we met on the day for the first time. I approached the interview differently to that of Bruce's in that I established rapport by providing a brief introduction to my career background which began at the shop floor. I also shared that I am interested in studying front line team leadership because not much has been written about that level of leadership. This was similar to the introduction I did with George. Xolani was highly engaged throughout the interview and shared his story freely, expanding on statements openly and generously.

4.4.2.4 Conclusion: Reflecting on the adequacy of the pilot interview protocol.

I shared the transcribed data with my supervising committee, where after we met to discuss my reflections and their review of the pilot interviews. We all agreed that the interviews generated rich data that should be used in the main analysis. Although I had prepared a clear guide for the interview, the approach I actually used was more unstructured, open-ended, and emergent than I had envisaged. The process seemed a lot messier than the intended approach. Upon reflection,

however, all the questions were addressed in each narrative but in a different order to the initial plan, and in some cases, questions were answered iteratively interwoven into many aspects of the participants' stories.

The initial question related to their background life story was always the same but, the subsequent questions featured in varying sequences, depending on the direction that the narrative took. We also agreed that the questions I actually asked rather than the ones I had prepared were better at surfacing the issues for the participants and were a more natural fit for me. For example, I had planned to ask "why" questions such as "please tell me why you decided to become a team leader" but during the conversation it did not feel right to ask this question in such a judgemental way. Instead it felt more natural to ask: "please tell me how you came to be a team leader". This is a typical way that I as the researcher actively co-created the data as the responses were likely to be different depending on which questioning technique I used.

Nevertheless, I felt the latter was also a much more respectful process and therefore my supervisors agreed that ethically this was a better way to gather the data. I subsequently amended the interview guide to reflect more closely what I was actually asking rather than what I had originally intended before entering the field. Although the differences appear minor, I do believe that the original questioning technique would likely have resulted in closed, more guarded conversations, whereas the pilot interviews were evidence that the adjusted questions created the environment for rich open conversations. The amended guide is presented in Appendix D.

4.4.3 Practices to ensure rigour when generating data from the interview process.

As the primary researcher, I personally handled all preparatory meetings, telephonic conversations and written correspondence with the company representatives and the participants. The primary reason was protection of the anonymity of the companies and participants, but a secondary benefit was that I had several opportunities to make pertinent observations due to this immersion in the field. Careful records were kept through-out and I engaged in personal reflection of my role in the process by keeping a research journal. I invited all participants to respond in the language they felt they could best express themselves in. This presented me with a (fairly unique) opportunity to improve the extent to which any emergent conceptualisation could be grounded in the preferred language expressions of the participants, improving the quality of the analytical reach into the voice of the participants and enabling an emic approach to theory construction.

All interviews were recorded on electronic recording devices. This allowed me to focus on the participants, maintaining an engaged conversation, ultimately enabling more data to be captured in the time allowed for the interview and allowing participants to more spontaneously tell their stories free of the punctuated pauses that would be required if I was hand-writing their responses. I am fluent in English and Afrikaans and capable of conversational isiZulu. I was thus able to personally transcribe all the interviews. This process took several days per transcript as I took care to transcribe not only spoken words but original expression, non-textual semiotic cues, paralinguistic utterances and body language as I was able to deeply immerse myself in the interview moment again and again vacillating between audio, transcribing, memory and field notes.

In addition to the primary data that took the form of transcribed narratives, I journalised visual observations at the work sites where the interviews were conducted. These included direct observations of physical artefacts, organisational rituals, short-cycle participant observation and conversations with organisational agents through the course of obtaining access or arranging for interviews, follow up conversations and member checks.

In conclusion, through careful, reflexive, open-minded and rigorous field work practices I was rewarded with life and work-life story narratives that constituted a rich, deep corpus of fluid, multi-directional, messy data. In the next section I describe how I analysed the data to arrive at a theoretical conceptualisation of first level managerialism in South Africa.

4.5 Analytical Strategy

I use the constructivist grounded theory methodology in this study owing to its paradoxical power to foreground the voices of the researched in the emergent construction of theory while muting that of the researcher precisely by illuminating the inimitable role the researcher has played in its co-construction. The deeply personal rendering of suffering in nearly all the narratives was my constant reminder of the privileged position I was in as the researcher and increased my resolve to deliberately handle the participants' stories with respect and care, preserving its integrity and their dignity.

The overarching inquiry approach I use in this study is constructivist grounded theory according to the methods of Saldaña (2009), Thornberg (2012) and Charmaz (2014). I integrate into the grounded theory method a narrative enquiry of the life histories of the participants using the theories and methods of Bruner (1991), Mishler (1995) and Josselson (2011). Furthermore, I

conduct a critical discourse analysis on theoretically sampled dominant discourses relevant to the narratives and emergent theoretical categories using a combination of the methods of Fairclough (2016), Jäger and Maier (2016) and Reisigl and Wodak (2016).

In combination these three methodological approaches produce a multi-method qualitative study that explicates the life, work and management experiences of first level managers of differing tenure, racio-ethnicity, in different types of South African organisational contexts, how they – as distinct from the normative manager in management scholarship (usually top or senior, occasionally middle, from Western cultures) – i) do management ii) how they did management in the past during apartheid compared with how they do management now twenty-five years after the dramatic national political power shift, and iii) to what extent their managerialism and the national political context was tied to their construction of self.

4.5.1 Initial coding and inter-coder confirmation.

After careful transcription of the initial tranche of four interviews, I read and re-read the transcribed data and noted down early ideas in the form of key-words, impressions and insights that struck me as clues to answering the broad question “What is going on here?” Once I had a sense of the life story I was hearing, I began initial coding of the data in a spreadsheet format. This enabled me to do line by line coding rather than chunky coding of substantial data segments. The line by line coding afforded me a very close read of the data and the chance to engage analytically rather than only descriptively with the data. Saldaña (2009) describes coding of large data segments as “lumping” and fine-grained coding as “splitting”, advising that “lumping gets to the essence of categorizing a phenomenon while splitting encourages careful scrutiny of social action represented

in the data.” (Saldaña 2009, p. 20). Line by line coding in a spreadsheet format additionally allowed me to develop my initial codebook for the study.

In order to keep the initial codes indelibly grounded in the data, I chose to do in vivo coding, preserving the participants’ meanings over my presuppositions (Charmaz, 2014). In the first cycle of coding I used segments of direct quotes from the data as the initial codes and coded these almost exclusively as in vivo processual (gerund) codes, following the Saldaña (2009) in vivo processual coding method closely. I then assigned a more conceptual analytical label in the description of the code ensuring that even the conceptual code definitions maintained a strong link to the data. I found that the processual coding helped me to “see” the actions, interactions, motivations, cognitions, tactics and strategies of various actors in the participants’ stories. Given that my main research question was a “how” question, getting at the processes was particularly important. Line by line in vivo coding resulted in roughly 600-800 initial codes per narrative.

Upon completion of the initial coding of the first tranche of interviews, I provided two of these first interview transcripts to a qualitative researcher in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria for independent coding. This was a very interesting and rewarding experience. The independent coder applied open coding rather than in vivo coding to the same data that I had coded, producing vastly different primary codes, yet strikingly similar code definitions and hence nearly identical focused codes. We met face to face to discuss the outcomes of the two different coding processes. While I had applied processual gerund coding, the analytical definitions I used to describe the meanings of my codes agreed very well with the open codes that the independent coder had assigned to the data. This process gave me the confidence

that even though no two coders would code in the same way, the conceptual abstraction from the data led to compatible interpretations.

Secondly, this exercise reconfirmed to me how essential it was that I tread carefully with the data. The few areas where we differed in code definitions highlighted cases where I had not been as careful about what the data was saying compared with what my presuppositions led me to see in the data. The discussion around these points provided excellent reflection for me and improved my awareness of when I was analysing *from* the data to an abstract concept compared with when I was analysing from a preconceived (sometimes theoretical) concept looking for reflection in the data. With this new insight I redid the entire first level coding for the first tranche of transcripts, this time staying even more true to the data than previously. Several codes remained unchanged, but for those that changed I was able to write reflective memos about which preconceptions had crept into the first round of coding, thereby increasing my awareness of my involvement in the data, and the care I was able to apply from that point forward. I also discussed the coding and the outcome of the independent coding exercise with my main supervisor, who provided insight and challenges that improved my analytical rigour throughout.

4.5.2 Focused coding and analytical memos.

As described in section 4.2., the inductive-abductive analytical technique of the grounded theory method starts in earnest when the initial codes are abstracted to focused codes. I conducted focused coding through constant comparison between the large array of initial codes, looking at their similarities and differences, the frequently occurring codes and the conspicuously infrequently occurring but potentially significant codes, back and forth to test emergent analytical codes in the

actual data across larger and larger sections of data across the various narratives, all the while generating memos to reflect on why the emergent focused codes held significance. I also gathered many exemplary quotes that epitomised the essence of the new emergent analytical categories.

The focused coding of the interviews took several months. During this time I held regular meetings with my supervisory committee to share my analytical strategy, my emergent codes, my testing methods, and my frustrations navigating the sea of data. These meetings were invaluable, serving as a sounding board for reflexivity, providing assurance that I was conducting the research correctly, challenging the outputs of my conceptual processes and providing practical guidance on the methodological procedures. I also consulted with a senior research methodologist and expert in the application of the Atlas.ti program among various other techniques. The methodologist provided me with training in the Atlas.ti program and provided an additional independent confirmation that I was applying the initial coding correctly. The methodologist also taught me how to use various features of the Atlas.ti program to organise my codes, code descriptions, memos, exemplary quotations, analytical categories and how to export such data into various useful outputs. As a licensed user of Atlas.ti, I also had access to numerous online resources for learning how to get the best out of the tools available.

Furthermore, the methodologist is as an expert well versed in many different research paradigms and methodologies and was able to apply a multiple method lens when reviewing some of my most prominent analytical categories. It was during one of these reviews that I realised that I had found salience in the way the talk in the participants' narratives mirrored dominant societal speak. For example, I had uncovered a prominent analytical category, pervasive across large data segments

across narratives, which I coded as a focused code entitled “post-apartheid speak”. Further coding led to more focused codes that related the discourse in the personal narratives to wider societal narratives. We discussed my analytical memos and my critical scholarship stance that led me to see the salience of the impact of societal discourse on the cognitive and behavioural processes apparent in the personal narrative data. At this point the methodologist suggested critical discourse analysis as a potential methodology to further unpack those interrelationships as a means to move from focused coding to theoretical coding. The beauty of this approach was that I would not have to redo the initial coding as I was planning to use the critical discourse analytical lens to explicate those categories where societal discourse featured prominently and potentially to explicate the interrelationships between these categories and the other categories of social processes that had emerged and could still emerge. At a later review an independent observation of the relevance of critical discourse analysis affirmed my proposed methodology for the study.

4.5.3 Integrating critical discourse analysis into grounded theory.

I conducted critical discourse analysis (CDA) using the dialectical-relational CDA approach (Fairclough, 2016), the Foucauldian approach (Jäger and Maier, 2016) and the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016), (each approach described in detail in section 4.2), to analyse the managerial and identity work actions and interactions revealed in the everyday talk of the first level managers’ narratives. Because I was interested in studying actions and processes, not themes and structures, I used a constructivist grounded theory method and not a classical grounded theory method. I used in vivo initial coding followed by focused coding to produce inductive analytical categories as precursors to theoretical concepts, as opposed to open coding, axial coding and thematic or structural analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2014). My analytical categories represented

significant processes emerging from the data but these had not yet been analysed as major or minor categories, where the former is expected to subsume the latter, leading to a substantive theoretical conceptualisation of the underlying processes. In order to relate the categories to one another, I applied each of three CDA methods in turn, drawing on the unique strengths of each.

Firstly, I applied the dialectical-relational approach to analyse the dialectical patterns of discursive social construction of the significant processes represented by coded categories. This allowed me to analyse these processes for discursive processes of power abuse and resistance at the micro, meso- and macro-societal levels. The key stages of the Fairclough CDA methodology do not follow a strictly linear procedure but is rather an iterative process that draws on a set of methods several times and in various stages. Fairclough (2016, p. 91) describes this process as a “variant of Bhaskar’s ‘explanatory critique’” that is overtly focused on finding, analysing and improving social problems.

Stage one of the process entails a focus on a problematic social phenomenon in two steps. The first step is to identify a potential topic from apparent social problems and determining the potential for surfacing the dialectical relations between semiotic and structural mechanisms of the problematized social phenomenon. Thereafter a transdisciplinary theoretical approach is taken to construct a research objective. This theoretical approach to initiating the research is considered important as the initially apparent social problem may not prove to be a theoretically sound candidate for scientific research (Fairclough, 2016). The constructivist grounded theory method I had followed from the selection of a broad research question, to the sampling processes, the collection of narrative data from participants, the initial coding, the focused coding and the

rendering of my focused codes to analytical categories matches this first stage of the dialectical-relational approach to CDA.

The second stage of the dialectical-relational CDA method (Fairclough, 2016) involves three steps namely i) analysis of the dialectical relations between semiotic and other social elements to identify suitable semiotics (texts, discursive acts, and so forth) to sample for the CDA study, ii) select or generate semiotic data and develop categories for analysis pertinent to the research objectives, and iii) conduct linguistic analysis on the texts, semiotic analysis on the non-text discourses and interdiscursive analysis of the semiosis as a whole. This second stage required sampling of semiotics *in addition to* my participant narratives *but as suggested by* these narratives.

I chose to go back into the empirical world by applying the theoretical sampling techniques of the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg, 2012). This enabled me to purposively sample media, social media, historical documents, literature, secondary data source gathered at the participants' workplaces and field notes related to participant observations in order to find dialectically related semiotics for discursive analysis relevant to the analytical categories of my coded data. Furthermore, the requirement for interdiscursivity in step three of this second stage meant sampling for data in various segments of the narratives but also across narratives, and in three cases this meant a search for additional participants to generate fresh narratives from voices not yet evident in the data to that point. The integration of grounded theory theoretical sampling with discursively relevant semiotic sampling not only ensured rigour but also enabled much needed continuity of thought required for the theoretical conceptualisation.

Stage three required analysis of and conceptualisation of the ways in which the social order relies on the semiotically constructed social practices for the production and maintenance of unequal power relations or domination. Fairclough (2016) however does not provide a technique for ensuring research quality in this stage, particularly how to prevent objectivist prescriptions for a good society to masquerade as research findings. Therefore, I apply the Foucauldian approach to discourse and dispositive analysis espoused by Jäger and Maier (2016) for step three of stage two and stage three of this semiotic analysis. In addition to a method that has rigour and strong connections to the data, the Foucauldian approach goes beyond the cognitive processes to analysis of embodied and material analysis, all of which was evident in the narrative data.

The final stage “moves the analysis from negative to positive critique” (Fairclough, 2016, p. 95) to propose shifts in the dialectical relations between semiotic and other social elements to address the social problems identified. For this stage, I returned to the grounded theory method to theorise resistant processes that I had already uncovered in the narratives of the first level managers. In addition, in order to explicate the resistant discourses in this study I applied the discourse-historical approach to CDA (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016). The data revealed that resistant discourses were located diachronically with various historically contextual links, making the discourse-historical approach a particularly good methodological fit for this phase of the analysis.

4.6 Practices to Ensure the Trustworthiness and Quality of the Research

I used a number of practices during all phases of the study to ensure trustworthiness and quality of this research which I discuss here using Tracy’s (2010, p.839) criteria for high quality qualitative

research, namely: “(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence”.

4.6.1 A Worthy topic.

Tracy (2010, p.840) argues that good quality research begins with a topic that is “relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative”, such as topics that serve not only academic but also societal political agendas, and cautions against topics of convenience while advocating for topics that challenge common sense assumptions. This research meets this criteria by showcasing the power struggles at the margins of managerial power within a national context characterised by epochal political power shifts and with surprising revelations about the identity work of those at the intersections of privilege and marginalisation.

4.6.2 Rich rigour.

Borrowing from the scientific field of cybernetics, Tracy (2010) calls for requisite variety in qualitative research that not only provides thick, rich descriptions but also analytical methods that are at least as complex as the results to be illuminated. This particular criteria is addressed in this research by the adoption of a combination of methods of analysis namely, grounded theory, narrative inquiry and critical grounded theory, each relevant for illuminating nuanced findings within the data categories, the whole narratives and the underlying discourses.

4.6.3 Sincerity.

To meet this criteria, Tracy (2010) challenges researches to be self-reflexive and transparent about the research process as about the researchers role in the process. Sincerity throughout this research

process from sampling, to interviewing, to data analysis and the discussion of the emergent findings was enhanced through practices such as journaling for transparency and self-reflexivity. Any factors that may have affected data collection, analysis and interpretation was continuously reflected upon by means of a research journal including field notes, written up in a natural history format and maintained as part of the data records for this research. I share these reflections as well as reflections about my positionality in Chapter 10. Additionally, I have provided a detailed description of the data collection procedures in this chapter.

4.6.4 Credibility.

Credibility is achieved through thick descriptions of the data and through triangulation or crystallization of data sources (Tracy, 2010). The primary data source for this research was the transcribed interview. Triangulation or crystallization opportunities were sought throughout the data gathering process e.g. documentation, archival records, physical artefacts, direct observations, and where it was permitted, participant-observation. Participants were invited to respond in the language they felt they could best express themselves in. Furthermore, member checks were conducted by presenting the original language transcripts to the participants to get their input as to the accuracy of the transcriptions. Furthermore, data analysis and interpretation was enhanced through inter-coder confirmability and triangulation of multiple data sources, regular check ins with my supervisory committee and consultations with a recognised independent research methodologist. With respect to how data is presented, this research preserves the voices of the participants by foregrounding their narratives.

4.6.5 Resonance.

Tracy (2010) describes resonance as the ability of research reports to have a profound impact on both those readers who are able to empathise with the research participants and those who are not in that situation but are able to relate to their circumstances through the impactful way that the research findings have been presented. The findings section of this research thesis provides rich descriptions of the struggles of participants, avoiding aloof descriptions, and in so doing strives to achieve resonance with the readers. Another aspect of resonance is the degree to which the findings are transferable across contexts. While the national context of apartheid and post-apartheid in South Africa appears unique, this research presents and references contextual similarities to other systems of domination and proposes future research for confirming such transferability as presented in Chapter 9. Moreover, the findings related to the identity work of first level managers could apply to several organisational contexts where hierarchy and asymmetrical power are similarly institutionalised.

4.6.6 Significant contribution.

Tracy (2010) credits research as making a significant contribution when it demonstrates theoretical significance, heuristic significance, practical significance and methodological significance. This research makes a theoretical contribution by presenting new theory that explains the complex antipodal processes of identity work at the intersection of multiple systems of domination and describes how identity work connects individuals' past, present and potential future identities with the historical contexts in which they are embedded. This research contributes to heuristic significance by suggesting several interesting avenues for further research within management and organisation studies, critical race studies, Whiteness studies and intersectionality studies.

Furthermore, this research makes a practically significant contribution by helping South African organisations to better understand the complex challenges of achieving transformation in the workplace, and by drawing attention to the everyday struggles of those managers at the lowest level of the management hierarchy in organisations, it is hoped that this research will contribute towards improving working lives in organisations. Finally, this study adopts a combination of research methods not often found in mainstream management and organisational studies and in so doing could be considered to make a methodological contribution.

4.6.7 Ethics.

Tracy (2010) calls for qualitative researchers to go beyond procedural ethics, to strive for ethical consideration of the research situation, relational ethics in the care taken to engage with participants and ethics beyond the research that is concerned with how participants and the research situation will be represented in written works that have longevity well beyond the processes that call for procedural ethics in research. During this research study I have taken extreme care to abide by the university ethics requirements as described in Chapter 1. Moreover, out of deep respect for the participants who so generously shared their stories with me, I undertook to remain aware of my presence and expectations in the research situation in relation to the rights and wishes of the participants with respect to anonymity and expression. This included offering the participants their choice of alias and exclusively using that alias throughout the interviews and subsequent processes; inviting participants to be interviewed in their preferred mode (which was face to face) at their choice of venue even when this meant the researcher had to travel to various parts of the country to capture their stories; inviting participants to express themselves in their own home language and the consequential care in translating their narratives; pausing the recording when participants asked

to share information off the record; granting the participants authorship by minimising questions and interjections which allowed participants reasonable control over the interview process while recognising that some control nevertheless was relinquished to me as the researcher. Moreover, I took great care in presenting the findings truthfully yet respectfully, anonymising all aspects of the participants stories that could lead to them being personally identified, remaining curious during the analysis of the data rather than prescriptive and maintaining reflexive journals to remain careful of overlaying my personal meaning onto participants' expressions.

4.6.7 Meaningful coherence.

Finally, Tracy (2010) cautions researchers to ensure that their methodological approach, the presentation of the data, the concepts advanced and the emerging theory are all coherent with the overarching paradigm and research goals. In this research study, meaningful coherence is achieved by using constructivist grounded theory as the overarching framework within a paradigm of pragmatism, augmented by narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis, allowing complex, messy, rich multiple realities to coexist in space and time, without being reducible to a single conclusion, yet revealing a cogent unifying theory of the everyday processes at work in first level manager identity work.

4.6.8 Limitations of the analytical approach.

Despite the aforementioned practices to ensure trustworthiness and quality in this research study, some limitations remained. The general limitations for the study are presented in Chapter 9, however in this section I present the limitations associated with the analytical approach.

This project was contextualised within the boundaries of a doctoral study with a number of constraining features. Firstly, access to ‘the field’ was limited to the researcher’s personal and professional network as the university where the researcher was registered relied on their students to source organisations willing to participate in university research projects. Each doctoral student was therefore constrained by their ability to penetrate this corporate research space. Having gained access to organisations, the data that could be gathered was constrained by the availability of participants that met the sampling criteria in the time allowed for this project.

I make no claim that the analytical tools were applied perfectly nor that the analysis is complete, nor that my understanding was accurate, or the explanatory suppositions correct. Rather I claim to have taken considerable steps to rigorously apply the most suitable analytical methods to thoroughly illuminate as much of the whole focus of inquiry as was possible, to allow the emergence of a theoretical explanation that is as sufficient and as valid as another could be, in full recognition that such emergence was in part the result of chance, convenience, available resources and institutional rules that surround a study for a doctoral degree.

Chapter 5: Key Findings

In this chapter I present the research findings that emerged from the data through the application of a multi-phase, multi-method analytical approach. These analytical strategies provided a means to interrogate the individual agency associated with identity, the macro and structural conditions, as well as the discourse of identity construction. Drawing on three different qualitative methods, namely, constructivist grounded theory, narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis helped me to build a theoretical model of how lower echelon managers construct their identities in the context of significant societal and political change.

I begin this chapter with a summary of the key findings, explaining how I conceptualised the five emergent substantive theoretical categories from the data. I then describe how the findings integrate conceptually into a theoretical model that represents how first level managers engage in identity work at the margins of managerial power in the context of societal and organisational transformation. In the subsequent chapters I present the detailed findings related to the theoretical constructs of subjective temporality, namely, episodic and continuous identity work transitions, which form the framework of the conceptual model presented here, supported with thick descriptions of the detailed findings pertaining to the core identity work processes as captured in the theoretical model. Chapter six focusses on the findings related to the episodic identity work practices of the participants while chapter seven focusses on the findings related to continuous identity work practices. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical integration of all the findings in chapter eight.

The findings emerged over several iterations of in-depth analysis. The overarching inquiry approach I use in this study is constructivist grounded theory according to the methods of Saldaña (2009), Thornberg (2012) and Charmaz (2014). The purpose of the research was to extend existing theory on managerial identity work by accounting for the influence of national socio-political power dynamics in identity construction. Therefore, constructivist grounded theory formed the golden thread through all analytical stages of the study as well as forming the framework for the study itself.

However, in order to build a process theory of how identities are constructed at the margins, I designed the study to enable the managers' lived experiences of the national socio-political power shifts over a period of twenty-five years in so-called "post-apartheid" South Africa, to be articulated and collected in the form of personal narratives. According to Bruner (1991), narratives are constantly written and rewritten according to each narrator's psychological patterns of what constitutes expected and unexpected experience. When these are self-narrations or personal narratives, they reveal both the expected and unexpected experiences of identity construction processes. For this reason, I integrated the grounded theory method with narrative inquiry using the theories and methods of Bruner (1991), Mishler (1995) and Josselson (2011) to further analyse any emergent storied themes.

Moreover, I approach this study from the stance that personal narratives interrelate with broader societal narratives, larger stories that have come to have social significance, which are recognisable by social actors and available for use in the rendering of their own personal narratives. I therefore also analysed theoretically sampled identity narrative segments using the critical discourse analysis

methods of Fairclough (2016), Reisigl and Wodak (2016) and Jäger and Maier (2016), to identify which societal discourses dominated identity narrative construction and how relational power was constructed and maintained in the personal narratives.

Finally, using the lens of symbolic interactionism (Charmaz, 2014), I raised the emergent theoretical categories to an integrated theory of first level manager identity work in the context of societal, organisational and individual power transitions. The analytical strategies, together with the high-level findings from each data analysis phase, are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of findings from the multi-phase, multi-method analytical approach

Phase 1: Constructivist grounded theory coding revealed initial emergent themes		
<i>In-vivo coding & Focused coding</i>	<i>Analytical conceptualisation</i>	<i>Initial emergent theoretical categories</i>
Line by line in-vivo processual coding: 600-800 codes per narrative	Raising focused codes to analytical concepts gave rise to 9	5.1.1 Storied identity constructions of self and others
Constant-comparison method and analytical memo writing: 15-25 focused codes per narrative	analytical categories (see figure 5.1)	5.1.2 Discursive identity work practices
		5.1.3 Social location in the struggle for politically powerful identities
Phase 2: Narrative Analysis of theoretical category 1.1		

<i>Input from phase 1</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Phase 2 emergent theoretical categories</i>
5.1.1 Storied identity constructions of self and others	Actor analysis	5.2.1 Identity substitution: the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities
a) Storying “their” struggle for freedom from apartheid as a failure	Plot analysis	5.2.2 Problematising the struggle for social justice: stories of militancy, unrequited struggle and self-sabotage
b) Storying “our” heroic racialised struggle for managerial power		5.2.3 Living with historical artefacts of segregation
c) Storying career stagnation as resistance to unjust remuneration policies	Diachronicity	5.2.4 Psychological time and subjective temporality in first level manager identity narratives
d) Storying first level management as a difficult endeavour	Canonicity	5.2.5 Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions
Phase 3: Critical discourse analysis to make sense of the interaction between societal, organisational and personal discourses in the categories 5.2.2 and 5.2.3		
<i>Input from phase 2</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Phase 3 emergent theoretical categories</i>
5.2.2 Problematising the struggle for social justice:	Argumentation analysis: dominant	5.3.1 Invidious discursive practices veiled as “post-apartheid speak”

<p>stories of militancy, unrequited struggle and self-sabotage</p>	<p>topoi, interdiscursive power dynamics, discourse markers of historical power, privilege, and resistance</p>	<p>a) Exceptionalising “our” progressiveness b) Normalising “our” privilege c) Peculiarising “their” normality d) Legitimising “their” segregation e) Problematizing “their” struggle</p>
<p>5.2.3 Living with historical artefacts of segregation</p>	<p>Dispositive analysis: relational power manifested through the interaction between materialisations and discourse</p>	<p>5.3.2 Organisational discursive practices perpetuating social injustice: a) Materialisations of segregation in the workplace b) Constrained access to career growth c) Wage distortion as a barrier to economic freedom d) Management as indispensable</p>
<p>Phase 4: Conceptualising the integrated theoretical model through the lens of constructivist grounded theory’s symbolic interactionism</p>		
<p><i>Theoretical categories from prior phases</i></p>	<p><i>Analysis</i></p>	<p><i>Phase 4 final emergent theoretical constructs</i></p>
<p>5.2.1 Identity substitution: the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities</p>	<p>Analyse patterns showing the dynamic relationship</p>	<p>5.4.1 Subjective temporality in the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities at the margins</p>

5.2.4 Psychological time and subjective temporality in first level manager identity narratives	between participants actions and meanings, how they construct their	a) Episodic identity work transitions b) Continuous identity work transitions
5.2.5 Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions	subjective meanings and explain their actions.	5.4.2 Identity substitution: strategies for constructing and maintaining politically powerful managerial identities
5.3.1 Invidious discursive practices veiled as “post-apartheid speak”		5.4.3 Organisational practices perpetuating social injustice
5.3.2 Organisational discursive practices perpetuating social injustice		5.4.4 Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions
		5.4.5 Invidious societal-organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as ‘post-apartheid speak’

It should be noted that the phases overlapped, and the analysis was highly iterative in a way that is not captured in Table 3. This format nevertheless provides some visual relief from the almost incomprehensibly messy picture that would otherwise be rendered had the actual iterative

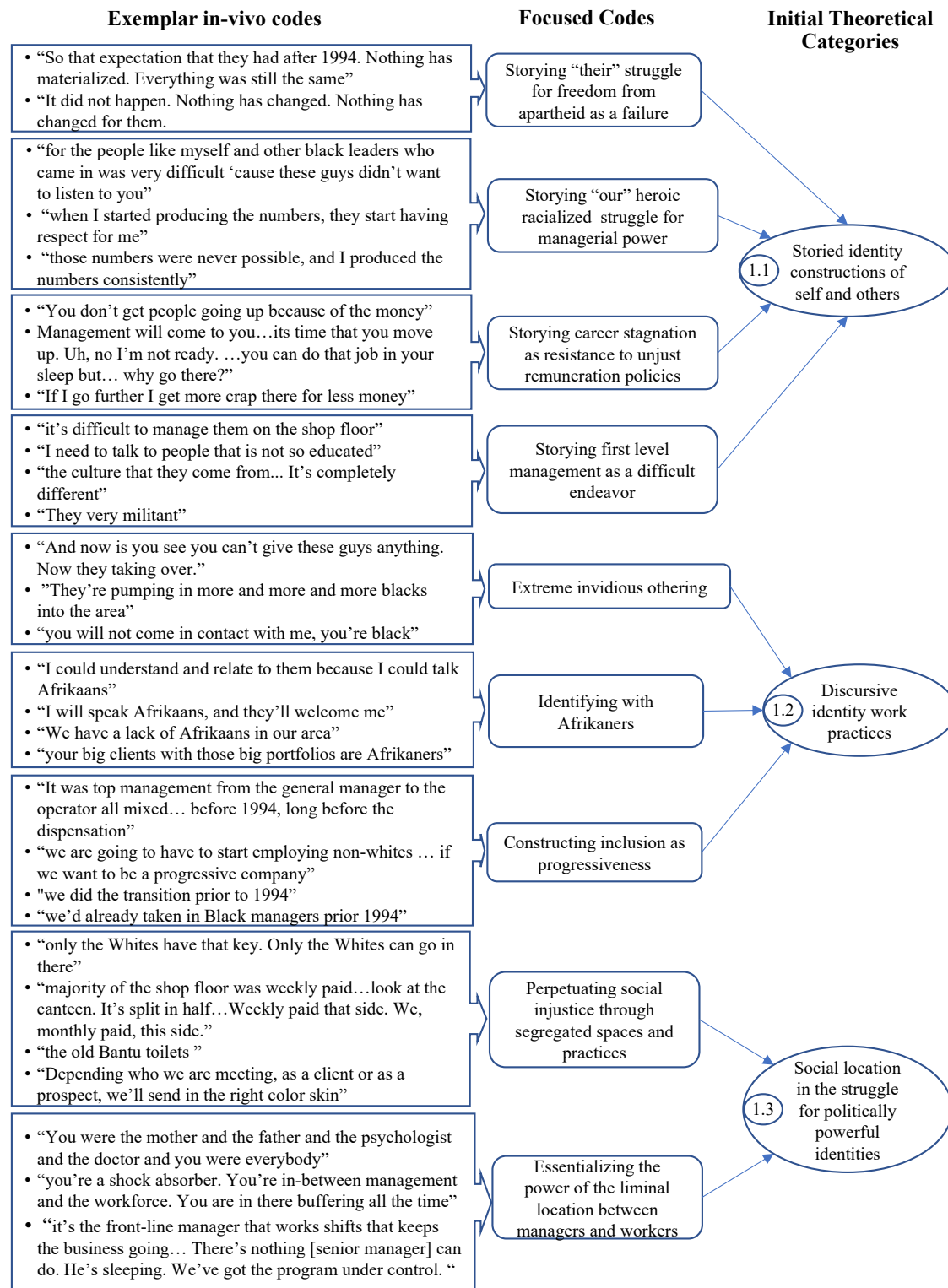
analytical process been re-traced here. The high-level findings that emerged from each of these phases will now be described.

5.1 Phase 1: Constructivist Grounded Theory Coding Revealed Initial Emergent Themes

I initiated the grounded theory data analysis with line by line in vivo processual coding followed by focused coding. Through constant comparison, immersion into the data and analytical memo writing, a number of analytical categories started to emerge which I then synthesised into theoretical conceptualisations of the dominant ways that first level managers do management and identity work. This phase of the analytical process, which is summarised in the first part of Table 3, yielded the initial findings which answered the first part of Research Question 1: *How do first level managers engage in identity work?* These findings are summarised in the diagram in figure 5 which shows how the initial codes and analytical categories led to the following theoretical categories:

- 5.1.1 storied identity constructions of self and others
- 5.1.2 discursive identity work practices
- 5.1.3 social location and the struggle for politically powerful identities

Phase 1: Constructivist grounded theory coding revealed initial emergent theoretical categories



Data: all transcribed interview data, line by line in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2009), analytical memos (Charmaz, 2014)

Figure 5: Phase 1: Grounded theory initial coding and theoretical categories

5.2 Phase 2: Narrative Analysis of the Theoretical Category: Storied Identity Constructions of Self and Others

The processes underlying the three initial theoretical categories were highly complex and several aspects within and between the patterned practices remained fuzzy. At this point I turned to narrative analysis using the theories and methods of Bruner (1991), Mishler (1995) and Josselson (2011) to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the first theoretical category: storied identity constructions of self and others. As shown in Table 3, using Mishler's (1995) narrative typology as an analytical guide and Bruner's (1991) theory of narrative knowing as methodological episteme to conceptualise the storied identity work of first level managers, I was able to go beyond the coded analytical themes to understand the patterns in the narrative segments as whole stories. This phase yielded the following theoretical categories as shown in Table 3:

- 5.2.1 Identity substitution: strategies for constructing alternative valued identities
- 5.2.2 Problematizing the struggle for social justice: stories of militancy, unrequited struggle and self-sabotage
- 5.2.3 Living with historical artefacts of segregation
- 5.2.4 Psychological time and subjective temporality in first level manager narratives
- 5.2.5 Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions

5.3 Phase 3: Critical Discourse Analysis to Make Sense of the Interaction Between Societal, Organisational and Subject Discourses

While conducting the narrative inquiry, I observed that the stories relied on recurring discursive practises that had additional features to those originally identified in the Phase 1 grounded theory analytical category: discursive identity work practices (see Figure 5). These discursive practices were more than just identity talk – they resembled discursive performativity in that they were akin to legitimate pronouncements over the identity of the authors and other actors in the storied identity constructions. In particular, the data underlying two of the theoretical categories emerging from Phase 2 relied on dominant societal discourses and their interactions with material artefacts in the workplaces that were salient to the identity discourses. These categories were: 5.2.2 Problematising the struggle for social justice: stories of militancy, unrequited struggle and 5.2.3 Self-sabotage and Living with historical artefacts of segregation.

I analysed the underlying data using the critical discourse analysis method of Fairclough (2016) and the Foucauldian discourse and dispositive analysis method of Jäger and Maier (2016). This analysis revealed two highly integrated yet distinct sets of practices, namely organisational discursive practices and societal discursive practices. I grouped the societal discursive practices and labelled the category: 5.3.1 Invidious discursive practices veiled as “post-apartheid speak” and I grouped the organisational discursive practices, labelling the category: 5.3.2 Organisational discursive practices perpetuating social injustice, as shown in Phase 3 of Table 3.

5.4 Phase 4: Theoretical Sampling, Testing and Conceptualising a Theoretical Model

I then returned to grounded theory, pursuing theoretical sampling (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2014) to generate data for theoretical testing: to identify confirmations of and exceptions to the proposed substantive theories. This was done through additional interviews, by sampling more data segments within the original data set and by sampling additional sources of dominant societal discourses referenced in participants' narratives. This phase allowed me to further integrate the categories from the three foregoing phases of analysis into a broader theory of first level manager identity work. Through the lens of symbolic interactionism, an approach central to a constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014), I conceptualised a coherent unifying theory that was grounded in the codes, analytical categories and theoretical categories from the first three analytical phases. By examining the patterned connections between these codes and categories, a substantive theory emerged which allowed me to situate the theoretical categories from the previous phases within a context of subjective time which revealed that the first level managers experienced episodic, high-intensity identity work differently from continuous, low-intensity identity work. I labelled this final emergent theoretical category: Subjective temporality in the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities at the margins. As shown in Table 3, this theoretical category comprised of two analytical categories namely: 5.4.1 (a) episodic identity work transitions and 5.4.1 (b) continuous identity work transitions.

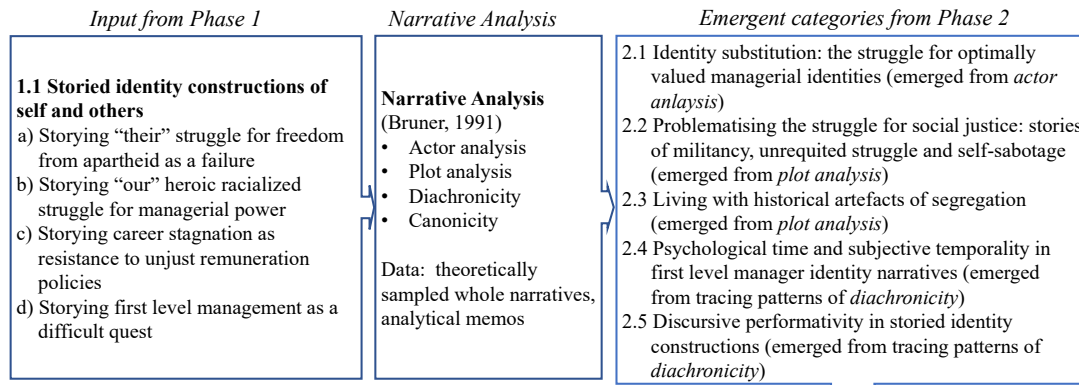
Furthermore, the narratives revealed that societal-organisational interdiscursivity was prevalent in addition to societal discourse and organisational discourse as influential in the construction of first level managers' discursive identity work. Moreover, by analysing the subjective experiences of

time and intensity in identity work as identity substitution vis-a-vis identity work as discursive performativity, I was able to identify the organisational and societal mechanisms that influenced both types of identity work. These influencing mechanisms had previously been conceptualised as separate theoretical categories namely, 5.4.3 “Organisational practices perpetuating social injustice” and 5.4.5 “Invidious societal-organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as ‘post-apartheid speak’”.

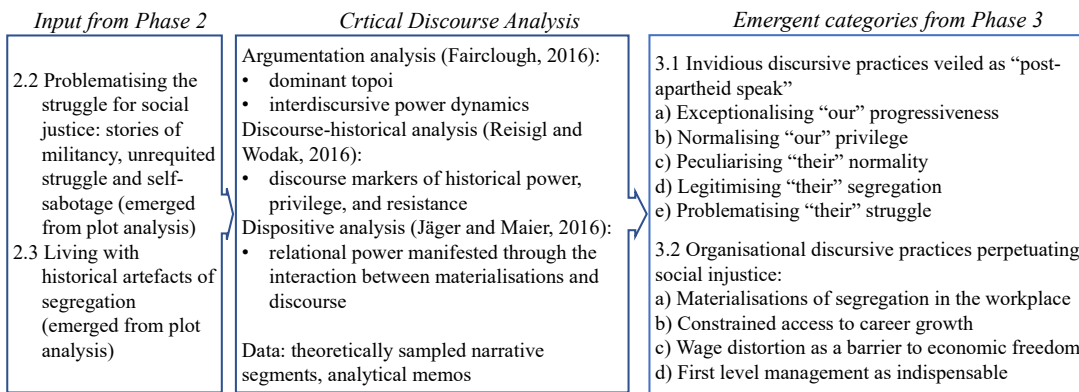
Thus, the final phase of the analysis yielded the following complete list of theoretical constructs that emerged from the data as shown in the final segment of Table 3 reproduced below. A summary of the findings from all the analytical phases is presented in Figure 6.

<i>Phase 4 final emergent theoretical constructs</i>
5.4.1 Subjective temporality in the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities at the margins a) Episodic identity work transitions b) Continuous identity work transitions
5.4.2 Identity substitution: strategies for constructing and maintaining politically powerful managerial identities
5.4.3 Organisational practices perpetuating social injustice
5.4.4 Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions
5.4.5 Invidious societal-organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as ‘post-apartheid speak’

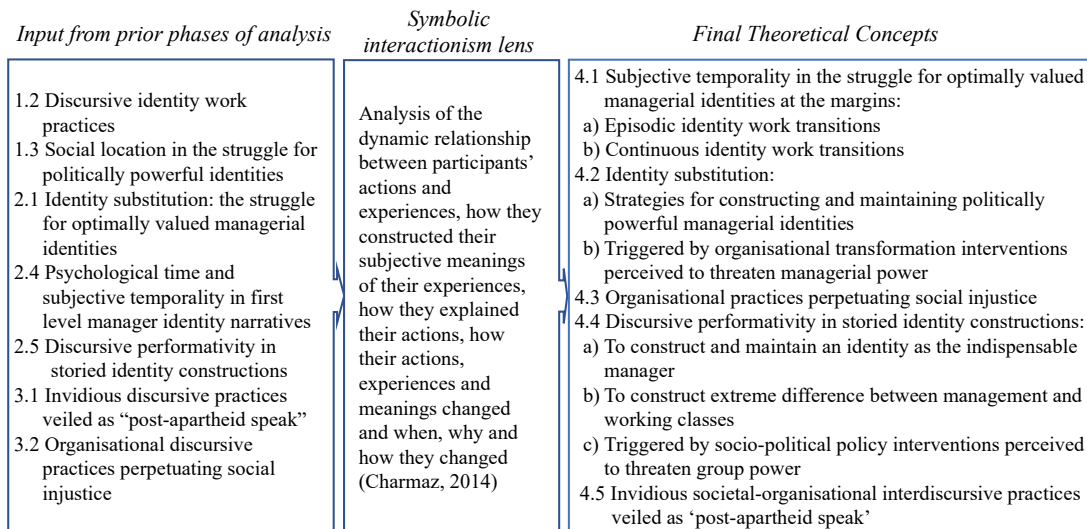
Phase 2: Narrative Analysis of the data underlying the initial theoretical category 1.1: Storied identity constructions of self and others



Phase 3: Critical discourse analysis of the interaction between societal, organisational and personal discourses in the data underlying categories 2.2 and 2.3 that emerged from the plot analysis



Phase 4: Conceptualizing an integrated theoretical model through a constructivist grounded theory-symbolic interactionism lens



See figure 7

Figure 6: Phases 2 to 4 of the grounded theory analysis incorporating narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis

While these five emergent theoretical constructs are individually coherent in their explanatory power of the data in response to the research questions, when taken together, they reveal an even more cogent unifying theory of the everyday processes at work in first level manager identity work in the context of societal, organisational and individual power transitions, as is usefully conceptualised through the visual model shown in Figure 7.

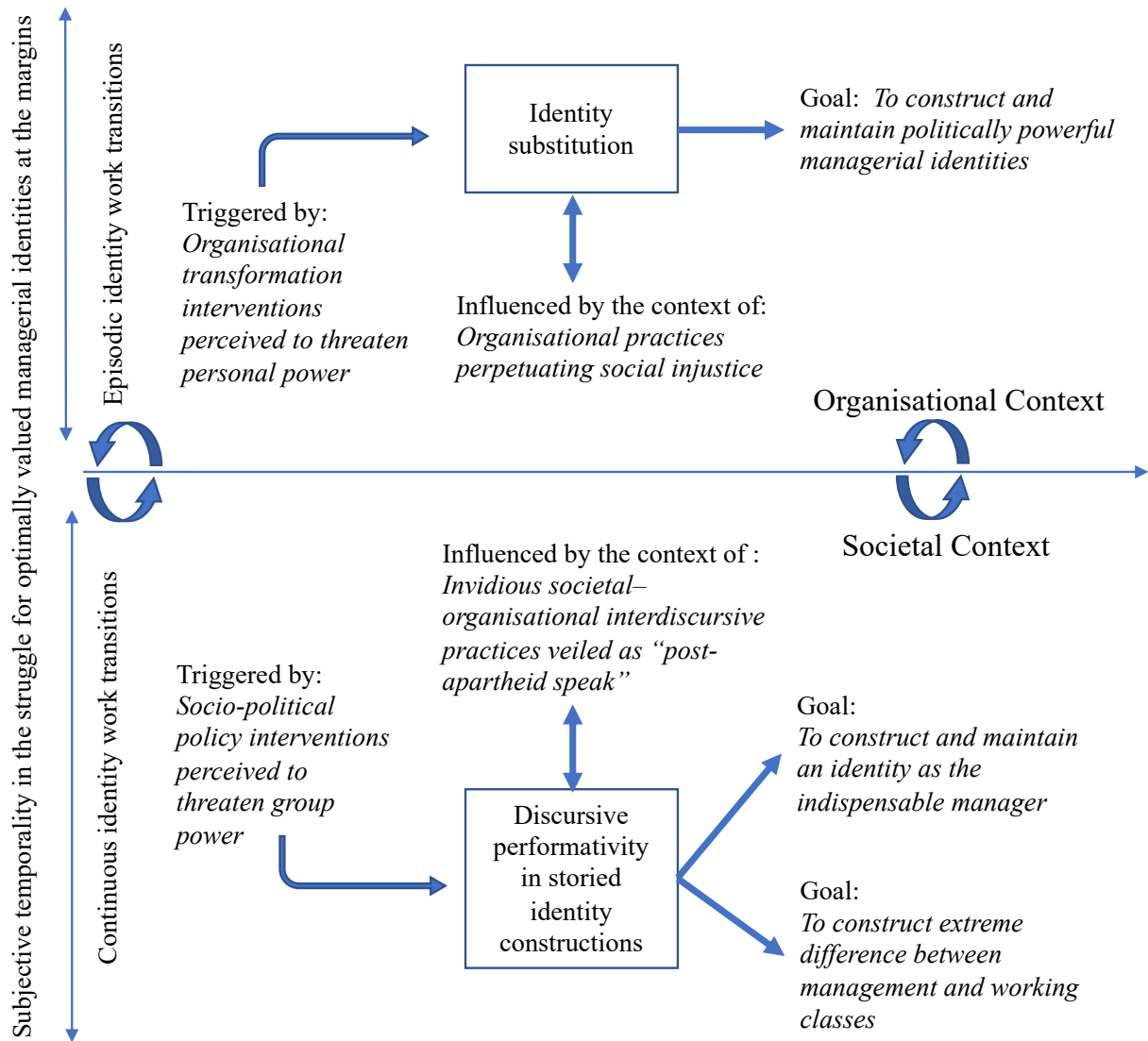


Figure 7: Identity work transitions of lower echelon managers: a theoretical model

The model in Figure 7 depicts how the five key emergent constructs interact to form a theoretical model of first level manager identity work. Starting at the left of the model, the construct “Subjective temporality in the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities at the margins” is depicted as a vertical domain split into two planes representing the two dominant ways that first

level managers engage in identity work transitions, namely, “Episodic identity work transitions” in the top plane and “Continuous identity work transitions” in the bottom plane.

The main goal of the episodic identity work transitions as shown on the right of the top plane is “To construct and maintain politically powerful managerial identities”. This goal is attained through a process of ‘Identity substitution’, which is depicted as the main process in the episodic identity work transitions plane (top half of the model). I use the term identity substitution to conceptualise the identity work that the participants engaged in as they substituted fundamental elements of who they were as first level managers in the past with alternative self-concepts of a first level manager in so called “post-apartheid” organisations. This process is an intense struggle where first level managers transition from one episode of identity substitution to the next, triggered when they experience “Organisational transformation interventions perceived to threaten personal power”. Collectively these three concepts make up the second key construct “Identity substitution: strategies for constructing and maintaining politically powerful managerial identities”.

Staying in the top plane in the model, it can be seen that the nature of the process of identity substitution is influenced by the organisational context which is the third key construct: “Organisational practices perpetuating social injustice”. Additionally, a bidirectional arrow is used to show that the process of identity substitution is influenced by and also influences in turn the context: the organisational discursive practices that perpetuate social injustice.

In the bottom half of the model the fourth key construct, “Discursive performativity in storied identity constructions”, is depicted as the main process in the centre of the continuous identity

work transition plane. Participants engaged in continuous identity work transitions through a process of discursive performativity expressed as storied identity constructions. I use the term discursive performativity in the Foucauldian sense to denote both the linguistic and non-linguistic discursive practices of first level managers in order to achieve the two main goals “To construct and maintain an identity as the indispensable manager” and “To construct extreme difference between management and working classes”. The transition from one discursive performance to the next was triggered by “Socio-political policy shifts perceived to threaten group power” made available to the participants for their storied identity constructions through “Invidious societal–organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as ‘post-apartheid speak’” (the fifth key construct). Once again, a bidirectional arrow is used to show that the process is influenced by the context and in turn influences the context for the process.

Finally, two oppositional semi-circular arrows at the intersection between the episodic and continuous identity work transition planes are used to depict that the distinction between the two processes is not always experienced as neatly and as distinctly as could be incorrectly assumed from this model. Instead the processes overlap and interact and, in some cases, could be simultaneously experienced. This theoretical model is indeed a simplified view of the messy, complex processes revealed in the data. Nevertheless, it is a useful way to conceptualise how the key constructs come together as a theory that explains the identity work transitions of low echelon managers in so called “post-apartheid” corporate South Africa in the context of the still-ongoing socio-political transformation of South African society and organisations.

Chapter 6: Episodic Identity Work Transitions

In the preceding chapter I summarised the key findings and the analytic strategy that led to the emergence of the findings. I also introduced the theoretical model that explains the patterned phenomena contained in the narrative data.

In this chapter I explain the components of the model in Figure 7 in greater detail using illustrative data. I use narrative inquiry, grounded theory and discourse analyses in an integrative way to sketch the abstract processes. I begin on the left of the diagram in Figure 7 by unpacking the concepts of episodic and continuous identity work transitions within the first key construct: Subjective temporality in the struggle for optimally valued managerial identities at the margins.

6.1 Subjective Temporality in the Struggle for Optimally Valued Managerial Identities at the Margins

The temporal nature of identity work and the relationships between the triggers, contextual variables and goals of identity work as fluid over time (psychological, not calendar time) is readily evidenced in first level managers' narrative identity constructions as their dominant organising principle for storying who they were, who they are and are becoming. This is in line with Bruner's (1991) assertion that diachronicity is the most basic property of a narrative.

Two modes of diachronicity are evident from the narrative analysis. Firstly, participants may experience the political, economic and social transformation of their societies and organisations as episodes of transformation with distinct features, playing out over a defined

period of time, each discernible from the previous episode, and each triggering episodic identity work transitions as participants re-construct who they are. Secondly, participants may also experience societal and organisational transformations as a flow of more or less constant micro changes that continuously require them to reframe who they are, keeping them engaged in continuous identity work transitions. This subjective temporality enables first level managers to use psychological time to engage in consistent, lower intensity identity work, transitioning how they engage in identity work more or less seamlessly in tune with changes in identity-impactful canonical discourses, that is, continuous identity work transitions. Moreover, subjective temporality enables first level managers to simultaneously, and synchronously, engage in instances of highly responsive, high intensity identity work, transitioning between successive episodes of high intensity identity work (episodic identity work transitions), and between high and low intensity identity work with a sense of time-controlled agency over the construction and reconstruction of their managerial selves.

In addition to influencing their perceptions of pace, duration and intensity of identity work, subjective temporality was also found to influence the nature of the identity work itself. First level managerial identity work could reasonably be expected to place more or less equivalent emphasis on personal identity work, work-role identity work and social identity work, as has been found in other studies on managerial identity work (Brown, 2015). However, the narrative data in this study reveals that the first level manager's predominant preoccupation is with social identity work: who *we* are as a group compared with who *they* are; how *we* have transformed over the years compared to *them*; and how things have changed for *us* compared with how things have changed for *them*. Work-role and personal identity work are accomplished predominantly in relation to social identity

work even in the context of constructing managerial identities in organisational settings. Interestingly, this preponderance of social identity work in work-role identity construction is diachronically salient.

While several examples in the data illustrate these concepts vividly, I foreground the narratives of Uncle, Sanza, Ojay and Petrus and to illustrate the triggers, practices and goals of both episodic identity work transitions and continuous identity work transitions.

6.2 Episodic Identity Work Transitions in the Struggle to Construct Politically Powerful Managerial Identities

The goal of episodic identity work transitions as shown previously in Figure 7, is for first level managers to construct and maintain politically powerful managerial identities. Participants who experienced no political power during apartheid engage in intense struggles to gain managerial power through the construction of politically powerful identities by engaging in identity substitution. Similarly, participants who experience loss of political power in post-apartheid South Africa, engage in intense struggles to maintain managerial power through the construction of alternative social identities as they resist the dominance of those now in power. This struggle similarly involves engagement in identity substitution.

6.2.1 Identity substitution in the construction of politically powerful managerial identities.

Uncle, racially classified as Coloured in terms of the South African race classification legislation, and a shift team leader with high tenure of nearly thirty years, narrates the identity work he had

engaged in, in an effort to be recognised as a suitable candidate for the production management role at the start of his career:

“...I started with Cedar – Soweto site. Commissioned a plant. I was there for five years then I decided no, let me go to Wattle because Wattle were *at that time* (emphasis in original) looking at non-whites and I said okay let me go there because I could see at Cedar Soweto there was no potential for a non-white – you understand? Er I was the production foreman but every time the production manager go or he get fired I will act but there’s “no, you’re too young” or whatever the case may be. There’s always stories. So I said I’m getting nowhere here after five years”.

In this narrative segment three aspects of subjective temporality in identity work are revealed. Firstly, Uncle presents his struggle for recognition as a potential candidate for the production manager role as a five-year long struggle (“I’m getting nowhere here after five years”), which is equivalent to the entire duration of his career at Cedar (“I started with Cedar... was there for five years”). Elsewhere in the narrative Uncle reveals that Cedar was his first major employer after leaving school. The above segment also shows that during this five-year tenure, he became a production foreman and commissioned a production facility. Yet his struggle for promotion from a foreman to a production manager role is expressed as having lasted for the full five years that he was employed by Cedar. A second aspect of subjective temporality is the experience of extreme frequency of occurrence of the struggle for a production manager identity. He stories his efforts as constant: “... *every time* the production manager go or he get fired I will act” (emphasis added). Thirdly, he cues the salience of historical periods or eras in his identity work discursively with “*at that time*” (emphasis in original) as a topos for arguing that racialised managerial identity

expectations was the normative practice of the day, and a feature of a bygone era, the apartheid era. Uncle receives feedback that his age identity does not fit the production manager persona: “I will act but there’s “no, you’re too young” or whatever”. Yet he interprets this to mean that his racial identity does not fit the production manager persona: “there was no potential for a non-white – you understand?”. Using the same topos, he stories the appointment of non-white employees into managerial roles by the Wattle company as a completely unexpected practice for that time in history: “because Wattle were *at that time* (emphasis in original) looking at non-whites”. In doing so he reveals the significance of his historical socio-political context on his identity work and the centrality of social identity in his managerial identity work. His struggle for a production manager identity took the form of demonstrating technical competence, through important work assignments (e.g. he “commissioned a plant”), and production manager competence by performing the role as a substitute (acting) production manager, being asked to act on every occasion that the production manager role was temporally vacant over a five-year period. He resolves that his struggle is not for a production manager identity but for a social identity he does not have. He believes he fulfils all the requirements for managerial selection bar one – he is not white. He also believes that the racial discrimination he experienced at Cedar was the norm for that time in history, while Wattle’s inclusion of non-whites into managerial roles was peculiar for that time.

Uncle engages in an episode of high intensity identity work triggered by the recognition that the leadership of the Wattle company is embarking on peculiar organisational transformation for that historical time period to include non-whites in their management ranks, while the leadership of the Cedar company appeared to be resisting his efforts to be seen as a suitable candidate for production management. Unable to win the battle for advancement at Cedar, he resigns from Cedar after five

years and joins Wattle as a production supervisor. This a lateral career move to a company he believes offers more career potential as a racially progressive employer.

Relative to his Cedar experience, Uncle does not struggle to be recognised as a high performing production leader by his Wattle senior management:

“I came here and within the first three months I ran numbers that Wattle never thought was possible. The general manager then took me and the wife out for a supper and I got money from the GM things like that ‘cause they thought ... those numbers were never possible and I produced the numbers consistently.”

Here Uncle can be seen to repeat the kind of managerial identity work he did at Cedar. He demonstrates business results. This time, however, he is rewarded for doing so. Interestingly, Uncle does not acknowledge other organisational factors as contributing to this success. His experience is that the business performance is a result of who he is. This highly intense identity work episode that began at Cedar many years prior ends when Uncle realises that he is acknowledged as the kind of first level manager who is uniquely able to “produce the numbers” and to do so consistently, something that Wattle managers have never been able to do before. Following this intense struggle, Uncle emerges as a recognised, valued member of management. His identity work enabled him to substitute a key identity defining feature of his prior self-concept of what it meant to be suitable to be a manager, i.e. being white, with a new self-concept: being a consistent producer of the numbers.

However, this experience is starkly contrasted with what he experiences when he encounters his new team of subordinates, which is when the next episode of high intensity identity work is triggered. As in the previous episode, social identity seems to be a key consideration in his struggle for a team leader identity:

Like I said to you prior 1994 very few non-whites were in team leader positions, you understand. It was predominantly the white person. Because he had the authority coming back from apartheid. When the white man talk you listen, understand. So, for the people like myself and other black leaders who came in was very difficult 'cause these guys didn't want to listen to you, you understand. "You one of us. Why must I listen to you? You part of the struggle", you understand. "We only listen to the white man". So it was very difficult for us to adjust. Was very difficult to adjust. Us as non-whites. Very, very, very difficult. (observation note: while shaking his head left to right as if saying no in his mind, eyes closed). It took us long, huh (heavy sigh). Maybe a year, two, three years down the line then the people start accepting you now. "You are the team leader. You are the supervisor. I listen to you," you understand. Because that culture was entrenched for years.

In this segment Uncle relates a multi-year struggle for acceptance as the leader by his people, discursively constructed as a long difficult adjustment period ending in tenuous acceptance ("the people start accepting"). This identity struggle is not narrated as a personal struggle, but the struggle of the whole racial group identified as "people like myself and other black leaders" and "us as non-whites" who all share the racial profile that belonged to those in the broader societal struggle, the apartheid struggle. This highlights once again the preponderance afforded to social identity work in first level managers' identity work. The struggle is about us and our identity and

my struggle to be identified as a leader when my group is *not* seen a priori as leaders, as those with the authority to lead, whereas those who were normatively identified as leaders were “predominantly the white person. Because he had the authority coming back from apartheid.”

As with the previous high intensity identity work episode, this narrative segment reveals that clock time is less relied upon to contextualise experience than is psychological time. This subjective temporality is revealed in Uncle’s use of incomplete enumeration as a rhetorical device to express that the time duration associated with the struggle for acceptance was extreme: “... a year, two, three years ...” coupled with the metaphor of time as distance where acceptance as a leader occurred a great distance away “down the line” from the time of his arrival at Wattle. The intensity of Uncle’s social identity work, which is associated with this instance of subjective temporality, is cued by the physical embodied emotional signification that I observed during the interview (as captured in the notes in the narrative segment), as well as the use of several rhetorical devices such as repetition “difficult to adjust”, the use of repeated epanalepsis of “difficult”, the use of epizeuxis “very, very, very” and even the use of interrupted direct quotations by actors he has storied into the narrative to express how he and others like himself were treated.

Two other instances of subjective temporality are revealed in this segment which are similar to those associated with the previous identity work episode at Cedar, namely categorising historical time into periods in his work-life history associated with the national socio-political context. Specifically, he categorises time into two main eras, related to the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. Previously, he referred to the apartheid era as “*at that time*” (emphasis in original). In this segment he more clearly categorises his experience of apartheid as “prior 1994”.

The nature of his identity work specifically during this very long and very difficult struggle for authoritative power over his subordinates is revealed in the next narrative segment. Similar to his struggles at Cedar, he demonstrates managerial competence, he demonstrates his experience as a foreman from a company in the same industry, he builds a performance track record which rivals the performance of shift teams led by white managers, enabling his shift to be rewarded for their business results. In so doing he convinces both his subordinates and his managers that he has the managerial qualities normatively associated with white managers:

“If you were non-white you were part of the struggle then, you understand. You were part of the struggle so you cannot be a boss, no. “You cannot be a boss. You’re a worker like me. That job is for the white man. He’s the boss”, you see. Now you come from there, supervisor. Ay its difficult. Joh, joh its difficult over the years. But I think what helped me, what helped me is when I started producing the numbers, they start having respect for me.... They could see now with this team leader the numbers are on the board. Compared to the other shifts we’re taking ten cases more a month home as a incentive. Compared to my brah here. ... “Okay, no, we’ll see him as a supervisor, we see him as the team leader...my team leader is a non-white but we run better than you guys”... So that is where the shop floor culture change to say “here comes a man, he is not a whitey, but, he’s not stupid, he’s clever”.”

Utilising similar discursive practices as in previous segments, Uncle can be seen to progress the argument that the resistance he experienced from the shop floor employees as he struggled for managerial authority was not a result of rational decision making but rather a result of cultural

indoctrination. The resistance is withdrawn when the culture of the shop floor changes, allowing them to see him as their supervisor. He constructs this shop floor culture change as a story of enlightenment, where “they” break free from the social conditioning of apartheid and come to realise that managerial qualities are not the unique parlance of “the white man”. However, he constructs the story in a way that makes him complicit in perpetuating White superiority by casting the black collective as a cultural mob and himself as an extraordinary non-white, possessing a quality that does not ordinarily accrue to non-whites but normatively belongs to whites: “he is not a whitey, but, he’s not stupid, he’s clever”. The colloquial term “whitey” is commonly used in South Africa by Coloured people to refer to white people in informal conversation, often, but not always, in antagonistic discourse.

In this section Uncle is seen to engage in successive episodes of high intensity, contested, complex, antipodal identity substitution. The transition from one high intensity identity struggle to the next is triggered when he encounters organisational barriers to the construction and maintenance of a politically and legitimately powerful managerial self. His self-concept of Uncle as one of the first non-white managers to be appointed by a progressive company at that time in history is substituted by his new self-concept as Uncle, a consistently high performing clever non-white. In this way, he is able to differentiate himself from the majority of non-whites sufficiently to be respected as a credible manager by senior management, yet sufficiently different from traditional white managers to be seen by the shop floor, those who were in the apartheid struggle, as one of their own, who has broken through the injustice of the past, and delivers “benefits” for them. Through these processes of identity substitution, he emerges from his episodic identity work transitions with a

more politically powerful managerial identity than when he was at Cedar, despite having remained a first level manager, a shift supervisor.

6.3 Episodic Identity Work Transitions as Resistance to the Loss of Politically Powerful Managerial Identities

In contrast with the narratives of participants like Uncle, those participants who enjoyed political and managerial power during apartheid engaged in high intensity episodic identity work to resist the loss of personal power. These narratives also reveal episodes of identity substitution in their struggle to resist the loss of politically powerful managerial identities. Participants resist loss of power by struggling for three dominant targets of identification related to politically powerful managerial identities, namely, being higher up in the hierarchy of the organisation, secondly, being at the centre of all organisational matters and thirdly, being located in physical spaces associated with higher power within the workplace.

6.3.1 We at this level: Hierarchical organisational level as a marker for a powerful managerial identity.

One of the most important ways that these participants self-identified was through the lens of hierarchy. Ojay (alias), a White Afrikaans shift team leader at the Phoenix (alias) transport company with high tenure (25 -30 years) recalls the time when all transport hubs were part of a South African government department, before Phoenix was incorporated as a company. At that time, he and Felix (alias), his fellow shift team leader (they were the only two at the Southern hub at the time), formed an integral part of the Southern (alias) hub's senior management team. "Dit

was vir my nogal lekker gewees in hulle tyd want ons was betrokke. Ons was deel van die bestuursgroep wat besluite geneem het... jy't alles geweet en jy was op hoogte" [It actually used to be so nice in their time because we were involved. We were part of the management group that made decisions...you knew everything, and you were informed]. Here "in their time" refers to his senior leaders of that time and "we" refers to the two shift leaders. Similar to Uncle, we can see how Ojay uses time-bucketing to argue that the organisational dynamics he experienced belonged to a particular period in history. By engaging in this subjective temporality, he is able to construct a self-narrative that anchors who he is in relation to what he considers the norm for the era in time that he perceives as his context. Being a first level manager meant being an integral part of the group in charge of the Southern hub at that time.

Ojay's narrative goes on to reveal that his membership of the top management team at the hub was a result of his membership of a particular professional services group, the FRS (alias). He explains how he experienced the organisational structure changes when the leadership of the newly formed Phoenix company diminished the first level managers' roles and levels of management. He prefaces the part of the story that deals with his loss of power with the following narrative segment that serves to legitimise why FRS professionals were important for the Phoenix organisation:

Toe sê die [hub] bestuurder maar hy – en ek het dit agter gekom in daai tyd – hy soek vir die [FRS] omdat ons in 'n dissipline afdeling is, soek hy mense wat uit 'n dissipline agtergrond uitkom vir dit. En ek dink hy het die bal redelik raakgeslaan in daai tyd met dit want ek kom dit nou agter met die jonger mense wat nie dit gedoen het nie.

Translation: Then the [hub] manager said that he – and I came to realise it in that time – he wants the [FRS] because we are in a disciplined function, he wants people who come

from a disciplined background for this. And I think he was reasonably accurate in that time with that because I realise it now with the younger people who did not do it.

Ojay uses “in that time” repeatedly as a rhetorical device to underscore the importance of a time period in identity valuation. This subjective temporality allows Ojay to legitimise the value ascribed to his group, FRS professionals, as important “in that time” and helps him to cope with the fact that FRS professionals are no longer exclusively important to the Phoenix organisation not because the skill is outdated or no longer needed, but rather because times have changed. It also provides him with a means to resist the devaluation of his professional identity through identity work that seeks to author himself as a disciplined professional who is better for the organisation than the younger, less disciplined employees that the Phoenix organisation currently employs. The topos underlying the rhetorical device “that time” serves to advance the argument that the standards for leadership selection was higher in the past and that the bar has been lowered over the years for the younger recruits. This allows Ojay to author his first level managerial identity as superior to the kind of first level managerialism of today.

In the next narrative segment, Ojay describes the organisational transformation intervention that triggers an episode of high intensity identity work as he struggles to resist the loss of a hierarchically powerful social location at the hub. The notion that the FRS shift leader is the most qualified to be at the helm of the hub is a discursive strand that continues in Ojay’s narration of his experience of the organisational changes at Phoenix:

[FRS]hoof het jou as skof leier saamgesleep. Hy’t nêrens sonder jou gegaan nie. Jy was sy sekretaresse. Jy was sy second in charge. Jy was: as hy nie daar is nie, is jy daar. Jy was

die opleidingsbeampte. Jy was die ma en die pa en die sielkundige en die dokter en almal was jy gewees.... Toe ons by [Phoenix] beginne toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil iemand hê onder die [hub] bestuurder.... Onthou ons was eintlik in die [hub] bestuurder se plek gewees. Die [FRS] het die [hub] gerun. Ons het almal se oortyd en hulle admin goeters en ag hulle oortyd geëis en goed. Maandeinde, ek het dit gedoen. Die twee ouens in beheer van die skofte het dit gedoen.... En um toe kom hulle toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil nou iemand hê onder die [hub] bestuurder wat op skof is, nie 'n [FRS]man nie, wat na al die departemente kan kyk. Toe stel hulle twee head of operations aan.... Toe het jy aan hulle gerapporteer. ...En toe na 'n paar jaar toe kom [Phoenix] toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil departementshoofde hê vir elke departement. So jy't 'n [FRS]hoof maar hy's nie 'n departementshoof, by die groot [hubs], by die internasionale [hubs] ja, maar nie by ons domestic [hubs] nie. Toe kom hulle toe stel hulle departementshoofde aan Nou hulle is nou 'n groep wat nou die management team genoem word, soos wat ons in daai tyd was. So ek is nou uit, uit daai scope uit. [Felix] gaan en hy gaan vir my kom vertel miskien in a meeting hier by ons, [en] gaan ek hom vertel wat ons raak. Maar ek gaan nie meer weet vir die res nie. So ek is uit gehou uit die loop uit.

Translation: The [FRS] chief dragged you as shift leader along. He went nowhere without you. You were his secretary. You were his second in charge. You were: if he was not there, you were there. You were the training officer. You were the mother and the father and the psychologist and the doctor and you were everybody.... Then when we started at Phoenix, they said no, they wanted someone under the [hub] manager.... Remember we were actually there in place of the [hub] manager. The [FRS] ran the hub. We did everyone's overtime and their admin stuff and oh we did their overtime claims and stuff. Month-end,

I did that. The two guys in charge of the shifts did that.... And um then they came, and they said no, they now wanted someone under the [hub] manager to be on shift, but not an [FRS serviceman], to look after all the departments. Then they appointed two heads of operations.... Then you reported to them. ...Then after a few years, then Phoenix came, and they said no, they want heads of department for every department. So, you've got an [FRS] chief but he's not a head of department, at the big [hubs], at the international [hubs] yes, but not at our domestic hubs. Then they came then they appointed heads of department. ... Now they are now a group that are now called the management team, like we were in that time. So now I am out, out of that scope. [Felix] goes, and he will come tell me perhaps at a meeting here with us, [and] I will tell him what's impacting us. But, I am no longer going to know about the rest. So, I am kept out of the loop.

The foregoing narrative segment reveals how Ojay experienced the loss of multiple, interrelated, valued targets of identification over time. He self-identifies as a member of the FRS special services profession. He uses various discursive strategies to legitimise the FRS department members' status as those who should be in charge of the entire hub operations, finance management and personnel administration. He uses "we", the first-person plural pronoun, to signal group membership "we were actually in place of the [hub] manager. The [FRS] ran the hub. We did...". Moreover, Ojay strongly self-identifies as an FRS shift team leader. He uses the repetitive "you were" phrase as a rhetorical device that simultaneously conveys self-identity, affirmed identity, valued identity but also, for all three cases, a past identity: someone he no longer is.

At the start of the narrative segment he references the mentor-protegee, job-shadow style of development he and his fellow shift team leader received from their FRS chief that uniquely

prepared them to serve every need from everyone in the operation: “He went nowhere without you. You were his secretary. You were his second in charge”. Ojay experiences the benefits of being the visible extension of the chief of operations of the hub. He was always seen with the chief and using military discourse, “second in charge”, his experience was that of being the chief when the chief was unavailable because “if he was not there, you were there”. He then uses “you”, the second-person plural pronoun, and “his” the possessive pronoun, in a repetitive rhetoric “You were his secretary. You were his second in charge” to convey that the chief himself both affirmed and valued who the team leaders were. Additionally, he uses “You were: if he was not there, you were there” to signal that others affirmed the shift team leaders as synonymous with the chief, and the use of “his secretary” signals not only that they handled the chief’s administrative tasks but that others gained access to the chief via the shift team leaders. We observe finally, that Ojay uses “we were” and “you were”, repeatedly, to signal that as an FRS shift team leader of the Southern hub, he once was all of this. He was still an FRS shift team leader of the Southern hub at the time of the interview. But he was no longer a member of the group who was in charge. He no longer ran the hub.

Ojay experienced the loss of a valuable identity not through a conscious choice but through a process that he feels wronged by. He opens the segment with “when we started at Phoenix, they said no, they wanted someone under the [hub] manager”, then he redirects to explain the importance of the FRS being in charge as explained above and then repeats almost exactly the same wording when he comes back to the main thread of how he, and the FRS as a unit, lost management power when the transport hub became part of Phoenix: “then they came, and they said no, they now wanted someone under the [hub] manager”. Ojay experiences being denied

positional power in Phoenix not because of his personal or professional inabilities but because he belongs to a group (FRS) who were no longer valued for their leadership of the hub. His group was no longer in charge. He uses the phrase “they said no” thrice, in three separate instances, showing that those with new power rejected what had been the norm until then and would reasonably have continued to be the norm had new management “they” who “said no” not arrived. He follows the second instance of “they said no” with the clarification “but not an [FRS] serviceman”. A new hub general manager was appointed with two sub-ordinate managerial positions, namely, operations managers, and the FRS chief (and the unit) then reported into one of the operations managers. This represents two hierarchical level moves downward for Ojay. Whereas he used to report directly to the hub manager, he now reported to an FRS chief, who reported to an operations manager, who in turn reported to the hub manager.

The narrative data therefore reveals that loss of hierarchical power is not only experienced as loss of managerial power but also as a loss of the personal status and power associated with that higher vertical social location. Moreover, the loss of a once valued managerial identity is the result of the loss of a valued social identity. The FRS group was no longer socially located at the top of the Phoenix hierarchy and being a member of the FRS group no longer meant automatic access to power and authority.

6.3.2 We at the centre: centrality as a marker for a powerful managerial identity.

Not only did equivalence to the chief’s hierarchical level make the FRS shift leader status a valued identification target but being relied upon by all the hub staff including those outside of the FRS department for all manner of services, gave the FRS shift leader power in another way: being

indispensable to peers. “You were the training officer. You were the mother and the father and the psychologist and the doctor and you were everybody.”

Ojay uses “you” combined with “the” and “and” in a run of titles as a rhetorical device to signal that the FRS shift leader occupied many validated roles: not “a” training officer but “the” training officer, for example. The precise choice of valid, valuable personas is extremely interesting, namely, “training officer”, “mother”, “father”, “psychologist”, “doctor”, ending in “everybody”. This signals that Ojay experienced that who they were mattered profoundly to those around them as each of these personas are important in their own right and especially when combined into one. This made the shift team leader a truly valuable person with a highly valued identity.

Ojay narrates that, a few years after the initial management restructuring, Phoenix introduced another change in the management structure. His position is once again diminished in importance but this time horizontally rather than vertically, through the separation of all departments, the removal of shared heads of operations and the introduction of a distinct departmental head for each department. He has already lost vertical proximity to the top leadership now he loses horizontal proximity to others in the hub. He is no longer in a position of centrality: no longer the “everybody”.

We observe that the experience of loss of centrality manifests similarly in Ojay’s narrative construction of a once valued now marginalised self as did the loss of hierarchical power in the previous segment. The last part of the foregoing narrative segment (repeated below) reveals the experience of loss of this pervasive connectedness with everyone else at the hub that he enjoyed

when the FRS and his role in particular was also responsible for general service provision, being the “everybody”:

Now they are now a group that are now called the management team, like we were in that time. So now I am out, out of that scope. Felix goes, and he will come tell me perhaps at a meeting here with us, [and] I will tell him what’s impacting us. But, I am no longer going to know about the rest. So, I am kept out of the loop.

Ojay explains how his head of department, Felix, makes up for his being “out of that scope” through the introduction of feedback and input seeking meetings. He then uses the discourse marker “But” at the start of a new sentence to draw attention to the fact that these additional meetings with his manager do not make up for his segregation from the rest of the hub. He will no longer “know” what is going on outside his department through this forced segregation where he is “kept out” of the normal flow “the loop” of information and action. Ojay’s repeated use of “now” (four times in the first sub-segment) starkly contrasts with “that time” serving to highlight that this was not always how things were and interestingly drawing immediacy to this management team that he is no longer a part of as a recent phenomenon, something as yet to be proven successful, whereas the actual calendar time that had passed since its inception up to the time of the interview was in fact over 15 years.

Ojay therefore engages in subjective temporality to provide the appropriate context for dealing with the loss of synonymy with a once powerful social location. Treating this as a nascent phenomenon provides Ojay with the psychological time needed to resist the idea that FRS shift

team leaders are no longer at the centre of organisational matters, that they no longer occupy that valued central role through which all information and co-ordination once flowed.

6.3.3 We in this place: physical spaces as a marker for a powerful managerial identity.

The importance of physical spaces in the workplace as targets of identification is evidenced in many of the first level manager narratives. I continue to foreground Ojay's struggle to maintain his previous politically powerful management status showing how he uses physical location in identity substitution. Before the interview started, Ojay explained that the office we are meeting in for the interview (which has two desks) is a space he shares with his department manager who is his former fellow team leader, Felix, who was the other team leader when the FRS was in charge prior to the changes at Phoenix. Felix has since been promoted to head of department and is Ojay's manager's manager. Ojay is the only team leader that shares an office with Felix. During the interview Ojay then reveals the social status associated with physical work spaces at Phoenix's Southern hub:

Vandag se dae het ons departementshoofde vir elke afdeling. Die departementshoofde sit daar (gestures to the neighbouring offices to Felix's office on the upper level of the main building). Dis nie noodwendig dat jou sekuriteitshoof (gestures to a space outside) daar gaan sit of jou [FRS]hoof nie. Jy het 'n departementshoof wat daar gaan sit (gestures to a level of the main building again).

Translation: Nowadays, we have heads of department for every section. The heads of department sit there (gestures to the neighbouring offices to Felix's office on the upper level of the main building). It's not necessarily the case that your head of security (gestures

to a space outside) or your [FRS] chief will sit there. You have a head of department that will sit there.

Ojay explains how his fellow shift leaders (who are equivalent to him within the formal organisational structure and at the same organogram hierarchical level) do not perform resource level planning across the shifts. They manage the resources within their shift but not across. Ojay, uniquely, is able to manage resources across all shifts, a task he and Felix used to do jointly when they were the only shift leaders at the Southern hub. Rather than hand over this task to Felix or to the other shift leaders, Ojay explained that it was a very complicated task and that only those who understood all aspects of the hub operations and had worked in all the jobs in the hub were capable of doing resource planning. Ojay uses this argument to warrant why he alone (and not the other shift leaders) get to occupy office space at the same physical level in the main building as the managers who are hierarchically two levels above the shift leader level. The other FRS shift leaders have offices “down there” in the FRS building while his shared office space is with the department heads because: “that coordination is at that leadership level where I am.” Here Ojay is referring simultaneously to his self-identified membership of the leaders at his physical level in the central building as well as the idea that his type of first level managerial identity is synonymous with the politically powerful social location among the other departmental managers.

Ojay’s struggle for a valued managerial identity goes beyond the occupancy of a socially powerful hierarchical level or a centrally influential social location but extends to the physical space within the workplace where he executes his daily tasks, a place for the visibly powerful. Once again, he engages in identity substitution, substituting shift leader tasks such as resource planning within one shift with the broader task of resource planning across all shifts, effectively going from shift

leader to multi-shift leader. He then uses this capability to substitute a significant feature of FRS shift leadership, their workspace location, with a more powerful location among the department heads and so doing identifies as a more powerful shift leader than the others.

6.4 Organisational Transformation Interventions as Triggers for Identity Substitution

In this section I continue to present participant narratives that story identity substitution as identity work, however I foreground narratives that specifically reveal the triggers for identity substitution. The participants vividly recalled their experienced of many organisational transformation interventions during their tenure as first level managers. However, those interventions that they perceived to threaten personal power were storied within their narratives as triggers for identity substitution. The types of interventions described by the participants varied from diversity & inclusion management interventions, culture change interventions, adoption of production management best practices, implementation of performance management systems, organisational redesign and the adoption of new labour and/or workplace policies. However, as I show in the narrative segments that follow, the participants did not describe these interventions in neutral ways. Instead they storied these organisational interventions as triggers to their intense identity struggles to gain managerial power commensurate with their recently acquired national political power on the one hand, or on the other hand, to resist the loss of managerial power associated with the loss of previously held political power.

Consistent with the forgoing sections of this chapter, I foreground narrative exemplars to demonstrate those organisational transformation interventions that became significant triggers, the

ones that the participants perceived had the greatest effect on their personal power and the ones where their stories were particularly compelling examples of identity substitution as identity work.

6.4.1 Implementation of Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment policies as triggers for identity substitution.

Like many South Africans, the participants experienced the implementation of the Employment Equity act in their organisations as the implementation of quotas related to the demographics of the city or geographic region of their workplace and as preferential selection of non-white candidates into management and skilled roles. Moreover, participants expressed their experiences of the Employment Equity Act in terms of another act, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 often reduced in the narratives to simply BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) in their narratives. The latter piece of legislation followed several years after the Employment Equity act and was promulgated to promote redress in economic participation by non-whites, beyond employment, for example in the ownership of businesses. Nevertheless, participants confounded all post-apartheid redress policies treating them as one system of (unfair) legislation.

6.4.1.1 Employment Equity interventions triggers the struggle for managerial power.

I presented the identity work that Uncle engaged in during his multi-year identity struggle for acceptance by his subordinates in section 6.2 in this chapter. This episode of identity substitution was triggered by the nascent inclusion of non-whites into management ranks during the early stages of Uncle's career when Cedar implemented employment equity during the early 1990s:

Like I said to you prior 1994 very few non-whites were in team leader positions, you understand. It was predominantly the white person. Because he had the authority coming back from apartheid. When the white man talk you listen, understand. So, for the people like myself and other black leaders who came in was very difficult 'cause these guys didn't want to listen to you, you understand. "You one of us. Why must I listen to you? You part of the struggle", you understand. "We only listen to the white man". So, it was very difficult for us to adjust. Was very difficult to adjust. Us as non-whites. Very, very, very difficult.

Another exemplar is provided by Petrus (alias), a White Afrikaans shift team leader at the Phoenix (alias) transport company, based at the Central Hub (alias) with lower tenure (5 -10 years) as a first level manager. He narrates the identity work he had engaged in, in an effort to be recognised as a suitable candidate for the shift supervisor position:

Na twee jaar, actually dus twee jaar nè. Dus nie net ingekom nie - dus twee jaar. Dit het tyd gevat. 2010 - met die World Cup - toe 's ons baie supervisors shift controllers kort en toe um toe kon ek baie uitgehelp het. Ek het admin gedoen. Ek het training co-ordinator gedoen. Ek het senior admin gedoen en ek was net 'n security officer. Which is, die training co-ordinator was like omtrent um drie levels bo my posisie nog. En ek het dit gemanage. En toe 't ek aansoek gedoen vir die supervisor pos en (pauses) na actually, soos wat ek verstaan, baie baklei want hulle wil nie a Wit persoon aanstel nie. ... En daar was reeds daai tyd redelik baie wat nou nie meer hier is nie um Wit maar *higher* level Wit soos shift controllers. En van daar af het ek supervisor gekry.

Translation: After two years, actually its two years hey. It's not just coming in – its two years. It took time. 2010 – with the World Cup – then we were short of many shift

controllers and then um then I could help out a lot. I did admin. I did training co-ordinator. I did senior admin and I was only a security officer. Which is, the training co-ordinator was like about um three levels above my position still. And I managed that. And then I applied for the supervisor position and (pauses) after actually, as I understand it, lots of fighting because they did not want to appoint a White person. ... And there was already at that time reasonably many who are no longer here um White but *higher* level White like shift controllers. And from there I got supervisor. (emphasis in original)

Here Petrus narrates his two-year long struggle for a promotion from a security officer to a supervisor. In order to demonstrate his suitability for a management role, he seeks out opportunities to demonstrate that he is able to perform management work at several levels above his work level. Similar to Uncle's experience, Petrus also engages in subjective temporality when he recalls his struggle. He repeats the calendar time "two years" three times in succession to emphasise its importance in the narration and clearly separates his psychological experience of time from the calendar time by expressing "It took time", leaving the audience of his narration in no doubt that the time spent was not in any way insignificant. The intensity of his struggle in this episode of identity work is signalled early in this narrative segment when he described how he came into a management role, that "It's not just coming in". He had to make a significant effort to be several types of managers: "admin", "senior admin", "training co-ordinator" which required him to operate not only at first level management levels but also more senior levels: "three levels above my position". However, Petrus was not simply a candidate engaging in a competitive recruitment struggle for a managerial role, he was engaged in a racial identity struggle: "they did not want to appoint a White person". He stories his struggle against racially based exclusion from

candidacy for a first level manager role as a struggle common to all Whites during this time period in South Africa's national socio-political history. He cues the salience of the shift in political power between historical periods or eras in his identity work discursively with "already at that time" as a topos for arguing that reduction in number of Whites in management ranks is not a recent phenomenon, but a practice that was prominent as early as 2010, a now normative practice of the times. Against this backdrop, his appointment as a White person into management is storied as exceptional, having occurred after "lots of fighting".

Petrus transitions from this high intensity episode of identity work straight into the next as he narrates his recent experience of trying to apply for a promotion from shift supervisor to shift controller:

En dus nou nog so. Dus nou nog so. Ek het vir my shift controller posisie aansoek gedoen. Ek het dit nie gekry nie. Die enigste rede is, want hulle het vir my reguit gesê, want ek is Wit. Dit is die rede hoekom ek nie aangestel is nie. ...HR en die volgende keer het die nuwe manager, wat nou van [Oosterdorp] af kom, vir my gesê is like in: "Sorry dan moet jy maar [Westerdorp] toe trek want net Wit mense word in [Westerdorp] bevorder. Hierso gaan jy nooit bevorder word nie". ...My assistant manager het letterlik vir my gesê ek moet trek. Die ding is ons het even 'n grievance hearing gehad want hy het dit voor mense gesê. En hulle het dit ook *in* die meeting gesê. ... Ja, onthou, want dus 51% government, dus parastatal, so ja. Hulle moet by BEE hou maar plaas van (pauses) hulle wil oor ons baklei en ons het hulle aangevat daaroor is dat, plaas dat hulle net fokus op ons [hub], neem hulle al die [hubs] in ag vir een posisie hier, which is nie fair nie. ...Al die nege main [hubs] van, van die company, neem hulle in ag vir een posisie hier oor jou vel kleur. ... So byvoorbeeld

om dit op te breek, as ek Wit is, of Kleurling is, die kans laat jy hier op hierdie [hub] gaan bevorder word is skraal. Baie min. ...En dan, die grootse meerderheid van mense wat bevorder word is swart vrou. Okay, nou met die laaste bevordering na supervisor level toe was dit twee swart mans en 'n swart vrou. Dit was vir almal van ons soos like in wow! Iemand anderste as 'n vrou (pauses) vir ons in ons veld was dit like in yeah! Victory! (laughs). ... Hoekom ek so sê, byvoorbeeld, Wit mense en Kleurling mense is die *minderheid*. Verstaan? So jy is een van ons.

Translation: And it's still like that. It's still like that. I applied for my shift controller position. And I did not get it. The only reason is, because they told me directly, because I am White. That is the reason why I was not appointed. ...HR and the next time the new manager, who came now from [Oosterdorp], told me it's like in: "Sorry then you must maar relocate to [Westerdorp] because only White people are promoted in [Westerdorp]. Here you will never be promoted". ...My assistant manager literally told me I must relocate. The thing is we even had a grievance hearing because he said it in front of other people. And they also said it *in* the meeting. ...Yes, remember, it's 51% government, it's parastatal, so yes. They must stick to BEE but instead of (pauses) they want to fight over us and we took them on because instead of them focussing only on our [hub], they consider all [hubs] for one position here, which is not fair. ...All the nine [hubs] of, of the company they consider for one position here because of your skin colour. ...So, for example, to break it down, if I am White or am Coloured, the chances that you will be promoted at this [hub] is slim. Very small. ...And then, the greatest majority of people that are promoted is Black woman. Okay, now with the last promotion to supervisor level then it was two Black men and a Black woman. For all of us that was like in wow! Someone other than a woman (pauses)

for us in our field, someone other than a woman, it was like in yeah! Victory! (laughs).
 ...Why I say so, for example, White people and Coloured people are in the *minority*.
 Understand? So you are one of us. (emphasis in original)

Continuing directly from the previous segment, Petrus stories White exclusion from promotion into management ranks as a still ongoing normative practice of the time, something he expected would be temporary but is not. He uses repetition as a rhetorical device: “And it’s still like that. It’s still like that”. After his successful struggle for his first promotion from officer to supervisor, his struggle for the second promotion a few years later to controller position is unsuccessful. The intensity of the experience is such that he stories the second struggle for a controller position as occurring directly after the first, despite the fact that just on five years separates the two incidents. This subjective temporality enables Petrus to see his present struggle as one that goes beyond himself, one that is part of a broader societal struggle that all those in his social identity group faces. He is told by his assistant manager that because there are no promotion prospects for Whites at his [hub] that he should relocate to another city. He interprets this to be the result of BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) legislation compliance which his [hub] is duty bound to comply with but has incorrectly (unfairly) applied in their recruitment policy. This triggers an intensified struggle via labour legislation channels (the grievance procedure), where he hopes to win his case at a grievance hearing. In the end he does not win the battle, even after escalating the matter to top management. Instead he receives feedback that confirms that his struggle for career advancement will not succeed at the Central Hub and perhaps not even inside the Phoenix organisation:

Even ons groot security manager oor current level security manager um hy’t even met ons grievance vir ons gesê reguit het hy gesê: “Ek is ‘n Indian persoon. Ek is stuck waar ek is.

Ek kan nie verder gaan nie. As ek wil bevorder word moet ek buite gaan soek.”

Translation: Even our senior security manager over the current level security manager um he even told us with our grievance, he told us straight: “I am an Indian person. I am stuck where I am. I cannot go further. If I want to be promoted, I must go look outside.”

In this section I showed that Petrus engages in complex social identity work as he transitions from one episode of high intensity identity work to the next. He begins the segment by constructing his struggle as the struggle of all White people. In the process of this highly intense episode of identity work, Petrus engages in identity substitution when he authors himself as a member of the Coloured group who, like the Whites, are struggling for promotion. His struggle is rewarded, with exclamations of jubilation “Victory!” when two Black men are promoted to supervisor. In this part of the narrative Petrus substitutes his identity again and he is now a member of all men, White, Coloured and Black, who are struggling for promotion in a time when mostly Black women are being advanced. In the closing part of this segment he again equates the struggles of White and Coloured people as being the minority against the Black majority. Here Petrus is doing identity work that substantially shifts the goal of his struggle from merely being considered eligible for a promotion to a political struggle for power for all racial groups he considers to be marginalised. In particular he advances the argument that Coloured people are in fact part of the White group, so included because they are similarly excluded from attaining managerial power. He then invites the researcher, a Coloured female, to engage in identity substitution, to adopt a new social identity, to see herself as part of the White group with his exhortation: “So you are one of us”.

6.4.1.2 Employment Equity interventions as triggers for resistance to power loss.

These examples demonstrate how employment equity interventions triggered the struggle for a politically powerful managerial identity as an entrant into the management ranks.

In the follow segment, however, one of Ojay's narratives demonstrates an interesting additional way in which the implementation of employment equity policies triggered engagement in identity substitution as episodic identity work:

Okay wat gebeur het by ons ne, um, met die BEE, dit is mos die demografie van die land of van jou streek waarin jy bly. Nou wat by ons gebeur het, op 'n tyd ne, ons was mos in die ou dae mos maar net Blanke mense wat dan nou um hierdie, in die beroep was. As jy nou praat van my beroep of op die [hub]. ...en toe't hulle mos later van tyd het dit mos gekom dat hulle almal aanstel. Maar toe 't hulle mos begin met die BEE ding. Nou ons demografie in ons omgewing is die Kleurling mense as ek dit so mag noem, is mos die meeste in ons omgewing. ... Okay. So almal wat by ons werk gekry het was, was Kleurlinge. Okay. Dis wat gebeur het.

Translation: Okay what happened here with us hey, um, with the BEE, that is actually the demography of the country or of your region where you live. Now what happened here with us, at a point in time hey, we were actually in the old days actually only White people that then were um in this profession. If you are talking about my profession or at the [hub]. ...and then they actually later in time it actually came about that they appointed everyone. But then they actually began with the BEE thing. Now our demographic in our region is the Coloured people if I may name it that way, is actually the majority in our region. ...Okay. So everyone that got employment with us, were Coloureds. Okay. That's what happened.

Ojay describes his experience of the implementation of affirmative action in extreme detail. He uses subjective temporality to reflect the privilege of Whites as normative “at that point in time” and to render the events that led to the opening of FRS jobs to “everyone” as simply something that “came about” normatively “later in time”. This experience triggered an episode of high intensity identity work in the form of identity substitution as shown in the next narrative segment, where Ojay struggles for an identity that distinguishes his first level managerialism and his membership of the FRS profession from that of “everyone” who now also have access to jobs and professions previously reserved for Whites:

...in vandag se dae kan ek ook nie bevordering kry nie as gevolg van die equity ding, en ek voel waar ek is kan ek ‘n groter bydra maak as wat ek sou hoër op gegaan het. ... As daai alarm nou af gaan, dan maak ek kontak met die beheertoring. Vra die rede vir die alarm. Die toring sê vir my ons het ‘n [voertuig] met so en so ‘n probleem. Dis so en so ‘n [voertuig]. En hy gee vir jou die registrasie en hy gee vir jou die tipe [voertuig] en hy gee vir jou hoeveel brandstof ... So al daai inligting gebruik ek om my size-up te maak om te sê okay ek het mense van buite nodig. Um ek moet vir hulle ‘n password gee. Hulle moet na die [hub] toe kom en dan daarvandaan af is jy in beheer van daai hele toneel. Jy is insident commander, soos wat ons dit noem. So dit is my ander bydra wat ek voel oor die jare die inligting of die kennis bymekaar gemaak het om dit te kan doen en ek geniet dit. Dit is nou basies, dit is my passie.

Translation:... in today’s day and age I can also not get a promotion as a result of the equity thing, and I feel where I am I can make a greater contribution than if I went higher up. ...If that alarm sounds now, then I make contact with the control tower. Ask the reason

for the alarm. The tower tells me we have a [vehicle] with such and such a problem. It's such and such a [vehicle]. And he gives you the registration and he gives you the type of [vehicle] and he gives you the amount of fuel... So I use all that information to do my size-up to say okay I need people from outside. Um I need to give them a password. They must come to the [hub] and from then on you are in charge of that whole scene. You are incident commander, as we call it. So that is my other contribution that I feel over the years the information or the knowledge gathered to enable me to do this and I enjoy it. This is now basically, this is my passion.

Identity substitution from shift leader to incident commander is Ojay's strategy to deal with his loss of political power triggered by post-apartheid employment equity transformation interventions "...in vandag se dae kan ek ook nie bevordering kry nie as gevolg van die equity ding [...in today's day and age I can also not get a promotion as a result of the equity thing". The struggle to resist the loss of political power is rewarded with the power of being in charge of all internal and external resources at the incident scene.

6.4.2 Organisational redesign as a trigger for identity substitution.

Participants experienced many organisational re-design interventions. Some were the result of post-apartheid privatisation efforts (for example Phoenix). Others resulted from global business expansion and the advancement of new technologies that followed the lifting of economic sanctions (for example Cedar and MoneyBank). I previously presented the narrative of Ojay (alias), in which he describes how the organisational redesign of Phoenix to introduce department heads and general managers triggered his struggle to resist the loss of hierarchical managerial

power. In the next narrative segment Ojay explains how this change in organisation design also triggered his struggle to resist the loss of his sense of worth:

Maar dit het nou weer verander... Ek het die gevoel altyd gekry, dis lekker. Jy weet. Jy't die gevoel gekry van ek dra waarde, of, ek voeg waarde toe. Mense kyk op na jou. Jy's hulle skof leier, of, jy's in beheer van die skof. Hulle kom na jou toe met 'n probleem. Vandag se dae dan bypass hulle jou. Hulle gaan gaan na die hoogste gesag toe. Want onthou management sê: "hoor hier julle" – as ons nou in meetings is – "my deure staan oop vir julle". Nou hoekom wil hy met my praat as die [hub] bestuurder vir hom kan sê hy kan 'n ding doen. Dit is waarmee 'n ou moet deal... Nou ons departementshoof wat hierso sit, um, hulle kom na hom toe. Hy beheer tot vandag toe ons verlot. Ek het vir hom hoeveel keer gese: "Doen my 'n guns. Gee dit terug vir ons". Want ek en hy het dit al die jare gedoen. "Gee dit terug vir ons"... Hulle bel hom by die huis om te vra "kan ek 'n dag verlot kry?" Dan sit hy by my op die skof. Hy kan na my toe kom. Ek is in beheer van die skof. Dit laat jy jou waarder verloor. Dit, ek meen hoekom betaal Phoenix my 'n salaris en ek het nie daai (pauses) outoriteit meer om dit te (pauses). Ek het dit! Hulle gee dit vir my! Maar hulle bypass jou..... Dis waarmee 'n ou deel en dis wat dit moeilik maak. Almal sê "O my deure staan oop. Julle kan maar kom." Maar dit maak dit moeilik.

Translation: But now that has changed again. ... I always felt that this is enjoyable. You know. You had this feeling that I have worth, or, I add value. People look up to you. You're their shift leader, or, you are in charge of the shift. They come to you with a problem. Nowadays they bypass you. They go to the highest level of authority. Because remember management says: "Listen here you (plural)" – this now when are in meetings – "my doors are open for you". Now why does he want to talk to me if the [hub] manager can say to

him he can do a thing. That is what a guy must deal with... Now our department head that sits here, er, they come to him. Up until today he controls our leave. I have told him how many times: “Do me a favour. Give it back to us”. Because he and I used to do it all these years. “Give it back to us.” ... They phone him at home to ask: “Can I get a day’s leave?” Then he’s sitting here on the shift with me. He can come to me. I am in charge of the shift. That makes you lose your worth. That, I mean why does Phoenix pay me a salary and I don’t have that (pauses) authority anymore to do (pauses). I have it! They give it to me! But they bypass you... That’s what a guy deals with and that’s what makes it difficult. Everyone says: “Oh, my doors are open. You can all maar* come”. But that makes it difficult.

[*Note that “maar” in this context is not translatable into an English word but is retained in situ in South African colloquial English as it is an important part of an expression used to denote a softening of the message.]

This narrative segment reveals that the task of approving subordinates’ absence from work used to form an integral part of Ojay’s managerial role when he was part of the senior management of Phoenix, but after the restructuring this task has been removed from his responsibilities. This change has triggered a deep sense of loss of self-worth and leaves Ojay questioning why he has the legitimate authority on paper but not in practice. His status as a manager, and with it the value of his managerial identity has diminished because whereas his subordinates used to “look up to you”, “nowadays they bypass you” preferring to “go to the highest level of authority”. An intense discursive identity struggle ensues with Ojay vacillating between having lost authority and with it his sense of managerial worth claiming “I don’t have that (pauses) authority anymore to do

(pauses)” and then immediately in a heightened state of emotion reminds himself that legitimate authority comes from his paid position in the company: “I have it! They give it to me!”. Immediately followed by the realisation that his subordinates do not behave in a way that affirms his authority: “But they bypass you”.

Ojay resists identifying with the new type of FRS shift leader, choosing instead to substitute key identifying characteristics of being an FRS chief into his self-concept of being an FRS shift leader as the following narrative segment reveals:

...en dit is die tipe van goeters waar ek kan my bydra lewe om te sê byvoorbeeld elke twee jaar dan doen ons ‘n groot skaal se simulاسie van ‘n [voertuig] ongeluk. En baie jare dan vra hulle vir my: “Kan jy vir ons die beplanning doen van dit?” ...Want onthou jy werk nou nie net met [hub FRS] nie. Jy werk nou met Suiderdorp munisipaliteit [FRS]. Jy’t Eden munisipaliteit [FRS]. Jy het die Suiderdorp polisie of jy het die polisie diens hier betrokke, die ambulans, verskillende ambulans dienste. Hulle almal moet gekoördineer word. Hulle almal moet opleiding kry en daai mense kry al hulle opleiding met my want wat weet hulle van [vervoer] af? So en *dit* is waar ek voel ek maak ‘n verskil.

Translation: ...and that is the type of things where I can give my contribution to say for example every two years then we do a large-scale simulation of a [vehicle] accident. And many years then they ask me: Can you do the planning of that for us?” ...Because remember you are not only working with [hub FRS]. You are no working with Suiderdorp municipality [FRS]. You have Eden municipality [FRS]. You have Suiderdorp police or you have the police services here involved, the ambulance, various ambulance services. They must all be coordinated. They must all get training and those people get all their

training from me because what do they know about [transport]? So and *that* is where I feel I make a difference.

In this narrative segment, Ojay substitutes the normal shift leader duties with the duties of an FRS Incident Commander. In this way Ojay mounts his resistance with a two-pronged approach: he seeks acknowledgment from role players in the emergency services stakeholder groups outside of Phoenix (e.g. Ambulance services, Police services) to legitimise the previous leadership regime's privilege afforded FRS professionals while showing the younger shift leaders and their teams the obvious life and death risks that are evident with the new regime's mainstreaming of access to shift leader roles.

Ojay's power as leader of the emergency preparedness planning stems from his 35-year knowledge base which he uses as another opportunity for identity substitution – the team leader as the training officer. In the following narrative segment Ojay is able to execute power over the actual incumbent in the Training Officer role, by influencing him to change his training plans for the week to enable Ojay to demonstrate his superior training capabilities within the context of an FRS emergency event:

So, soos vandag byvoorbeeld. Ons training officer het na my toe gekom en hy vra vir my hy wil 'n [FRS] dril doen. En ek sê vir hom: "Ek het 'n bietjie kort aan personeel. Ek het vir jou drie mense maar jy kan nie 'n volle dril doen met drie mense nie." Toe sê ek vir hom... hy moet ook onthou hierdie jaar is ons tweede jaar wat ons beplanning doen vir ons nood prosedure. So dis ook nodig dat hulle bietjie na die uitroep prosedure kyk, kyk 'n bietjie na roles en responsibilities, wie's verantwoordelik waar vir wat, hoe sny hulle die verskillende entiteite of dissiplines soos die polisie en die er die ambulans dienste en die

verkeer almal. Wie doen wat? Hoe sluit hulle bymekaar? Hoe word dit gekoördineer? Ek sê kom ons doen dit vandag. ... So dis nie dat hy dit nie kan doen nie maar hy't nie die ondervinding van dit soos wat ek dit doen nie. Ek meen ek beplan die goed nou al vir hoeveel jare.

Translation: So, like today for example. Our training officer came to me and he says he wants to do an [FRS] drill. I tell him: "I am a bit short of personnel. I have three people for you, but you cannot do a full drill with three people." Then I told him ...he must also remember that this year is our second year that we are doing the planning for our emergency procedure. So it's also necessary that they look at our call out procedure, at role and responsibilities, who's responsible for what, how do you carve out the various entities or disciplines like the police and er the ambulance and the traffic everyone. Who's doing what? How do they fit together? How is it being coordinated? I told him we'll do it today....So it's not that he can't do it, it's just that he does not have the experience of doing it the way I do it. I mean I'm planning these things now already for how many years.

In the foregoing data segments, I once again demonstrate the practice of identity substitution by foregrounding the case of Ojay who is able to substitute the normal features of a shift leader role with qualities unique to his FRS competence to show that he is an extraordinary shift leader, different from the new shift leaders, the "everyone", who are not yet capable of being the kind of shift leader that Phoenix needs especially in emergency conditions. This identity substitution is a struggle to resist the loss of power he enjoyed when he and Felix were the only team leaders at the Southern Hub, reporting directly to the Chief of operations. His power accretive identity struggle meets with resistance from his employees and peers, but he manages to retain his role as Incident

Commander for this year and in so doing enjoys legitimation of more managerial power than the newer shift leaders.

Ojay reveals how he deals with the organisational redesign, in the form of a number of intense struggles to be recognised as the managerial authority in his space. He substitutes aspects of the shift leader identity with aspects of department head or FRM chief or training officer identities to create a new type of shift team leader identity that is somewhat unique to his occupancy of the shift team leader role. In this way he satisfies his need to be acknowledged for occupying a more powerful and more politically salient role than the rest of the shift team leaders.

The data also shows that identity substitution is not a one-time strategy. Ojay is seen to engage in successive episodes of high intensity, contested, complex, identity substitution. The first trigger event, the change in hierarchical level, which was implemented 17 years prior is treated as something that occurred in the distant past while the second trigger event, the introduction of departmental silos, is experienced by Ojay as something that occurred very recently, despite the fact that 15 years had passed since its introduction. He transitions from an episode of high intensity identity work where he resists the loss of hierarchical (vertical) power, to another episode of high intensity identity work where he resists the loss of relational (horizontal) power, by significantly separating his experiences of the two triggering events in psychological time, and by substituting the essential features of the new type of shift team leader with the features of those higher up in the hierarchy who hail from the pre-Phoenix FRS focused regime. Becoming this type of team leader is always out of reach of the newer recruits, allowing Ojay to maintain some of the power and privilege he experienced when his professional group, the FRS, ran the hub, and when his

racio-ethnic group, White Afrikaners, held political power within management ranks in South African state-owned entities.

6.4.3 Diversity management interventions as triggers for identity substitution.

The case of GrowthInc is an interesting exemplar, where nearly 25 years after the end of apartheid, the company started deliberate interventions to diversify the management team in terms of racial and age identity by grooming young Black interns for management roles. They also implemented interesting new ways of working aimed at valuing and embracing diversity. Sanza (alias), a Black sales team leader at the GrowthInc (alias) software company, with low tenure (0 -5 years) as a first level manager, narrates the episodic identity work he engaged in when GrowthInc reorganised the sales function to incorporate a newly created Pre-sales team. Sanza stories his career development and the events that led up to his appointment into the position of Pre-sales manager as the identity struggles of a protégé being groomed for a specific future:

Our space there was we would do the technical configurations of the software....I thought that was very exciting. ...Two years under good mentorship um and leadership in the company. ...Um that then opened up an opportunity for me to move to a different place within GrowthInc altogether here where I was more client facing. I moved away from being a techie, more a client facing consultant where I was now more a data enabled, training enabled....That was again for another two years. Um at the end of that two years, me being very young, I wanted to leave for a while, and I wanted to pursue being a business analyst. ... Lynn (alias) wasn't very happy with it. Lynn is our MD who had said: "Sanza, you know I really don't want you to leave because we've invested a lot in you. You've shown so much promise and um delivered so much as well. It will be very sad for us to lose you

as an individual that we've seen, that we've groomed from a very young age". But I said: "Lynn", (because you know she was appealing to more the son part, 'cause she's like a mother to me and um you like you know the son of this company) I said: "you know, I will accept the offer but at the same time I'm very young. I really want to go out and see what the company, what the world has to offer, because if I'm shielded here, I'll never be able to know am I performing at world standard or am I performing at South African standards which you know might not be so good or something like that". So, I really wanted to measure myself against the rest of the world. So, I went out there for about a year. We did really, really well. Um eleven months into the job Lynn calls and says... "Sanza I told you that I was grooming you for a position and um I really need you to come back and it has to be very urgent".

Sanza begins this narrative segment by describing his first two jobs at GrowthInc, spanning four years, where he was firstly a technical software resource for two years, followed by an opportunity to be client facing and no longer "a techie". He then leaves the employ of GrowthInc to gain experience as a business analyst, where after, within less than one year of leaving, he is recruited back into GrowthInc and offered a Pre-sales Manager role. A narrative and discursive analysis of this segment reveals that Sanza authors his early career development, mentorship and promotion into his first management role as the story of the tension between protégé and maternalistic mentor: "because you know she was appealing to more the son part, 'cause she's like a mother to me and um you like you know the son of this company". He experiences feeling cloistered: "because if I'm shielded here, I'll never be able to know am I performing at world standard". GrowthInc is constructed as being his home, the place where he belongs, where he was nurtured and all other

workplaces and their opportunities are constructed in relation to GrowthInc as being “out there”, in “the world” such that Sanza expresses the need to “go out and see” and after he “went out there” he was asked to “come back” to resume his rightful place for which he had been “groomed from a very young age”.

This narrative segment reveals Sanza’s episodic identity struggle to be afforded the opportunity to be an independent adult employee, free to choose his own career development pathway. Interestingly, he adopts the persona of a young adult negotiating his freedom from a mother’s apron strings: “I will accept the offer but at the same time I’m very young. I really want to go out and see...”. He promises to fulfil Lynn’s career aspirations for him but only after he has had a chance to explore other career options outside GrowthInc. This identity substitution allows him to leave GrowthInc on good terms, as a son (“the son of this company”) would leave his mother’s home (“she’s like a mother to me”), with the door always open to return either when he chooses to or when family responsibility requires it.

Similar to the experiences of the other participants, Sanza’s episodic identity work is triggered diachronically in his narrative, when he experiences that sufficient psychological time has passed and that it is time to make a change: “That was again for another two years. Um at the end of that two years, me being very young, I wanted to leave for a while”. He uses the compounding references to the passage of time as a rhetorical device to signal the important role of time as an unmarked normative powerful actor at the core of his topoi for negotiating his release from Lynn and GrowthInc. This subjective temporality allows him to engage in identity substitution as a means to be seen as an organisational actor who is both a powerful, credible insider despite being

an organisational leaver. Being “the son of this company” enables Sanza to declare his decision to leave without disclosing any triggers, antecedents nor causes, other than time itself, signalled discursively as a repeated passage of invested time: “again”, “another two years”; at a particular time in his life “being very young” and he would be leaving not forever but “for a while” and when he agrees to return it is because Lynn is quoted as needing Sanza to return under great time pressure: “and it as to be very urgent”.

Sanza’s episodic identity work continues when he transitions from being the “the son of this company” who is “out there” exploring the corporate world “for a while” to being the manager of a new portfolio within GrowthInc, a role in which he will continue his grooming towards top management of GrowthInc:

Lynn calls and says... “Sanza I told you that I was grooming you for a position and um I really need you to come back and it has to be very urgent”. It was eleven months into that other position. Um and then I asked Lynn what was this about because you know um and she said: “No, listen, GrowthInc, the management level of GrowthInc, was all at a very old age. So, there’s let’s say give or take three people that are all management and it’s a fairly small company to have all management that are over the age of sixty that are sitting at top management. Um and they, they were all planning to leave now and I need, I, Lynn, need to start thinking about the next generation of people who are going to take over. And we believe that you are the right calibre of a person. Um you might not have the experience, but you’ve shown drive and you know the business that we operate in. We’ve seen you strive in two different positions in the organisation. We believe you’ll do just fine at the next level of your position”. I said: “You know what? I’d be happy to come and join you”.

We met up. We discussed the details around it and she said: "... I'm going to groom you. I'm going to give you the tools that you need. And I'm going to support you in the initiative. Um if you can handle that area for me, I believe you will go a long way". And I said: "I'll gladly accept it as a new portfolio for me". I came back as a Pre-sales Manager, which was almost a new position in GrowthInc but we all knew that it had its place in the organisation. And Lynn said: "With that said we're going to take on new products because with an older team they're so used to those products, it's so difficult to change the direction of the company". ...And Lynn said she'll give me a team of two people to work with. So, I work with two people as a Pre-sales Manager at GrowthInc.

In this narrative segment, Sanza constructs a valued managerial identity at GrowthInc as principally linked to age identity. Using various discursive practices, he reveals the dominant topoi shared by him and his mentor to be that young managers are good for business. Having old managers, over the age of sixty, makes it difficult for the company to change strategic direction and take on new products. Paradoxically, a valued managerial identity also accrues to those who have experience and "who know the business that we operate in". For this reason Sanza enters his second phase of grooming where he is placed in "a new portfolio for me", where "she'll give me a team of two people to work with" in an "initiative" as a trial run because "if you can handle that area for me, I believe you will go a long way". Despite being placed in a managerial role, Sanza's episodic identity struggle for a valued managerial identity continues because his narrative authors him as being in a grooming role yet again. Using the a-contextual psychological projection "but we all knew" as a rhetorical justifier, Sanza reveals his awareness and concomitant identity struggle that the new role and the team he had been given was most likely created ostensibly

because “it had its place in the organisation”, yet in truth for the purpose of grooming “the son of this company”. Sanza’s narrative juxta-poses his age identity struggle as “me being very young” yet part of the essential “next generation of people who are going to take over” with his managerial identity having the responsibility to safe-guard the company from the risk of lack of continuity at the top: “all management that are over the age of sixty that are sitting at top management. Um and they, they were all planning to leave now.” By accepting Lynn’s “urgent” call to take on the role as Pre-sales Manager of GrowthInc, Sanza concludes this episode of intense identity work where he transitions from “a techie” to a first level manager, having engaged in identity substitution as “the son of this company” at a time when those uniquely young incumbents are valued as the new managers of GrowthInc.

Sanza then almost immediately transitions to the next high intensity episode of identity work when he struggles for acceptance from his team as the new type of younger manager valued by senior management at GrowthInc:

Then the team formed. Me and the two dudes that I’ve got. The two dudes are extra specialists in their product fields that they’ve been working at for the past couple of years. And I’m coming in and I’m going to pick on the new product that we’ve got and then still become the leader or the manager for these two gentlemen. There we go. So, then the team was formed. And so now we had to make sure that the guys understand why I’m there. Um that I’m new to my role and so forth. I’d never worked much with the guys before either. So that was also quite something um to pick up. And then they are also white guys. So, um the cultural differences must play a role now because I need to understand how they do things and how I currently do things and put all that together. ...One of the guys was

actually a boss. He was in a director like position before he joined the team. So, he owned a company. That company that got bought by us by GrowthInc. And in that company imagine he was the boss making all the top end decisions now you gonna come into GrowthInc and you going to report to this young guy who doesn't know anything. So, one of the guys was that. Very experienced guy. Very well rounded that guy um older, way older than me, he's been through the ropes and everything. ...The other dude in fact I'd say maybe the same forty-two, forty-five. He reported to a previous director at GrowthInc, one of the guys who left. Um the other dude. Now they have to come back and report to this young guy. I don't even look at it much of reporting. I think it's just structure. It's just structure. We are a very flexible organisation. Like I said everyone is expected to be responsible for their own area and space.... And like I said lots of learning from me to pick up that product and say even though I don't know what you do but I know enough that what you going to do now is not going to get us to where we need to get. Can I suggest that you do one, two and three? It's up to you if you take it or not and then I walk away. Then the guys can see, that's a true leader. That's a guy we can rely on to come up with solutions whenever we're stuck and stuff like that. And at the same time, it's not always one sided. For me a true leader is the one that listens to what the people are saying. Because if he has more experience and knows what he's doing it's up to me to go to him and say we've got an opportunity in your area. You tell me what you think I should do. Then you listen and you execute the way that they say. You execute.

In this narrative segment Sanza stories his struggle for acceptance as the team's manager after the new reporting structures were implemented. He authors the relational exchange as the process

game players go through when learning the rules to a new game. He is aware that his appointment would be received by his team as unusual “And so now we had to make sure that the guys understand why I’m there”. Both Sanza and senior management (Lynn) have changed the rules of game. Whereas the unmarked norm of management used to be a deeply experienced, older individual, the new team has to “report to this young guy”. He has to establish rapport with the team given that he had “never worked much with the guys before” and “then they are also white guys. So, um the cultural differences must play a role now.” However, his biggest struggle for a valued managerial identity is centred around age identity. He authors this struggle as a mutual struggle where his subordinates have taken a step back in their careers: “Now they have to come back and report to this young guy”. Sanza then engages in identity substitution to soften the impact of this unusual reporting arrangement: “I don’t even look at it much of reporting. I think it’s just structure. It’s just structure”. He opts to be the kind of leader who asks his experienced team to be self-managed: “everyone is expected to be responsible for their own area”, and to take the lead for technical direction pertaining to work in their product areas while Sanza enters into a complete role reversal and executes their instructions: “Then you listen and you execute the way that they say. You execute.”

While Sanza has mostly adopted a devolution approach to leading his team “you listen and you execute”, on occasion when he does, however, decide to assume authority he meets with resistance:

Um, like I said, it was a bit of a hurdle, but it did eventually come right. This was through the support of my leadership. Um so for example, every once in a while we will try to do some corrections when they try to jump out of my jurisdiction to report to Lynn such and such and Lynn will be like: “Please chat to Sanza and let him be the one to handle the issue

first” kind of a thing “before you come back to me”. So, some corrective action had to be put together. Um and ja. It was a bit of a challenging space. But I think at the end of the day our goal is we need to provide more business. We need to make more business. And the guys are very willing to adapt to whatever that’s being asked of them in order for us to conduct that.

As in a game of sports, the players seek guidance from a higher authority to referee the decisions that he as a leader makes on the field of play. Lynn, however, refuses to play the role of the referee instead referring the team back to their manager and in so doing refrains from disempowering Sanza. This overt level of executive support to create an empowering environment for Sanza to develop his management identity is a critical aspect of Sanza’s identity work:

So er it is quite a phenomenal experience, very, very *difficult* place but the support of my executives, even the guys like I said they’ve come to the party. ...That was quite a challenging space. I thought that was quite something and everyone had been watching and waiting to see how this is going to pan out but ja so I think it works quite well because in our area we don’t have the broom thing – I will beat you if you don’t do this no. It’s more of a – here’s a task, it needs to be completed. And you are going. And the guy needs to find a way to complete it. It’s obviously within the means. It’s within reasonable expectations and stuff like that. But that’s what it is. (emphasis in original)

It is clear from this narrative segment and the preceding segments that Sanza’s managerial power rests in “the support of my leadership”. He continues to enjoy the support of his mentor and “the support of my executives” as he and his mentors seek to create a success story with new rules

while the organisation watches: “everyone had been watching and waiting to see how this is going to pan out”.

6.5 Organisational Practices That Perpetuate Social Injustice

Throughout this chapter I have presented exemplar participant narratives that story identity substitution as identity work. In the final section of this chapter I draw attention to the ways in which participants’ identity substitution narratives were influenced by organisational practices that perpetuate social injustice. While the narratives were replete with examples, I foreground two exemplars that demonstrate this aspect of the phenomenon under study.

6.5.1 Racial exclusion as intolerant working conditions.

Garth (alias), a Coloured Afrikaans shift team leader at Phoenix’s Western hub with a tenure of 20 to 25 years, narrates how the organisational practices at Phoenix prejudices his efforts to perform basic management duties such as initiating disciplinary procedures:

Ek het nie eers ‘n printer om hulle written warning te gee nie. So hoe gee ek nou die, hoe print ek die written warning uit? Annexure 14 vorms? En hoe gee ek die man sy vorm en ek discipline ? Ek kan hom nie eers discipline nie! Ek vra die man nou al van vyf jaar terug af: “Kry net vir my ‘n printer. Ek sukkel om die mense te discipline”. Die mense weet hulle kan niks oorkom nie. Nou maak hulle wat hulle wil. ... Maar regtig dit is ‘n sukkelry. Dis ‘n sukkelry. Dis hoekom ek jou die kantoor gewys het. Dis al wat ek het is die komper. Hulle sit vir my ‘n telefoon in. Nie die ene nie (gestures to the portable phone). Hy werk nie eers daai telefoon nie. Um, hulle bring vir my daai computer. Hulle sê vir my hulle

upgrade my. Hy, daai ene het 'n vyfhonderd K megabyte hard drive. Die ene het 'n honderd en twintig. Dis nie upgrade nie. Dis 'n downgrade ek bedoel. Al my dokumente is daar op. Nou moet ek al die dokumente van die ou ene aftrek. Ek het vir hulle gesê: gee vir my net 'n (dis vir die IT's nou), gee net vir me 'n external hard drive want my werk is daarop. Tot vandag toe het hulle dit nog nie gedoen nie. Ek bedoel dit is regtig 'n gesukkelry ... Soos my kantoor is heeldag oop. Die Wit mannetjie sluit die ding heeldag toe (gestures to a door across the passage). En net die Wittes het daai sleutel. Dan is dit die Wittes onder my. Ek is in control van die Wittes, van hulle, maar daai sleutel het net die Wittes. Net die Wittes kan daar in gaan. Maak nie saak of jy graad een is of jy graad twee is nie, maar net die Wittes kan daar in gaan. Ek sukkel nou al jare vir 'n printer. Daar's 'n printer in die mannetjie se kantoor. Ek het hom gesê: "Jy meen ek moet die werk doen dan moet ek vir jou email, jy moet dit print dan sê jy vir die mense jy het die werk gedoen?" Ek sê vir hom: "Ek sal nogal nie laat jy die credit kry daarvoor nie". Ek doen my werk. Ek sit my werk op my computer. Ek save my werk daar op my computer tot die dag ek *een jaar* 'n printer gaan kry om al daai goeder te print.... Dit is nou die mannetjie daar. My hande is afgekap.

Translation: I don't even have a printer to give them a written warning. So how do I now give this, how do I print out the written warning? Annexure 14 forms? And how do I give the man his form and I discipline? I cannot even discipline him! I've been asking this man now already from five years ago: "Just get me a printer. I'm struggling to discipline the people". These people know that nothing can be done to them. Now they do just what they want.... But really it is a struggle. It is a struggle. That's why I showed you my office. That's all that I have; a computer. They installed a telephone. Not this one (gestures to the portable phone). That phone does not even work. Um, they brought me that computer. They

told me I'm being upgraded. That one has a five hundred gigabyte hard drive. This one has hundred and twenty. That's not an upgrade. I mean that's a downgrade. All my documents are on there. Now I must remove all my documents from the old one. I told them: "Just give me (that's to IT now), just give me an external hard drive because my work is on [the computer]". Up until today they have not yet done so. I mean it is really a struggle ... Like my office is open all day long. This White mannetjie* locks this thing all day (gestures to a door across the passage). And only the Whites have that key. Then it's the Whites who report to me. I am in control of those Whites, some of them, but only the Whites have that key. Only the Whites can go in there. It does not matter if you are grade one or you are grade two, but only the Whites can go in there. I'm struggling now for years for a printer. There's a printer in this mannetjie's office. I told him: "You mean I must do the work then I must email it to you, you must print it then you tell people you did the work?" I told him: "I will also not let you get the credit for it". I do my work. I save my work on my computer. I'll save my work there on my computer until the day I *eventually* get a printer to print all that stuff. ... That is now this mannetjie there. My hands are chopped off. (emphasis in original)

(*The direct translation of mannetjie is little man but that is not what is meant by Garth. Instead within this context mannetjie is a disparaging form of address.)

In this narrative segment Garth experiences physical exclusion from access to material resources that he needs to exert his managerial authority, namely, the power to implement the company's disciplinary code. The physical exclusion is experienced as a consequence of racial exclusion. Garth lacks the power to convince IT to provide him with a printer yet his White colleague has a

printer behind locked office doors. Access to this printer is controlled by a door lock which only Whites have a key for, including his own White subordinates. This represents a material rejection of Garth's authority as a manager, tantamount to insubordination. Furthermore, his White colleague denies him access to the printer in his office, offering instead that Garth should email the work to be printed to him so that he could print it. The IT equipment distribution practices, the office security processes and the dysfunctional working relationships, colleague to colleague, and manager to subordinate are all evidence of extreme workplace injustices revealed in Garth's narrative. This extreme level of politicising in the workplace is experienced and expressed as extreme suffering, evidenced not only through Garth's repeated use of the words "really a struggle" but also after mounting a show of resistance where he refuses to send his work to his White colleague for printing, he recognises that he is powerless to act, feeling that his "hands are chopped off".

Furthermore, as the following narrative segment reveals, the leadership response to complaints of racial exclusion at Phoenix is akin to abdication, thereby perpetuating everyday social injustices:

Ek het nou al vir [Senior Security Manager], daar in [Central hub], ek het al vir hom 'n email gestuur. Toe sê hy vir my: "Garth, jy's in Western, ek is hierso, [FRS hoof]". Hy's nou baie hoog (gasps). Dis nou vyf sterre [rang] ek het maar net twee. "Ek kan nou niks aan die saak doen nie. Jy moet nou maar, dis maar nou Western se probleem."

Translation: I have already sent [Senior Security Manager], there at [Central hub], I have already sent him an email. Then he told me: "Garth, you are at Western, I am [FRS Chief] here". Now he is very highly ranked (gasps). That's a five star [rank] and I only have two stars. "I can do nothing about the matter. You will have to, it will have to be Western's problem to handle."

6.5.2 Visible vestiges of a politically segregated past.

The next exemplar of lingering organisational injustices was observed during one of my visits to Wattle's South Site in 2017 when I was conducting follow up interviews. One of the participants showed me the two separate canteens (cafeterias) where employees are served lunch and the two separate pubs where employees socialised after work. At the time of my visit the separate spaces were no longer in use as separate amenities, however, rather than having been renovated or repurposed, a large notice board blocked the entrance to the one canteen no longer in use. The once separate bars merely served as overflow in the event of large events. The once separate sports clubs and change rooms were no longer in evidence as those spaces had been renovated over time. However, when I visited another Wattle site, for a site tour, the once separate change rooms were still in use in the work place, and although the apartheid signage had been removed, the employee who accompanied me on the tour still referred to one set of cubicles as "the old Bantu toilets" in very casual everyday conversation.

The Laissez faire approach to the removal of these visible vestiges of a politically segregated past hides organisational discursive practices that perpetuate segregation along lines of social privilege/oppression and social inclusion/exclusion within the physical and relational working environment as is revealed by the following narrative segment taken from Uncle's narrative of his experiences as a first level manager at Wattle's South Site:

So, I take the team out, have some fun and things like that. Because all these years, you were oppressed. Now I brought you in, you understand. I didn't bring you in all these years. No, no. You're just here your eight hours, do your job. But now I say: "Look, we part of

the business now. Come in. I open the door for you". And that's how the culture gradually changed. ... We even went as far as, as [integrating]. We had two bars. Socializing, two bars. A weekly paid bar and a monthly paid bar. That was the segregation. Then, we closed the one bar. Now we only got one bar. We had two sports clubs: weekly, monthly. Now there's one sports club. But we integrated over the years, you understand. ... There was a big status difference. You are monthly paid, you weekly paid. There was a big status difference. If I talk about the us and them that's where it's coming from. The us and them. 'Cause majority of the shop floor was weekly paid, you understand. ... You look at the canteen. It's split in half, they put a board now. Weekly paid that side. We, monthly paid, this side. Irrespective of colour. You weekly paid you will sit there. Monthly paid you sit here. There was weekly paid canteen, monthly paid canteen. This is what happened here. I come from that era. And not so long ago. 1989 when I joined. There's weekly paid change rooms, monthly paid change rooms. (Laughs). ... That changed about (pauses) fifteen, sixteen years ago. Way after 1994. Ja. Way after the 1994 change. That one came towards close to 2000. ... The sports club, weekly monthly. Every time a new General Manager comes he says: "No I'm going to break barriers now. I don't need a weekly bar. Mingle with us". We have to accept it, you understand. Then, the integration there also had its own problems. Because you will find on a Friday for, for both weekly and monthly, there'll be snacks and some good stuff, some biltong for the guys, then, er, there's more a culture or behaviour on the monthly paid, and then there is no behaviour and there's arguments fighting this and that. Then we started integrating. So, we had all the same things again this side. And now is you see you can't give these guys anything. Now they're taking over. So, when the person come, the monthly paid come, you find the snacks is finished because now

we incorporated them there. So, something else happen also now. So, that monthly paid people did not go to the bar no more. You understand. We had to deal with that. So less and less people go to the bar. If they do go to the bar, there's a clique - there, there and there.

As with Garth's experience, the materialisations of socio-political segregation within the workplace at Wattle provide an enabling environment for the perpetuation of segregation. The physical real-world reminders of separation along lines of pay status (weekly/monthly paid) perpetuates the inferiority of those who are paid for hours worked versus those who are rewarded for competence, capabilities and outputs. The vast majority of employees on short-term pay arrangements were Black shop-floor employees and the equivalence between weekly paid and Black employees is so overwhelming that in Uncle's narrative he cross-references both Black and weekly paid employees interchangeably. So deeply engrained is the belief in segregation underlying the organisational discourse that the act of integration in the year 2000 (10 years after the repeal of apartheid legislation) is storied as an extreme measure where "we even went as far as" metaphorically opening one's home to strangers "Come in. I open the door for you".

A number of other oppressive apparatus are at work in this narrative. Those who are rewarded purely for their labour hours are judged as less identified with the organisation "You're just here your eight hours, do your job". Furthermore, the exclusionary materialisations and concomitant organisational discourses serve to legitimise social exclusion of weekly paid employees on the basis that such practices applied across all races and therefore were not illegal post-apartheid. Storying the removal of barriers through a host-guest performativity serves to normalise the power

of higher status employees to set the terms of the integration process and thereby remain most entitled to organisational privileges such as “snacks and some good stuff, some biltong for the guys” when socialising. The incremental removal of vestiges of segregation as localised decisions by each subsequent incumbent General Manager of South Site rather than as the result of an organisational policy by the Wattle Company even up to 2017, nearly thirty years after the repeal of apartheid legislation, is peculiarised as progressive “Every time a new General Manager comes he says: “No I’m going to break barriers now”.”

Moreover, the integration is storied as problematic “And now is you see you can’t give these guys anything. Now they’re taking over”, which ends with the inevitable failure of the integration process to achieve social integration “So, that monthly paid people did not go to the bar no more” and this integration failure is storied as the fault of those who were invited to the integration party “then there is no behaviour and there’s arguments fighting this and that.... We had to deal with that. So less and less people go to the bar”. I present the findings related to this invidious form of post-apartheid discourse in Chapter 7. Finally, this narrative segment is storied by a participant who self-identified elsewhere in his narrative as a “Black manager” and yet when identifying with the organisation “We even went as far as” he becomes complicit in the very exclusion he fought against during his struggle to be recognised as a manager at a time when he experienced that management was normatively White.

The ability of this organisation to so powerfully regulate Uncle’s identity when he identifies as part of the “we”, the lack of further organisational impetus to drive integration in the bars, or even to remove the remaining physical materialisations that remind employees of their segregated past

all represent invisible, taken-for-granted, everyday practices that perpetuate social injustice in very complex yet effective ways.

6.5.3 Career development as rite of passage.

Sanza, a Black sales team leader at the GrowthInc (alias) software company, with low tenure (0 - 5 years) as a first level manager transitions from an episode of highly visible identity work where “everyone had been watching” the strategic placement of a young Black manager as part of senior managements diversity strategy, to the next episode of identity negotiation within the less visible space of his own team, as Sanza works to be accepted as the team’s manager “even though he’s a Black guy”:

Even within us, even within us to run ourselves, the three of us, we know, even though he’s a Black guy we know, like I said, he’ll have to put in the hours. He’ll have to gain the respect in the right way for the guys to know shame he’s young, he’s inexperienced, but dammit he has picked up on our products, he is knowing what we’re doing. He’s involved when you ask him to be involved and he’s really doing what he can to make a difference to the team. Let’s (pauses) all you can do is respect a person like that. So that’s really what, what it boils down to as well. ... Challenging spot but very interesting.... and I think it was a strategic move from the executive at the company.

Sanza constructs his quest for a powerful managerial identity as the struggle that ensues when companies place young Black managers in managerial positions as “a strategic move”, a move which has hitherto not been the norm. He struggles within a meritocracy-entitlement tension that is familiar to Black South Africans placed in a position of power within so-called post-apartheid

South Africa: “even though he’s a Black guy we know, like I said, he’ll have to put in the hours. He’ll have to gain the respect in the right way”. He authors his identity work as the underdog in the struggle. His subordinates are cast in his narrative as being powerless to make it easy for him because they too are bound by the rules of this organisational rite of passage. This is the way he has to prove himself in this difficult situation, this “Challenging spot”. Yet, as they observe him “really doing what he can to make a difference to the team”, they afford him resigned acceptance: “all you can do is respect a person like that”.

Interestingly, Sanza’s struggle for a managerial identity within his own team is expressed discursively in the form of a third-person narrative that makes him complicit in perpetuating an extremely complex form of Black exclusion from normative managerial identity prevalent in post-apartheid Whiteness discourse, that being a resistance to Black entitlement and unmarked Black normativity: “we know, even though he’s a Black guy, he’ll have to put in the hours. He’ll have to gain the respect in the right way”. Notably the three members of the team, Zanza and his two White subordinates, are referred to by Sanza as a collective using the pronoun, “we” in “we know” and Sanza himself as one of “the three of us” is discursively split from the identity of the narrator when referring to himself as “he’s a Black guy”. This is an example of the powerful ways that everyday organisational practices such as career development akin to rites of passage effect identity regulation in ways that perpetuate social injustice through peculiarising Black management.

6.5.4 Normalising racial posturing as a business tool.

In this narrative segment, Sanza reveals how he and his fellow team members engage in racial posturing as a sales tactic for achieving the team's goals:

I think, in, in our organisation that is a *daily* thing. Okay. It becomes easier to speak about and handle because it happens on a daily basis. I'll give you an example. Depending who we are meeting, as a client or as a prospect, we'll send in the right colour skin. Okay. So, it's easier for us to be honest and accept the diversity that we offer as an organisation because we'll go out and say: "Oh, we're meeting a guy from XYZ (alias). XYZ is a politically driven organisation. They would speak better to a Black person than they would to a White person. Send in Sanza. Okay we're going to FuelCo (alias) and we are going to be meeting the head of the chemistry department and its run by Piet van Tonder (not an actual person). Let's not send in Sanza, let's send in one of the older white guys who will relate to him much more". It's a strategic thing that we do internally to say in order for us to win the business let's do this and this. There's times that I will go into a meeting room and I will even lead the conversation like a bigger director than I even am if we meeting with Black people to show them that in my organisation I'm the guy that makes the decision and I'm a Black guy. If we're going and you'll have an older Paul Haggard (alias), he's one of our executives, very, very intelligent guy I respect so much. He will have to bow down in a way and work as though he reports to me in a way just for the structure of the meeting. And it can easily be the other way around if we're meeting with white folks and stuff like that. It's er. It becomes less of a difficult conversation to have because it's something that we deal with and we use to our advantage. (emphasis in original)

In this narrative segment Sanza reveals GrowthInc's purposive engagement in racial posturing: "Depending who we are meeting, as a client or as a prospect, we'll send in the right colour skin". It is also clear that working this way has been a struggle for the team as revealed by Sanza's discursive practices within the narrative such as the use of epanalepses as a rhetorical device to signal that the struggle is present but easing. He opens the segment by assuring his audience that "It becomes easier to speak about and handle" and concludes the segment by re-assuring his audience that "It becomes less of a difficult conversation to have". Interestingly the epanalepses is incomplete revealing perhaps that perhaps upon reflection during his narration of the segment that "easier to speak about" may have been too strong and that the softened form "less of a difficult conversation" is probably a fairer reflection. Overt racial posturing as an everyday business practice helps Sanza's team overcome racial impediments to closing their business deals. However, it perpetuates racial privilege and oppression dynamics within the GrowthInc sales team-client relational space, and as revealed in Sanza's narrative, creates the stress of routine identity regulation as psychological labour for his team members.

In this narrative segment, Sanza continues the thread that runs throughout his story being that the rules of the game have been deliberately changed through strategy: "It's a strategic thing that we do internally to say in order for us to win the business let's do this and this". The underlying topoi for this discursive practice is that despite the shifts in the national socio-political context, deliberate strategic intervention is needed to change both how business has always been done and who have always been the leaders in business. The socio-political context of so-called post-apartheid South Africa, even twenty-five years on, may not be sufficient to drive the power change within organisations. New rules for conducting business within the new socio-political context have to be

devised by organisations for themselves where team members are expected “to be honest and accept the diversity that we offer” in order to achieve business objectives within the new socio-political context: “We need to make more business. And the guys are very willing to adapt to whatever that’s being asked of them in order for us to conduct that”.

6.6 Episodic Identity Work as Identity Substitution – A Summary

In summary, first level managers experienced organisational transformational change that threatened the loss or gain of a valued managerial identity, as triggers for engaging in high intensity episodic identity work. Transitioning from one episode to another was experienced as a complex struggle for various modes of managerial power made tenable through subjective temporality where events were separated in psychological time compared with calendar time or where the pace and duration of identity struggles were psychologically time controlled. This was done to enable the narrator to construct resistance to the loss of managerial power or to resist the contestation of managerial power gains.

The dominant strategy for engaging in episodic identity work was found to be identity substitution, revealed as complex processes of identity work where participants substituted fundamental aspects of who they were and how they perceived their managerial identities as first level managers with alternative self-concepts of a more powerful first level manager.

The specific goal of identity substitution as episodic identity work was the struggle for managerial power at the margins between employees (non-management) and more senior management. For those who had no political power during the so-called apartheid era, the struggle to construct a powerful managerial identity was experienced as the struggle to be seen as an exception to the

norm, a high performing valued member of the management team despite being “a non-white” or “a Black guy”.

On the other hand, the struggle to resist the loss of a once powerful managerial identity was experienced as the struggle for both hierarchical positional power (vertical power), and for relational power, the power to influence others at the same hierarchical level but across departments or divisions in the organisation (horizontal power). The latter power is akin to being first among equals due to some unique capability or competence that is valued or needed by others. It is perceived as the horizontal power that comes from being intimately involved with, having knowledge of, controlling, influencing and impacting a whole rather than one part of an organisation, by being of service to others (hence needed by them) rather than through positional authority over others. The loss or gain of a valued managerial identity is also associated with being located at comparably less or more desirable physical workspaces. First level managers’ identity work thus also has to do with where they situate their managerial selves within socially and politically powerful physical spaces.

Various organisational transformation interventions were experienced as triggers for episodic identity work, resulting in transitions to successive episodes of intense identity struggles triggered predominantly by three types of organisational transformation interventions: employment equity policy implementations, organisational restructuring that threatened personal or group power and diversity management interventions.

Finally, routine, taken-for-granted organisational practices such as career development through rites of passage, racial posturing as client sales tactics, leadership abdication to deal with racial antagonism and passively continuing to do business alongside physical vestiges of social exclusion as mute monuments, were all experienced as powerful, unmarked mechanisms for perpetuating social injustice.

Chapter 7: Continuous Identity Work Transitions

As was shown in the preceding chapter, the narrative data reveals that participants may experience the political, economic and social transformation of their societies and organisations as episodes of transformation, each triggering episodic identity work transitions as they transition from one episode of high intensity identity work to another. In this section I show that participants also experienced societal and organisational transformations as a flow of more or less constant micro changes that continuously required them to reframe who they were in response to shifting canonical societal and organisational discourses, that kept them engaged in continuous identity work transitions.

Participants engaged in these continuous identity work transitions through a process of discursive performativity expressed as storied identity constructions. They did this in order to achieve the two main goals: to construct extreme difference between management and working classes and to construct and maintain an identity as the indispensable manager. The transition from one discursive performance to the next was triggered by socio-political policy shifts that participants perceived as threats to group power. As shown in the exemplars that follow, participants accessed socio-political transformational discourse for their storied identity constructions through invidious societal–organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as “post-apartheid speak.

7.1 Continuous Identity Work Transitions in the Construction and Maintenance of Extreme Difference Between Management and Working Classes

I begin with a segment from Uncle's narrative. Having engaged in high-intensity episodic identity work to break management and shop floor workers' limiting perceptions of who he believed he was and could be as a manager in a production environment, Uncle's narrative then reveals a transition to continuous identity work, performed through discursive practices to maintain and gradually strengthen his hard worked for, valuable, powerful "boss" identity, as distinct from his previous "a worker like me", "part of the struggle" identity. He does this by storying extreme difference between the managerial and working classes as show in the following segment, where he constructs managers and workers as belonging to completely different cultures:

And it's difficult to manage them on the shop floor because of the background and the culture that they come from; you understand. It's completely different. Like the GM will manage his team differently. Now, I have to deal with a guy here on the shop floor who tells me Uncle I want compassionate leave. My mother passed away. Now, I give him his five days compassionate leave. Then, two years later, he come back again, Uncle my mother passed away. I said: "no, but you only had one mother." "No, I grew up with another mother that looks after me as a child, 'cause my mother was not around". You understand. You have to deal with those cultures, different cultures. You understand what I'm saying. It's like, it's like, it's like my sister, my eldest sister's child grew up with my mother and called her mother, but that's the second mother, you see, and those are the things that you don't know that you must just accept it now. This is the way these... (pauses, gestures), you understand. And you learn those things as you go on.

Here Uncle engages in low intensity identity work of a continuous nature as signalled by the phrase "you learn those things as you go on". The construction of this cultural difference between shop floor employees and management is therefore storied as gradual everyday learning with each

encounter he has with his employees. Storying the identity work as learning gives the impression that the process is neutral. However, using a critical discourse analysis lens, it becomes clear that Uncle is borrowing directly from post-apartheid whiteness discourse, designed to maintain racial segregation on the grounds of cultural incompatibility. Uncle advances the fallacious argument that the shop floor culture is so different from some unmarked normal culture that those who manage the shop floor need to commit to a continuous process of learning a different culture in order to effectively manage this different culture. He uses the migrant labour carer system, that is widespread in Coloured townships and more especially Black townships in South Africa, as topos for the fallacy that this practice is culturally endemic to a group of people who are cast as being very different from most people in South African organisations. Demographically, Coloureds and Blacks together make up the majority of South Africans. If anything, the practice of being raised by one's own mother in one's own home as was the case for most (not all) White and Indian families, would be considered the unusual case in South African history, unless one chooses to adopt White Western familial customs as the norm. Uncle's narrative reveals that even his own family practices this system of raising children within the extended family, yet he proposes in his argument that these are the kinds of different cultural practices that those with normative familial practices have to deal with: "my eldest sister's child grew up with my mother and called her mother, but that's the second mother, you see, and those are the things that you don't know".

The final phrase of this narrative segment signals that Uncle is borrowing from post-apartheid whiteness discourse: "you must just accept it now". This discursive form of white resistance to black rule and black inclusion is pervasive in South African society, as was shown in previous whiteness discourse studies (Steyn and Foster, 2008). This so-called new South Africa discourse

advances the argument that, despite cultural incompatibility, social inclusion is being forced upon whites who, under black rule, no longer have a choice but to accept that things are inevitably going to be more difficult for them in the so-called new South Africa.

Reference to shop floor employees as apartheid-struggle stalwarts who are stuck in the past is another discursive practice evident in Uncle's narrative, aimed at constructing extreme difference between the majority of shop floor workers, on the one hand, who seem to be stuck at the shop floor and the more learned new entrants into the work force, on the other hand, who rapidly progress to management levels. This is evident in the next narrative segment, where Uncle engages in subjective temporality to construct the apartheid-struggle mindset of his subordinates as out-dated, belonging in the past, to a bygone era, as the incorrect attitude for progressing in the present post-apartheid times:

With the guys on the shop floor sometimes they very militant also. They very militant. And they stand together. And if they don't like a team leader, they'll try and work him out. I've seen this in the past. Ja. Uncle is bad, this that that. And they stand together. They rather get this team leader in trouble as one of them get fired. And that's, and that's probably how they stayed in their jobs for so long. They mos said in the old days a injury to one is a injury to all. And, and the sad part in this new dispensation, there's still some of them like that because they come from the old school. They still behave in the same way. You find the modern guys coming in, the learnership guys and what, he's got a new mindset. Total different mindset compared to the guys from the old school. Now the old school, there are more of them, that influence the new kids on the block. That's the problem. So, it takes you longer to get things right. And you can't tell the old guys that's been here for twenty thirty

years to go, you understand. It will be unfair. So, you have to live with him and his problems. You understand my point. You have to be patient with him and his problems. You understand my point. You have to be patient with his problem and that's the difficult part of a shop floor team leader.

A number of identity work goals are being advanced here. Uncle transitions seamlessly from identity work constructing extreme cultural differences between the shop floor employees and himself as a member of management, to a new strand of discursive identity work aimed at constructing extreme differences in mindsets between the “modern guys”, who are suited for management, and the majority of the shop floor workers with an old apartheid mindset. In doing so he borrows from dominant post-apartheid societal and political discourses that problematise those who engage in collective resistance as they struggle for social, political and economic justice. These discourses call for South Africans to let go of the past, to put the injustices of the apartheid era behind them, to reconcile for the sake of progress and to get on with rebuilding a prosperous South Africa. Against this backdrop, Uncle constructs his older shop floor subordinates as incapable of adjusting to the high-performance work ethic of the so called new South Africa, storying their interaction with younger entrants into the workplace as indoctrination, designed to ensure that these new incumbents with their new mindsets, also resist the temptation to perform well. He invokes popular collective resistance discourse to demonstrate his argument: “a injury to one is a injury to all (sic)”.

In the same narrative segment above, in order to maintain his hard earned acceptance as the leader (an identity he previously struggled for), Uncle engages in continuous identity work that constructs

his managerialism as the sympathetic paternalistic leader: one who pities the apartheid-struggle stalwarts, acknowledging that to simply “tell the old guys to go” would be “unfair” given their struggles, but one that problematises their inability to adjust to the post-apartheid so called new South Africa, choosing instead to “live with him and his problems”, to “be patient with him and his problems”. This is storied as continuous identity work because the extreme mindset difference is something that “you have to live with” and something that makes first level management a constant struggle over time because “it takes you longer to get things right”. Once again the prominence of diachronicity in narrative construction is evident but unlike the case where time was altered relative to calendar or clock time to cope with the intensity of episodic identity work, subjective time is used in continuous identity work to signal that expectations about who one is changes normatively over time and as such is incontestable to be adopted or a false normative to be resisted. This extensive interplay between identity and time in Uncle’s narration is used as a rhetorical device to signal a topos for the argument that one’s identity has to keep pace with changing times, that organisations have expectations about valued ways of being in the world, and these expectations shift with time.

Moreover, this discursive performativity enables Uncle to create new identity categories for grouping those with modern versus old mindsets; those belonging to the new South Africa versus those stuck in the old South Africa; those workers who continue to engage in resistance and the struggle against injustice as belonging in the past along with apartheid. His constant daily struggle is therefore storied as being a manager to both the modern and the old mindsets in a world where being from the “old school” is no longer valued and is in fact pitied: “and the sad part in this new dispensation, there’s still some of them like that because they come from the old school”. Uncle

draws on the interdiscursivity of the organisation's expectation that in order to progress in one's career one needs to demonstrate a new South Africa, future focused mindset and that of broader societal invidious discourses of post-apartheid speak that "the struggle" is over, that those who continue to fight for as yet unfulfilled economic freedom should be content with their political freedom as focusing on the past injustices is in fact a hindrance to progress in the "new dispensation". He does so in order to pronounce the existence of another identity group: the militants who win the fight to stay in their jobs at the expense of team leaders.

The construction of employees as militant collectivists is a form of discursive performativity that goes beyond merely constructing extreme difference between management and working classes. It also stories the relationship between them as extremely adversarial. In so doing this narrative serves to construct the first level manager as indispensable, being the first line of defense between militant workers and more senior levels of management. The first level manager is at that level of management always in the firing line of the "old school" shop floor employees who would rather falsely accuse their team leader of deviance as a ploy to divert attention away from their inability to do the work required in a modern workplace: "And they stand together. They rather get this team leader in trouble as one of them get fired. And that's, and that's probably how they stayed in their jobs for so long". Yet, he simultaneously constructs a first level manager identity as one who understands the apartheid struggle (like himself) and is therefore uniquely placed to have the empathy to deal with the shop floor, to "be patient with his problem and that's the difficult part of a shop floor team leader".

7.2 Continuous Identity Work Transitions in the Construction of an Indispensable Managerial Identity

James (alias), a Coloured shift team leader at the MoneyBank (alias) financial services company, with medium tenure (11-15 years) as a first level manager, narrates how he experienced the socio-political policy shift in MoneyBank's call centre:

If you have to look at it now, for in order for me or for anyone else that's [pause] not Black [said in hushed tone] for now, if you have to apply for positions now, it's a no-no. At the moment the company is only looking at [pause] at Black... because I think [MoneyBank] is unbalanced. It's not balanced. So, I think we've got a certain period to balance the equations you understand. So, at the moment you know there's opportunities arising and whatever but automatically because of your skin colour you automatically you get declined you understand. So, there's many positions that you're overqualified for that you qualify for that you're looking for you understand but because your skin colour doesn't allow you to, you understand, and I think that's unfair, understand. Something else I wanted to raise earlier on also especially here with our environment you understand, you must look at it, I mean if as a leader or as a leader you hear it from the floor: "This is what we lack here in our department", you understand. They keep on telling you: "This is what we lack. We have a lack of Afrikaans in our area", you understand. If you have to look at this call centre a few years ago the majority of the people in this call centre was Coloured, you know that? Majority of the people in this call centre was coloured and somehow it just died out. I don't know for what reason, but it died out. They're pumping in more and more and more Blacks into the um area, which nothing is wrong, but what I'm saying is: look at your clientele,

look at your clientele. Look we do understand er for politics or whatever you want to look good as a company. You want to make sure your equations are balanced or whatever, but you must look at this: majority, majority of our clients is White whether they like it or not, majority of our clients. But you know what, majority of our clients we are going to lose, or we are already losing. So, we don't have the physical facts. We don't see these things but er if we're not already losing them. Like I said your big clients with those big portfolios is Afrikaners. Nou jy weet hoe is daai man. Daai mense sê (veral as hy daai Afrikaans [opsie] gedruk het): "Ek soek daai Afrikaans se opsie". En er, hoe kan ek sê, jy weet, daai Boere is baie streng as jy dit like of nie en and if we don't look at it I mean we looking at that we wanna keep the employee and employee equity om nou vir hulle gelukkig te hou but in this side the clients are suffering. We as a company, we should, ons moet sulke dinge kan baklei, verstaan jy, employee equity. Because years ago, you would take the sweeper and put him in management, understand and take the tea girl form outside and toe tea girl management gemaak.

Translation: ...your big clients with those big portfolios is Afrikaners. Now you know how that man is. Those people say, especially if he pressed that Afrikaans [option]: "I'm looking for that Afrikaans option". And er, how can I say, you know, those Boers* are very strict whether you like it or not and, and if we don't look at it I mean we looking at that we wanna keep the employee and employee equity just to keep them happy but in this side the clients are suffering. We as a company, we should, we must be able to fight such things, you understand, employee equity. Because years ago, you would take the sweeper and put him in management, understand and take the tea girl form outside and then made the tea girl management.

*Note: The direct translation for the term “Boere” is “farmer”. However, within this particular South African context the term Boere is best translated to the term “Boers” which is the term describing White Afrikaners in relation to their mainly Dutch heritage.

As has been shown in other cases, a key aspect of the narrative segment is the participant’s engagement in subjective temporality. In this narrative James draws attention to a recent time window of change that is expressed discursively through the epistrophe of “now” as a rhetorical device at the end of each phrase of the first sentence of the narrative: “If you have to look at it *now*, for in order for me or for anyone else that’s [pause] not Black [said in hushed tone] for *now*, if you have to apply for positions *now*, it’s a no-no” (emphasis added to highlight the use of epistrophe). He then immediately follows with another repetition device, a restatement of “now” in the second sentence which is used to explain a present temporality: “*At the moment* the company is only looking at [pause] at Black” (emphasis added to highlight the restatement repetition device), followed by another restatement in the third sentence “we’ve got a certain period” and a repetition in the fourth “So, at the moment”. As was the case for all other participants, James uses subjective temporality within his narrative identity construction as the dominant organising principle for storying who he is as a first level manager. In this example “at the moment” James engages in a similar type of time-bucketing as was seen previously with other participants. The data in this segment shows he does so again when signalling the end of an era which “just died out” when the majority of the people in the call centre were Coloured and again at the end of the segment when designating the act of illegal tokenism (known in South African B-BBEE law as “fronting”) to a bygone era as something that used to be a practice “years ago.” In this way his identity struggles are perceived as temporal. The data also reveals that James’ episodic identity work transitions are

triggered by employment equity interventions which threatens his personal and social power as he struggles for a powerful managerial identity. He too engages in identity substitution transitioning from being a minority raced Team Leader to an Afrikaans speaking Team Leader whose power is vested in his being uniquely able to relate to the Afrikaner clients, those with the biggest portfolios in MoneyBank.

There is much more that could be said about the way in which James engages in identity substitution as identity work, however, I provide only a high-level analysis of James' episodic identity work transitions here as I do not wish to repeat what has been shown with other exemplars throughout chapter six. Instead, I wish to draw attention to the continuous identity work transitions and the discursive performativity within James' storied identity constructions. I begin this analysis again at the start of the segment where James repeatedly pauses before uttering the word "Black" and also drops into a hushed tone upon the second mention. His reluctance stems from his acknowledgement that he as a Coloured minority-raced team leader in the call centre occupies a low-power position compared with the Black majority in the call centre. The sheer pace of the power shift in the call centre from majority Coloured workers like himself to majority Black workers is storied discursively as an unexpected sudden extinction of a species: "somehow it just died out. I don't know for what reason, but it died out". Interestingly he does not offer a proposed mechanism for the extinction. Instead he proffers that the gap left by the extinction is being rapidly, forcefully and increasingly filled with Black workers: "They're pumping in more and more and more Blacks into the um area", a process he suspends in psychological time as being relevant "at the moment" just over 25 years after the repeal of apartheid law, a time when society has grown impatient with the lack of economic democracy (as shown in Chapter 2). Within this context of

the socio-political imperative for reform, James finds his group threatened and so engages in resistant Whiteness discourse in the form of post-apartheid speak, an invidious discursive practice that integrates canonical societal and organisational discourse to construct extreme difference between organisational & management identity and that of the workers and thereby constructing the first level manager as indispensable. Here Black bodies have been commoditised as a high-volume, commonly available, unthinking, choiceless resource. This dehumanising, deintellectualising of Black workers serves to foster the fallacious argument that a Black majority is bad for business and ultimately Black rule is bad for South Africa. The give-away phrase that reveals the invidious underlying topos is “which nothing is wrong, but”. This specific discursive practice in post-apartheid speak serves to pretend that a voice of reason is required to highlight the unintended consequences of doing what is purportedly right, in order to prevent the inevitable harm that results from doing right too zealously. Those who engage in this practice seek to cast post-apartheid reform as a moral dilemma, capable of equally doing good and harm rather than as a human rights imperative. Ultimately, the proponents of the ‘reform-cautiously’ discourse harbour the topos that privileges held by a few under apartheid are in fact rights, the loss of which deserve equal weight and consideration as does the acquisition of basic human rights that were denied the majority.

The reform-cautiously discourse intersects with the business-first and meritocracy organisational discourses, making available a societal-organisational invidious interdiscursive fabric from which organisational actors can draw as they structure their arguments for resisting organisational reforms that threatens the power of their personal and group identities. James draws from this reform-cautiously-for-the-sake-of the-business discourse in three important ways. Firstly, by

expressing disconcertion that “pumping in more and more and more Blacks” is being done only to “balance equations”. The fallacious argument here is that employment equity is a forced numbers game with no intent of bringing about economic redress and with no appreciation of the inevitable negative impact that accompanies the introduction of Blacks into the workplace especially when “the majority, majority of our clients is White whether they like it or not”.

This leads to the second important way that James engages in invidious interdiscursive practices: he constructs extreme incompatibility between White customers and Black call centre workers. The “pumping in” of “more and more and more Blacks” and the caution that “majority of our clients we are going to lose” (sic) because “majority of our clients is White” (sic) are discourse fragments with a number of common underlying post-apartheid resistant topoi that Black and White people are incompatible (the increase in numbers of the one group implies the decrease in numbers of the other group); are incapable of integrating (the inclusion of one group implies the exclusion of the other) and have oppositional goals (we are keeping them happy on this side and on that side our (White) customers are suffering).

Thirdly, and most importantly, James straddles the intersection of available canonical organisational and societal discourses to create his version of post-apartheid speak. He draws on a popular business discourse that the “customer is king” – the most important person in a client service organisation is the client and what the client wants the client gets – which means that satisfying the client at the expense of all stakeholders is a business imperative. He then marries this idea with post-apartheid Whiteness discourse that Black call centre agents cannot effectively meet the client service needs of White clients because Black call centre agents do not speak

Afrikaans. James is particularly concerned that White Afrikaners get what they want because, in his experience, Afrikaners are “strict Boers” who are also the biggest portfolio owners and hence the most important clients to please.

James constructs this dilemma at the liminal space between employees, managers and clients which he as a Coloured Afrikaans speaking first level manager is uniquely placed to resolve. He opens his narrative with a statement about the racio-ethnic exclusion he experiences whereby the colour of his skin “automatically” denies him the chance of promotion. He then builds the argument that it is precisely his racio-ethnicity that enables him to be the go-to person for the wealthiest clients with the largest portfolios. The power of the Afrikaans speaking first level manager as being indispensable for effective client engagement of MoneyBank’s most influential customers is discursively achieved by transitioning from personal identity construction to organisational identification: “We as a company, we should, we must be able to fight such things, you understand, employee equity.” James thus discursively elevates the power of his identity as an Afrikaans speaking non-Black team leader through synonymy with the organisation’s elite namely, senior management and clientele identity. His own identity struggle has been cast as equivalent to MoneyBank’s struggle to retain its Afrikaans identity in the face of enforced socio-political reform expectations such as employee equity.

Finally, the narrative segment ends with James engaging in invidious societal-organisational interdiscursive practices veiled as post-apartheid speak: “Because years ago you would take the sweeper and put him in management, understand, and take the tea girl from outside and then made the tea girl management”. The discursively unmarked raceless incumbents “the sweeper” and “the tea girl” who were “put in” or “made” management expresses exacerbated instances of popular

societal post-apartheid speak. Firstly, the trope of Blacks as normatively occupying the lowest roles in organisations typified as the cleaner, the sweeper and the extremely invidious terms garden boy or tea girl is pervasive in post-apartheid organisational-societal discourse in relation to employment equity and black economic empowerment specifically to advance the fallacious argument that employment equity is about tokenism – advancing unqualified employees into management ranks simply because they are Black. Secondly, James’s proposal that MoneyBank is justified to mount a fight against employment equity in the same way that South Africans successfully fought against the illegal activity of B-BBEE fronting, serves to advance the argument that “pumping in Blacks” into call centres who lack Afrikaans language proficiency, is tantamount to fronting. Moreover, it is not only James and Afrikaans speaking clients who protest the flawed implementation of employment equity polices, but the struggle to stem the loss of Afrikaans capability is storied as the struggle of the Black call centre agents themselves, making the resistance all the more justified: “...as a leader you hear it from the floor: “This is what we lack here in our department”, you understand. They keep on telling you: “This is what we lack. We have a lack of Afrikaans in our area”, you understand”.

James’s narrative reveals his more or less continuous identity work transitions as a call centre team leader whose racial identity makes him unsuitable for promotion to higher levels of management while his ethnic identity proffers him the power of being in demand to serve MoneyBank’s high profile clients at a time when MoneyBank management has been forced to balance their numbers through a flawed implementation of employment equity. As with other participants’ narratives, the goal of these storied constructions of self is to construct the job of the first level manager as indispensable to the organisation, and the holder of the job as the one who occupies a powerful

position at the margins between management and an extremely different workforce. The narrative construction is accomplished through invidious societal-organisational interdiscursivity in the form of post-apartheid Whiteness discourse.

In the next segment, Uncle constructs his first level manager role as the one uniquely able to deal with the “not so educated” shop floor workers, something that upper management does not have to do:

You see, a shop floor leader, he, the difference between him and the general manager is the general manager might look at the bigger picture. I look at the picture *now* (emphasis in original). You understand. I need to execute now. And I need to talk to people that is not so educated like him and his managers. You with me? I have to use a total different mindset because I got people that came from the apartheid era that's still in the system with a standard eight and a standard ten [equivalent to grade 10 and grade 12 in the revised South African school grading system adopted in 1996]. So, I have to talk in a different way, where, he will talk differently to his management 'cause they educated. I'm dealing with semi-skilled people and they not as clever so you going to have to have patience and guidance with these guys on the shop floor, you understand. You can't just say this, you must show him what you want.... So, on the shop floor its more complex because of education than to compare with a man that's got a degree. He can understand quicker what you trying to say.

Here Uncle engages explicitly in societal-organisational interdiscursivity. Firstly, he borrows from dominant organisational discourses about strategic “big picture” managers versus operational

“execute now” managers who manage so called white collar versus blue collar workers. He combines the underlying argument of such discourse (that there is no one managerial identity but rather many distinct managerial identities depending on the management level), with dominant post-apartheid societal discourses about the so-called brain drain post 1994 that left South Africa with an uneducated Black majority and a small minority of educated Whites to take businesses and the country as a whole into the future. The goal of this interdiscursivity is to construct the first level manager as uniquely able to deliver business results in post-apartheid corporate South Africa, and hence as indispensable. It can also be noted that Uncle’s discourse is overtly gendered, not only in this narrative segment but generally throughout his narrative and indeed in most participants’ narratives, a point I return to in Chapter 8.

Uncle then seamlessly transitions to another strand of discursive construction, where the focus of his identity work serves to build on the notion of the importance of the first level manager role for delivering operational results around the clock, giving upper management the opportunity to focus on strategic matters. This is demonstrated in the next narrative segment where Uncle stories the work context with respect to the management function as akin to a tactical response unit, where all control over and responsibility for production results is entrusted to first level managers who are at the “front line”. Top management provide the overall plan and thereafter merely need to be informed of major deviations from the plan (despite being fully aware that they are not able to exercise any direct control over its execution). The first level manager is thus constructed as the most powerful player in this narrative:

And it’s the front-line manager that work shifts that keep the business going. Because the general manager’s asleep and all his managers are asleep. We are the one that put the

[product] in the warehouse on a 24 basis. So, the team leader, supervisor, front line are the key people in the business... He's in charge, he makes the decisions. He must make the decisions.... There's still procedure in place. If you have a breakdown longer than a hour, you must phone... They still build systems in place for you to still communicate with them. So, you not totally in charge. In actual fact when you phone him, there's nothing he can do. You understand my point? That's a waste of time but you follow the protocol. We have to phone him and inform him. There's nothing he can do. He's sleeping. We got the program under control, you understand.

Here, Uncle's discursive identity work goes beyond merely constructing the first level manager as an important part of management. Rather, the first level manager is *the* most important role in management. The rest of management are cast as so unimportant that they are literally asleep, unless business protocol requires them to receive communication that they are powerless to act on in any event. It is clear that Uncle's narrative resists the notion that first level management is the lowest level of management. Instead the liminal position occupied by first level managers at the margins of managerial power between management and the workforce is constructed as the management level with the most direct power over operations, uniquely placed to get the shop floor to deliver results.

Notwithstanding, as the next narrative segment demonstrates, the power of this liminal space is continuously contested, requiring continuous identity work such as the metaphorical discourse below to consistently construct and resist deconstruction of the first level manager as indispensable:

You a, we used to call it, you a shock absorber. You in-between management and the workforce. You are in there buffering all the time. You getting it from the top. You getting it from the bottom....It's the most difficult to manage, you understand. The boss want results, I need to get results through them, so I'm in between. ... It is very, very difficult. Team leader job it's probably the most difficult job. The most difficult job. And, and, and you got a compliment of fifteen people. You've got artisans in between. Where not even the exec got fifteen people, you understand. So, the team leader got the most people he have to look after on a daily basis, on a shiftily basis.

The metaphor of the first level manager as a shock absorber is more than just a rhetorical device to resist the notion of first level managers as low power leaders. Its value in discursive performativity enables the first level manager to feel powerful even in the face of resistance. The power of a shock absorber is precisely its resistance capability – its ability to exert bi-directional power proportional to the resistant power enacted upon it from both directions in a way that cushions the opposing translation of the forces. The mechanism whereby the shock absorber wields the indispensable power is articulately summarised in the following narrative segment:

But I think what helped me, what helped me is when I started producing the numbers, they start having respect for me.... They could see now with this team leader the numbers are on the board. Compared to the other shifts we're taking ten cases more a month home as a incentive...

By consistently performing the most difficult of the management jobs, that of managing them down there to run the numbers for them up there, the first level management role is powerfully

rendered as indispensable within the management function of organisations. “Running the numbers” provides power over subordinates: the shift that “put the numbers on the board”, gets rewarded, driving subordinates to “listen to” the shift leader who wins them incentive benefits. “Running the numbers” also gives senior management peace of mind, who in turn empower high-performing shift leaders with more freedom to act and make decisions, because if they “put the numbers on the board”, the senior managers get to sleep at night (literally).

Throughout the course of their daily activities and in tune with shifts in canonical societal and organisational discourses over time, Uncle and James continuously transition between the multiple strands of discursive identity work required to maintain extreme difference between workers and managers and to construct and maintain an identity of the indispensable manager. Although these two narratives are foregrounded as illustrative of this theme, the goals of continuous identity work transitions presented here emerged across the participants’ narratives.

Moreover, the use of invidious organisational-societal discourses as discursive performativity in continuous identity work was widely evidenced across the narratives as presented through the exemplars foregrounded in both chapter six and chapter seven.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to relevant theory and research, highlighting the contribution of the emergent theory for management and identity work scholarship.

Chapter 8: Discussion – Power, Privilege and Identity Work Transitions at the Margins

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the relevant literature by exploring the ways that the findings converge with, diverge from and cognate with existing theories about the identity work of first level managers in organisations.

This research study was designed to construct theory about how lower echelon managers construct their identities in the context of significant societal and political change. While I acknowledge that research questions in a grounded theory inquiry are refined throughout the study, I nevertheless initiated this inquiry with the following questions: How do first level managers engage in identity work? How has this changed or not changed over time? How are they negotiating and reconstructing their identities as first line managers in the face of changes in the political, social and historical context of the societies within which they live and the country as a whole? How do differences in their social identities shape the nature of their identity work?

The overarching research design and analytical strategy that I applied was constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). However, very early on in the study it clearly emerged that the first level managers expressed their identity through story telling. This led me to incorporate narrative inquiry (Bruner, 1991) into the overall grounded theory methodology as a means to analyse the identity work behaviours within their narrative constructions. Other scholars have also examined the potential of combining the methods of grounded theory and narrative inquiry,

concluding that combining the two approaches “creates possibilities for developing a richer understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Lal, Suto & Ungar, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, a close look at the narratives revealed that the nature of the identity talk was not neutral but gendered, racialised, politicised and generally fissured along various lines of power difference. I therefore turned to critical discourse analysis (Wodak, et al., 2016) to examine the processes and practices underlying first level managers’ discursive identity work.

A central finding of this study was that participants used psychological time, rather than calendar time, as a key organising principle in the narrative construction of their managerial selves. While the role of temporality in narrative construction has been extensively theorised in narrative inquiry scholarship; (Brown, Gabriel & Gherardi, 2009; Bruner, 1991; Clandinin, 2006; Hiles et al., 2017), a thorough literature review revealed that the role of subjective temporality in narrative identity work is understudied, particularly in organisational and management studies with notable exceptions by Watson (2009), Pratt et al. (2006) and Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010). Previous scholarship on subjective temporality in identity work has been theorised mainly in the context of identity regulation (Wilson & Ross, 2001; Ross & Wilson, 2002; Wilson, Gunn & Ross, 2009).

Two modes of diachronicity were evident from the narrative analysis. Firstly, participants experienced the political, economic and social transformation of their societies and organisations as episodes of transformation, each triggering episodic identity work transitions as participants re-construct who they are. Secondly, participants also experienced societal and organisational transformations as a flow of more or less constant micro changes that continuously required them to reframe who they are, keeping them engaged in continuous identity work transitions. During

episodic identity work transitions, participants used psychological time in overt ways, noticeably altering the pace and duration of time relative to calendar or clock time to cope with the intensity of episodic identity work. Subjective time was used during continuous identity work transitions to signal that expectations about one's identity changes normatively over time and as such is incontestable.

I found that the nature of the episodic identity work was best conceptualised as a process of identity substitution, where the participants substituted fundamental aspects of who they were previously when they first identified as first level managers, replacing these with alternative self-concepts of a first level manager in so called "post-apartheid" organisations. This process was found to be an intense struggle for first level managers as they transitioned from one episode of identity substitution to the next, triggered when they experienced organisational transformation interventions that threatened their personal power as managers. This particular finding represents an extension of current identity work scholarship that seeks to understand the detailed mechanisms of how identity work at work is accomplished (Atewologun et al., 2017; Brown and Coupland, 2015). Furthermore, managerial and socio-political power gain or loss as triggers for episodic or occasioned identity work has rarely been a focus in management and organisational identity work studies at the margins of managerial power, namely, the lowest level of management.

I found that, in addition to episodic identity work, participants continuously engaged in discursive identity work practices to maintain the powerful managerial identities they had struggled for. I found that the nature of this continuous identity work was expressed as discursive performativity within storied identity constructions. I use the term discursive performativity in the Foucauldian

sense (Panayiotou, 2012) to denote both the linguistic and non-linguistic discursive practices of the first level managers as they continuously worked to construct and maintain an identity as the indispensable manager who deals with (their storied construction of) extreme difference between management and working classes. In particular, using a thick approach to discourse analysis of whole narratives rather than line by line textual analysis revealed non-linguistic performative practices of racially stratified social hierarchy in organisations through processes such as the host-guest performative and the conditional meritocratic approaches to employment equity through the mentor-protégé performative. These findings and the analytical strategy used to uncover them form an important contribution to scholarship answering the call of Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) who are critical of discourse analysis in organisational studies to the extent that it represents a reductionist, fallaciously constitutive and colonializing way of understanding phenomena in organisational settings. They call for thick descriptions and counter-balanced empirical lenses while being acutely sensitive to the discursive structure and content of performative organisational processes under study. It also underscores the work of Down and Reveley (2009) who used Goffman's dramaturgical perspective to analyse managers' identity narratives and found that successful management performances are an important expression of and source of material for crafting stable managerial identities.

Perhaps the most salient finding was that the context for identity work mattered to the participants in a way that has hitherto not been theorised in the literature. Specifically, the national socio-political context impacted significantly on the participant's identity work in two important ways. Firstly, participants' experienced threats to their managerial power as a result of the political power shift between race groups triggered by organisational transformation interventions as proactive

response to, compliance with or resistance to the national policy reforms directed at the dismantling of apartheid and the redress of racially based economic exclusion. The experience of identity threat triggered intense episodes of identity struggles.

Secondly, I found that participants' discursive identity practices were strongly influenced by dominant post-apartheid discourses, and that shifts in the discursive content of these practices were triggered by shifts in the prevailing canonical societal-organisational interdiscursive practices perceived to threaten the power of their social identity group. Furthermore, the first level managers' identity work narratives in this study revealed that so-called 'post-apartheid' South African organisations remain sites for perpetuating social injustice through organisational discursive practices as well as complex societal-organisational interdiscursive practices that serve to maintain an unequal distribution of power, social oppression and exclusion. These findings powerfully address Brown's (2015, p.31) assertion that "*There is much we still do not know about how contexts – particularly organisational and national cultural settings – affect individuals' identities and identity work*".

Each of the foregoing findings represent dominant processes or practices of identity work that interact dynamically over time in complex, yet explainable ways as represented by the model in Figure 8.

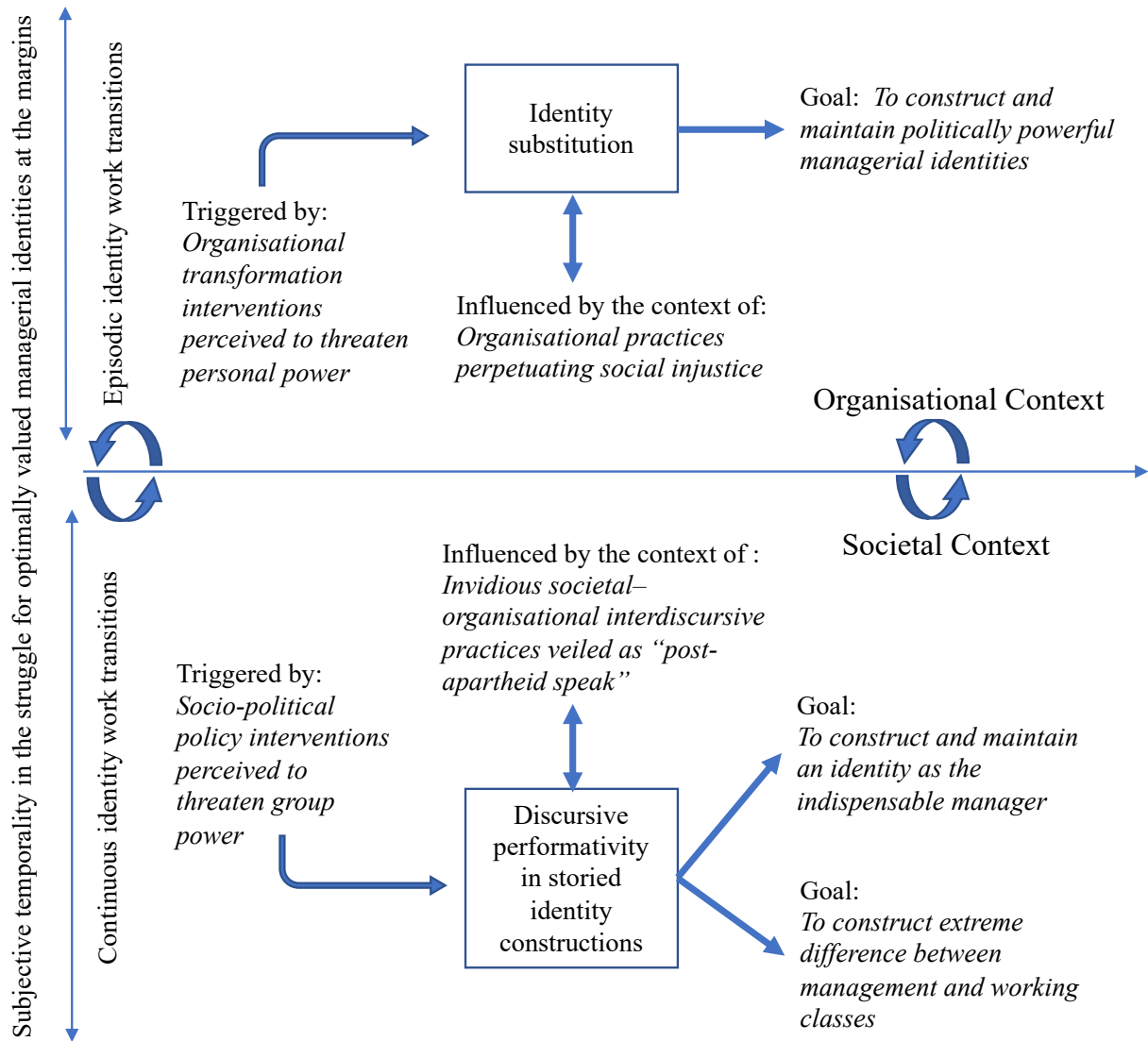


Figure 8: Identity work transitions of lower echelon managers – model reproduced

8.2 Subjective Temporality in the Struggle for Powerful Managerial Identities at the Margins

The relationship between subjective perceptions of time and identity work has largely been the domain of scholarly work related to temporal self-appraisal (TSA) theory (Ross and Wilson, 2002; Wilson and Ross, 2003). TSA theorists and researchers have demonstrated that people often revise the timing of events in autobiographical memory, perceiving accomplishments as psychologically more recent and failures as being in the more distant past when controlling for calendar time, in order to construct and maintain a favourable current identity. Studies have shown that the practice of systematic biases in subjective time when conducting self-appraisals are fundamental to processes of identity regulation (Wilson, Gunn & Ross, 2009). According to TSA theory, by perceiving past glories as subjectively recent in time, individuals can enhance their current identity appraisal because the accomplished self is basically the same as the current self. On the other hand, by perceiving past failures to belong to a subjectively more distant past, individuals can attribute those failures to a former self, reducing a negative threat to their current self-appraisal (Wilson & Ross, 2001). While temporality in identity regulation was apparent in this study it was not processed in the same way. I found that the two modes of subjective temporality being episodic and continuous narrative identity construction processes relied on diachronic identity work transitions that did not follow predictable temporal self-appraisal processes.

8.2.1 Episodic identity work transitions.

Firstly, participants experienced the political, economic and social transformation of their societies and organisations as triggers for episodic identity work, transitioning from one narrative identity

reconstruction to the next in discernible episodes engaging them in time-dependent identity work. I found that participants engaged in a practice of time bucketing or era creation and that they also experienced distortions of calendar time when engaging in episodic identity work and when transitioning from one intense episode of identity work to the next.

Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) proposed that episodic narrative identity work plays a key role in the process of how individuals construct and revise their identity repertoires in times of identity salient work role transitions. They propose that the prevalence of narrative identity work during work role transition episodes are influenced by the nature of the interactions during those episodes. They postulate that when the stakes are high for the individual such as during publicly visible encounters with others, encounters with high-status/powerful others or encounters with new work colleagues, that episodic narrative identity work will be more prevalent than at other times. This is because those who have transitioned to new roles are more inclined to use identity narratives during episodes of high stakes interaction encounters to explain why they are credible occupants of the new work role and why the previous work role was transitioned from.

The findings of this study extend Ibarra and Barbulescu's (2010) idea of narrative identity work prevalence during identity salient episodes of interaction related to work role transitions in a number of important ways. Firstly, the identity narratives of the first level managers served predominantly to convince others that their social identity credentials were suitable for management roles, in particular their racial and ethnic identity congruency with management work roles. Secondly, the first level managers did not merely engage in explanatory narrative identity work but rather engaged in high intensity episodic identity struggles as their racio-ethnic suitability

for management roles was mostly contested during the interactions experienced. Thirdly, the characteristics of the episodic interactions and the triggered identity narratives were found to be significantly and directly influenced by the socio-political context in that transitions in the national socio-political landscape superseded the work role transitions as triggers for identity work and simultaneously provided the canonical discursive material for the actual construction of the episodic identity work narratives. Furthermore, and most importantly, the first level managers engaged in identity substitution, which not only revised their identity narrative as proposed by Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) but they fundamentally altered the actual work role of the first level manager job to suit their identity work goals being the struggle for a powerful managerial identity. Thus, unlike the one-way dynamic of work role transition triggering narrative identity work, this study reveals a cyclical episodic effect where first level manager identity work was triggered by changes to the work context as a result of national political policy changes, to which first level managers responded with identity work as identity substitution which in turn resulted in a new work role definition of being a first level manager, and this transition in turn triggered the subsequent episodic identity struggle and active continuous discursive identity work. The power of the narrative identity work was therefore found to go beyond merely neutral explanations but served as intense struggles and even the materialisation of new ways of being a first level manager in service of first level managers' identity work goals of power gain, maintenance or resistance of loss of power.

Howard-Grenville, Metzger and Meyer (2013) developed a process model of community identity recreation, resurrection and regeneration in the context of episodic or recurring organisations such as summer camps, large sporting events or large industry or academic conferences. Their study

revealed that the role of organisational actors such as event leaders and community members, the importance of tangible resources such as money and skilled people to orchestrate identity-salient experiences and the role of intangible resources such as symbols, authentic experience and emotions were significant inputs into the collective identity resurgence process following a period of identity decline and threat. While the present study focussed on individual experiences of identity work and not on community identity resurgence, it nevertheless similarly found that participants' memories of their lived experiences and felt emotions associated with identity salient events triggered intense identity work. The major difference, however, was that the events which triggered episodic identity construction in the organisation had originated outside the organisation resulting from national socio-political events that fundamentally altered societal power and privilege.

8.2.2 Continuous identity work transitions.

In between the highly intense episodes of identity struggles, participants did not report a phase of background, passive identity stability but rather within the ever turbulent political context of the past twenty-five years, they experienced ongoing societal and organisational transformations as a flow of more or less constant micro changes that continuously required them to reframe who they were. Participants therefore engaged in active, yet less intense, continuous identity work transitions. The nature of identity work in organisations as a dynamic, ongoing, constant, unfinished project with individual identities constantly evolving, always in a state of becoming is one side of a well-established debate with the alternative theoretical tradition holding that identities are largely stable and that identity work is occasioned when triggered (Ashforth, 2016; Atewologun et al., 2017; Corlett et al., 2017).

A key finding in this study, however, is that first level managers experienced their everyday identity work as active continuous identity work (not passive, background work) while simultaneously experiencing episodes of high intensity identity struggles, and both modes of dynamic identity work were experienced over extended periods of time, some of them for over twenty-five years.

I found that participants accomplished these continuous identity work transitions diachronically by engaging in a form of subjective temporality akin to the personification of time. Through their discursive identity practices, participants surrendered their choices about identification and disidentification with various racio-ethnic groups to the power of the passage of time expressing this normatively in their narratives in line with shifting canonical societal-organisational discourses. A popular way that this was achieved in participant narratives was through a form of post-apartheid whiteness discourse (Steyn & Foster, 2008) that I call “post-apartheid speak”, so named because its use extended beyond the narratives of the White participants in this study and in fact was equally as profound in the narratives of the Coloured and Black first level managers, while also reflecting the discourse in the wider post-apartheid South African society. I found profound levels of deference to the changing times as the personified dictator of new norms and new expectations about the identities of self and others. The nature of identity work within a context of more or less ongoing micro shifts in the political landscape, perceived as rolling waves of changing times, signalled by the constantly shifting societal discourse, was such that first level managers’ narratives expressed their identity work as politically constrained. Accordingly, participants expressed how the consequential shifts in socio-political power of the changing times

had normatively impacted their social identities and managerial identities and in turn, their identity work.

In this way the socio-political pressures felt by the first level managers and the influence it had on their identity work could be seen as a form of identity regulation. Critical management scholars such as Alvesson and Willmott (2002) have argued that identity regulation is an important form of organisational and managerial control, instrumental in the identity work of organisational actors. Scholars have highlighted the processes of negotiation, struggle and contestation that employees engage in when doing identity work at work (Adams & Crafford, 2012), the types of organisational conditioning designed to exert control over individual identity work (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014), and the emotional consequence of organisational regulation of identity such as insecurity (Knights & Clarke, 2014), anxiety (Gill, 2015), insecurity and anxiety (Knights & Clarke, 2018). These studies do not, however, address the influence of national politics, nor the specific mechanisms at play at the margins of managerial power. This study therefore makes an important contribution to the scholarship on identity regulation in organisations by showing how the national socio-political context interacts with the organisational context to exert immense and inescapable psychological influence over the identity work of managers at the margins of organisational power within the context of a major national political power shift as was the case for South Africa where political power shifted from White people to Black people.

Moreover, despite being constrained by the available discursive material for narrative identity construction owing to the dominance of socio-political and racio-ethnic post-apartheid discourses, by engaging in subjective temporality, first level managers were able to transition from episodes

of high intensity identity work to lower intensity continuous identity work with a sense of time-controlled agency over the construction and reconstruction of their managerial selves. Although the exact inner workings from a psychoanalytic standpoint has not been examined in this study, future research into subjective temporality in narrative identity construction may reveal how subjective time control as a mechanism for retaining agency over identity work, contributes to the structure-agency debate in identity work scholarship (Booyesen, 2018; Brown, 2017).

8.3 Identity Substitution as identity Work at the Margins of Managerial Power

Turning to the question of how participants negotiated and revised their identities as first level managers in the face of changes in the political, social and historical context, a central finding was that first level managers engaged in a processes of substituting key identity-defining fundamental ways of being a first level manager in order to gain or resist the loss of managerial power. I use the term *identity substitution* to conceptualise the identity work that the participants engaged in as they substituted fundamental elements of who they were as first level managers in the past with alternative self-concepts of being a first level manager in so called “post-apartheid” organisations, the substitution being elicited in response to organisational transformation events that threatened their personal power as managers.

The process of identity substitution was found to be similar for all participants, being an intense struggle in the form of episodic identity work. Moreover, I found that the triggers for identity substitution were similar, being organisational transformations that threatened participants’ managerial power. However, the goals of identity substitution varied depending on whether participants experienced having lower or higher political power before the triggering events.

Participants who experienced no or little political power during apartheid engaged in intense struggles to gain managerial power, through the construction of politically powerful identities that served as alternative or substitute first level manager identities. Exemplars included the construction of substitute self-concepts from being a non-white ineligible for management to being the first non-white manager, or from being a high performing “clever non-white” to being the indispensable manager, the “shock absorber” between shop floor and senior management, or from being the Black manager who was placed as a “strategic move” to being the “son of the company” who passed the rite of passage.

On the other hand, those participants who experienced loss of political power in the transition to a post-apartheid South Africa, engaged in intense struggles to maintain managerial power through the construction of alternative social and managerial identities as they resisted the dominance of those now in power. Exemplars include substituting being the only White team leader left at shift level to being a more disciplined, higher pedigree, more technically capable version of shift leadership compared with the new standards for management entry. From being a shift leader whose group was in charge to being a super-ordinate shift leader, volunteering for extra-role tasks such as being the (self-appointed) emergency preparedness trainer for all other shift team leaders in order to maintain power that sets the self apart from ordinary first level managers.

Moreover, those participants who experienced a period of political power gain which was then followed by the experience of loss of this power when the new B-BBEE codes were promulgated, such as the younger Coloured participants, as well as those younger White participants who entered the workplace several years after the repeal of apartheid and had hoped that affirmative action

policies would have been terminated just when they were intensified at national government levels, experienced profound levels of extreme disarray and construction of conflictual identities. Exemplars include substituting being a Coloured team leader having no promotion prospects to being an Afrikaans speaking team leader whose power is vested in being the only Afrikaans speaking team leader and thus uniquely able to relate to the wealthiest Afrikaner clients. Another exemplar was a younger White Afrikaans manager who started his narrative by locating his identity struggle as the struggle of all White people, and then re-authored himself as a member of the Coloured group who, like the Whites, are struggling for promotion, and then storied himself as a member of all men (White, Coloured and Black men), who were struggling for promotion in a time when mostly Black women were being advanced, and then in the final identity substitution act of the narrative he stories his struggles as the struggles of the minority race group in South Africa, the Coloured people, exclaiming that Coloured people are now part of the White population, the new marginalised.

The concept of managerial identities as negotiated, contested, narrative identities revealed through thick descriptions of complex, relational, situated, contextual lived experiences of being a manager, is consistent with previous research (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, 2016). This study builds on such research through in-depth illumination of the mechanisms of identity substitution as an expression of antipodal identity construction. In so doing, it also contributes to research about antagonisms and contradictions in manager's identity constructions (Clarke, Brown & Hope-Hailey, 2009) with the notable addition of managerial power as the goal of such identity substitution struggles.

8.3.1 Organisational transformation interventions as triggers for identity substitution.

A key finding explicating identity work as identity substitution is that those interventions that participants perceived to threaten their personal power were storied within their narratives as triggers for identity substitution. The types of interventions described by the participants varied from diversity & inclusion management interventions, culture change interventions, adoption of production management best practices, implementation of performance management systems, organisational redesign and the adoption of new labour and/or workplace policies. However, these interventions were not described in neutral ways. Instead participants storied these organisational interventions as triggers to their intense identity struggles to gain managerial power commensurate with their recently acquired national political power on the one hand, or on the other hand, to resist the loss of managerial power associated with the loss of previously held political power.

Petriglieri (2011, p.644) conceptualised identity threat theory defining “individual-level identity threats as experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity”. In this study I found that managers struggled for a valued managerial identity, made valuable by the ascribing socio-political, personal and managerial power to various ways of being a first level manager. Within this context certain organisational transformation interventions were storied as identity threats, insofar as first level manager power was threatened. This finding is consistent with and supports identity threat theory by providing specific examples where organisational transformational interventions were perceived as threats to group level socio-politically powerful identities.

Furthermore, participants engaged in high intensity episodes of identity work in the form of identity substitution in response to these organisational transformation triggers. Holmes, Whitman, Campbell & Johnson (2016) developed a social identity threat response framework that extended the identity threat responses of identity protection and identity restructuring proposed by Petriglieri (2011). I found that the process of identity substitution unveiled in this study, its goals and the organisational transformations that triggered this form of identity work are all consistent with identity threat theory and the social identity threat response framework albeit that first level manager identity work was motivated by power gain or resistance to power loss in a way that extends both theories.

8.3.2 Organisational practices perpetuating social injustice.

While organisational change interventions provided the impetus for identity work episodes, the material of construction underlying participants' identity substitution narratives was provided by institutionalised organisational apparatus, both physical and discursive, interacting with everyday organisational practices to perpetuate social injustice.

I found that physical vestiges of apartheid such as "Bantu toilets" and separate dining and socialising facilities for segregating weekly-paid and monthly-paid employees at a time when majority of the Black employees were in the weekly-paid group, remain erect in some workspaces as mute monuments to a segregated past. These objects found expression in participants' storied identity constructions in the form of narratives about the still ongoing segregation in workplaces along lines of organisational social status differences. Physically locked workspaces, housing essential work tools such as a printer, where the keys to unlock the door were provided to and

controlled by White employees only, were foundational in a first level managers' narrative of racially intolerable working conditions.

The interaction between these physical materialisations of oppression and the dominant organisational discourses surrounding these materialisations were storied in participants narratives in complex antipodal ways making marginalised actors complicit in the very exclusion they struggled to resist in their quest for a powerful managerial identity. The resulting host-guest performative, for example, which stories failed integration attempts between organisationally lower and higher status employee groups, may be a discursive effort yet it fundamentally relies on the physical evidence of a once separate workspace to reinforce social power differentials available in organisational discourse in a sufficiently powerful way to legitimise continuing segregation.

Apart from these materialisations, other everyday organisational practices such as abdication by senior management to deal with complaints of racism, fast-track career development processes for young Black managers that invoke rites of passage and team members having to endure the stress of deliberate racial posturing to close business deals with racially similarly others, were storied into participants' identity substitution narratives as taken-for-granted, unmarked mechanisms for perpetuating social injustice in organisations.

Very few studies have investigated how material and discursive regimes of racial control function within workplaces to influence identity work through the perpetuation of social injustice. However, there have been calls by critical management scholars to focus more attention on the materialisations of institutionalised forms of identity control. In particular, Bardon, Clegg and

Josserand (2012) criticised critical management approaches to the study of identity regulation that placed an over-reliance on textual discourse analysis, revealing only the managerial rhetoric purported to be the apparatus of identity regulation without exploring the materialisations for actualising such identity regulation. By uncovering both the material and discursive organisational practices that perpetuate social injustice, and the interaction between them, this study has revealed the physical-discursive posturing of societal and organisational regimes of control over the identity work of first level managers in post-apartheid corporate South Africa.

8.4 Discursive Performativity in Storied Identity Constructions

A central finding of this study was that in between and often times in concert with episodes of high intensity identity work as identity substitution, first level managers also engaged in lower intensity yet active continuous identity maintenance processes. I found that first level managers' continuous identity work mainly took the form of discursive identity practices expressed as stories of asymmetrical power relations wherein privilege, oppression, exclusion and segregation are normalised within broader societal-organisational discourses. The goal of such discursive performativity was two-fold: to construct an identity of the indispensable manager, to maintain the managerially powerful identity struggled for in previous or currently ongoing identity substitution episodes; and to construct extreme difference between employees and management so as to maintain a powerful managerial identity albeit at the very margins of managerial power at the lowest level of management. Of particular significance was the finding that despite being continuous in nature, discursive performativity as first level manager identity work was influenced by mostly subtle shifts in canonical societal discourse and experienced within organisational context as societal-organisational interdiscursivity.

8.4.1 Everyday discursive practices as identity work.

These findings support and extend several cognate theories of discursive identity construction within the context of management and organisational studies. Firstly, the notion that everyday discursive processes within organisations have the power to shape the identity work of organisational actors has been proposed by many scholars. After a two-year analysis of twenty years' worth of empirical literature on identity work in organisations, Brown (2017) proposed that discursive identity work was one of five major approaches to identity work with the others being dramaturgical, symbolic, socio-cognitive, and psychodynamic. The specific processes of discursive identity formation and revision have also been studied. For example, McInnes and Corlett (2012) studied how involvement in everyday organisational talk produces and alters organisational actors' identities. Clarke et al. (2009, p.324) found that manager's identity work is a process of continuous identity authoring where "managers draw on mutually antagonistic discursive resources in authoring conceptions of their selves". The present research is consistent with this scholarship and extends the notion of discursive self-identity work to beyond the self.

In this study first level managers authored their own and others' identities through discursive construction of predominantly social identities in their workplaces, authoring their manager self-identities as a result of social identity formation repertoires where the identities of self and others are storied as relational inevitabilities. Moreover, first level managers incorporated the physical materialisations of privilege, oppression and segregation in their organisations into their identity formation repertoires, manipulating these symbolically to achieve their goals of the indispensable manager at the margins between employees and management. This discursive performativity places the identity talk of the first level managers somewhat amidst three of Brown's (2017) major

approaches to identity work, namely, discursive, dramaturgical and symbolic, even while at surface level social identity in group and outgroup narratives could be understood as a socio-cognitive approach.

8.4.2 The influence of contextual discourse on discursive performativity.

Secondly, the influence of contextual discourses has been proposed by many scholars. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) showed a senior manager's struggles to construct identities and anti-identities within a multi-discursive organisational context. Jammaers, Zanoni and Hardonk (2016) studied the discursive identity work of disabled employees in the face of dominant ableist discourses in an organisation. Similarly, Ainsworth, (2001) studied the influence of dominant organisational discourses on the discursive construction of older worker identities. McKenna (2010) studied the influence of dominant ideological discourses on manager narrative identities finding that even when managers reject organisational discourses about what being a manager means, the alternatives they select are nevertheless influenced by and limited to the management discourses available at the time.

Watson (2008) proposed a three-step process model that shows how social discourse and social identities are used as discursive resources when constructing manager self-identity, and how the manager self-identity construction process in turn influences the discursively available social identity of being a manager. Meriläinen, Tienari, Thomas & Davies (2004) studied the discursive identity work of professional consultants in two different national contexts and showed that the cultural context influenced the forms of resistance in knowledge worker discursive identity constructions.

The findings of the present study are consistent with such research showing the influence of contextual discourses on the discursive identity work of managers. However, this research goes beyond the influence of the meso-level context to show how canonical discourses in the macro-level political context intersect with discourses in the organisational context and how this interdiscursivity influences how first level managers negotiate their identities. I argue that the nature of the very extreme context of national power inversion, and the subsequent socio-political upheaval that has shaped the organisational context for these first level managers, has illuminated the various complex ways that managers at the margins of power struggle for a managerial identity.

Interestingly, the constant power shifts that the participants experienced in the socio-political context kept them engaged in largely the sense-breaking phase of Ashforth, Harrison & Corley's (2008) socio-cognitive process model of identity work, unable to reach the sense-making stage. Prior studies of managers' discursive identity work suggest that mutually antagonistic discourses of selves could be responses to the unpredictable effects of organisational control practices (Clarke, Brown & Hope-Hailey, 2009). In this study I extend this thinking to beyond the boundaries of the organisation suggesting that the first level managers' antipodal constructions of self are responses to (i) organisational (in)action related to national political transformations, (ii) societal expectations of redress and (iii) the impact of the (re)distribution of power on first level managers' variously politicised selves as subjectively positioned in each of the multiple relational power exchanges inherent in their managerial lives.

8.4.3 Discursive performativity as self-other relational identity work.

This research furthermore sheds light on the complexity of first level managers' relational identity work, between their employees and their senior managers. Given that participants find themselves at a level of management which remains largely under-researched, the findings of this study also contribute to scholarship on identity work in liminal contexts characterised by indeterminacy, ambiguity, and hybridity. Panayiotou (2012) similarly found that the discursive identity work functioned as relational identity work when organisational actors discursively construct the nature of the manager-employee relationship. Moreover, discursive performativity as identity work highlights the complexity of simultaneous subordination to and resistance against dominant discourses in subjective self-other authorship. For example, Tracy (2000) found that employees' discursive identity constructions served simultaneously as resistance and consent to emotional labour expectations in a client-facing business environment.

Such contradictions are exacerbated when the discursive performativity draws on socio-political-organisational interdiscursivity, as first level managers discovered when they were simultaneously prejudiced by and complicit in the perpetuation of repertoires of White privilege and Black racial exclusion. Pierce (2003) studied how White legal professionals engaged in discursive practices such as the "racing for innocence" performative in an effort to reproduce and maintain White privilege as resistance against affirmative action policies in a North American law firm. Similarly, Steyn and Foster (2008) uncovered post-apartheid "White Talk" repertoires that served to advance the discourse of non-racialism, democracy and inclusion while simultaneously denying the existence of a racialised society and the associated requirement for economic redress, effectively constructing the loss of automatic White privilege in post-apartheid South Africa as equivalent to

marginalisation. Verwey and Quayle (2012), studied the difference between private and public discursive constructions of the post-apartheid Afrikaner identity revealing that public discursive performativity takes the form of rejecting the system of apartheid, while arguing for the continuation of the virtuous aspects of its ideology. While the intersections of canonical managerial, organisational and socio-political social locations and the associated interdiscursive discourses were foregrounded in the findings of the present study, Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis and Sabelis (2009) found more generally that discursive processes of identity formation through 'self-other' talk was a critical aspect of discursive identity work situating the individual identity in relation to society. Bass, Erwin, Kinners and Maré (2012) examined the transcripts of participants from a research project into South Africans' views on non-racialism. Building on the work of Maré (2003), they found that participants naturally engaged in banal racialism through self-other relational identity talk as they struggled to reconcile the tension between national political discourses of non-racialism and the perceived need for cultured, gendered and raced self-other identity difference for everyday living.

8.4.4 Discursive performativity at intersectional social locations of privilege and oppression.

Finally, Giddens (1984, p.86) reminds us that "All social interaction is *situated* interaction – situated in space and time" (emphasis in original). Within a thick inescapable political context where political power was experienced as ever shifting, first level managers also found themselves in an organisational context at the intersections of organisational and political power. In this respect discursive performativity as identity work is conducted at the intersections of first level managers' social location at the power margin between management and working classes, and their social location at the margins between political power loss or gain in post-apartheid

organisations (depending on their racio-ethnicity), and at this intersection their context provides societal-organisational interdiscursive post-apartheid and transformational discourses that foregrounds their everyday managerialism. At these intersectional social locations, first level managers continuously construct and revise their managerial identities through contested and coercive agentic strategies of power and resistance, while finding themselves implicated and relationally complicit in invidious discursive practices, veiled as post-apartheid speak. This research therefore specifically contributes to intersectionality theory in the sense that processes and systems of domination intersect to create complex contexts for the formation, revision, maintenance and reproduction of power and privilege as identity multiplicity (Dhamoon, 2011). While acknowledging that the study of intersectional categories of identity such as race and gender remain important topics in the field of identity work in organisations (Cho et al., 2013), the present study found that the intersections of systems of domination had greater influence over first level manager identity work than did intersecting categories of identity. In this respect the present research responds to Booyesen's (2018, p.17) call that future research "needs to explore the intersection of privileged identities, and the interaction of intersecting marginalized and privileged identities, in which experiences of marginalization might outweigh the recognition of privilege, or the recognition of privilege might outweigh the experiences of marginalization, based on contextual aspects".

8.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of this research into the identity work transitions of lower echelon managers at the margins of managerial power and at the margins of power loss and gain

within the national socio-political context of post-apartheid corporate South Africa, in relation to the research questions and the relevant literature.

I discussed how the findings represent dominant processes and everyday practices of identity work that interact dynamically with the systems of power in organisations and societies, and progress over time in complex, yet explainable ways as represented in a theoretical model depicting the dynamics of first level manager identity work transitions.

A central finding of this study was that participants used psychological time, rather than calendar time, as a key organising principle in the narrative construction of their managerial selves, transitioning between episodes of high intensity identity struggles in the form of identity substitution and more or less continuous discursive identity work. Perhaps the most salient finding was that the national socio-political context impacted significantly on the first level managers' identity work in ways that kept them engaged in a constant struggle for managerial power as inextricably linked to their ever shifting racialised political power within post-apartheid South Africa.

In the next chapter I present the conclusion of the study, summarise the theoretical contributions, present the practical contributions and discuss the limitations of this study. I also recommend propositions for future research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The overarching purpose of this research was to theorise the hitherto unexamined role that dramatic shifts in national socio-political power and privilege play in the identity work of first level managers, those at the lowest level of management in organisations. I conducted this research by studying the lived experiences of those first level managers who lived through the abolition of apartheid twenty-five years prior to the start of the study and who were still in the first level manager role at the time of the study, as well as those who became first level managers more recently, several years after the abolition of apartheid. Using a constructivist grounded theory approach combined with narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis, I was able to understand and give a voice to the participants own narratives about being first level managers in both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

9.2 Theoretical Contribution

This study has contributed an emergent theory of the identity work transitions of first level managers, those at the margins of managerial power, who experienced multiple episodes of political power loss and gain linked to their racio-ethnicity, within a national socio-political context where other forms of societal power such as economic power and social status remain inverted to political power.

The emergent theoretical model extends existing theory on managerial identity work by accounting for the influence of national socio-political power dynamics in identity construction (Brown, 2015). Furthermore, by expanding on the critical role and the detailed mechanism of subjective

temporality in narrative identity work this study also contributes to narrative identity work scholarship (Pratt et al., 2006; Watson, 2009 and Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010).

Moreover, the emergent theory further illuminates how dynamic identity work processes are experienced and engaged in through the introduction of the concept of episodic identity work transitions as purposive responsive mechanisms for resisting power loss and the contestation of power gains during times when societal and organisational transformations threaten lower echelon managers' managerial power. Knowledge of these dynamics contributes to the 'stable-fluid' debate in identity construction by showing a context where 'fluid' is more accurately described as high intensity, episodic identity work and 'stable' more accurately reflected by the phrase active continuous discursive performativity (Ashforth, 2016; Atewologun et al., 2017; Corlett et al., 2017).

The emergent theory also expounds the detailed processes of episodic identity work as identity substitution, triggered by organisational transformation interventions perceived to threaten managerial power. As such it provides an alternative explanation to work role transitions as a trigger for episodes of narrative identity work as proposed by Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010). This study revealed that first level manager narrative identity work was not necessarily triggered by changes in their work roles but rather triggered by changes to their work context as a result of national political policy changes that threatened their managerial power. First level managers responded with identity work as identity substitution, which in turn resulted in a new self-ascribed work role definition, expressing a fundamentally new way of being a first level manager, and this transition in turn triggered the subsequent episode of identity work as first level managers

struggled for acceptance of their new substitute managerially powerful identity, triggering discursive performativity as continuous identity work to maintain and reproduce the substitute identity, and so on. The contextual triggers were not one-off events but rather were experienced as repeated waves of societal power shifts resulting from the repeal of apartheid legislation and the subsequent waves of legislation promulgated to enforce racial equality and economic redress in societies and workspaces, along with the associated shifts in canonical societal and organisational discourses about racio-ethnicity and management in so-called post-apartheid organisations. This powerfully extends Ibarra and Barbulescu's (2010) narrative repertoire evolution model of work role transition identity work by illuminating the complex role that shifts in societal power plays in identity narrative revision and the alternatives available to organisational actors through identity substitution processes when their contested identity pathways remain incomplete or fail to achieve acceptance.

The findings of this study also contribute to current scholarship on identity regulation in organisations by illuminating the immense influence that shifts in societal power and privilege exert over the identity work of organisational actors, providing another lens that perhaps challenges the ubiquity of the power that the organisational apparatus exerts on identity work in the workplace. Nevertheless, this study has also revealed that organisational transformation interventions and organisational practices, both material and discursive, that perpetuate social injustices directly triggered and sustained high intensity episodic identity work struggles. In this sense the findings directly support the work of critical management scholars, by contributing additional ways that organisations are instruments of identity regulation and additional individual

outcomes of identity regulation in organisations (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Adams & Crafford, 2012; Gagnon & Collinson, 2014; Knights & Clarke, 2014; Gill, 2015; Knights & Clarke, 2018).

Finally, this study contributes to the critical race, Whiteness and intersectionality scholarly conversations by theorising how the societal and organisational processes and systems of domination intersect (Dhamoon, 2011) to create complex contexts for the formation, revision, maintenance and reproduction of power and privilege; how the pursuit for powerful social locations (Booyesen, 2018) keeps first level managers engaged in identity substitution and how the reproduction of Whiteness in post-apartheid South African organisations (Steyn & Foster, 2008) is accomplished through every day, unmarked discursive performativity practices that serve to maintain an unequal distribution of power, social oppression and exclusion.

9.3 Practical Implications

In addition to the scholarly contribution of this study, it is hoped that the emergent theory will form the basis of policy decisions for improving working lives in organisations. This study draws attention to the everyday struggles of those managers at the lowest level of the management hierarchy in organisations, those at the margins of managerial power, for whom expression of their managerialism and acceptance of their authority as managers is a tenuous process, constantly contested within an organisational context where political power and societal privilege remain more dominant than organisational policy for influencing organisational behaviour. Furthermore, this study revealed how organisations perpetuate segregation, exclusion and social injustice by expecting employees to work alongside physical vestiges of apartheid, by senior leaders abdicating their responsibility for dealing with complaints of racism, and through various carelessly managed

employment equity interventions that leave both minority and majority racio-ethnicities threatened, oppressed and marginalised.

9.4. Limitations of the Study

As with all studies, several limitations apply. This project was contextualised within the boundaries of a doctoral study with a number of constraining features. Firstly, access to ‘the field’ was limited to the researchers’ personal and professional network. Nevertheless, I took reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of convenient access to a good sample by going well outside my network through snowball sampling. I continued searching for first level managers that met the theoretical sampling criteria for well over twelve months and only stopped when the constant comparison and theoretically sampled data gathered yielded no new insights from my own and triangulated analysis.

I make no claim that the analytical tools were applied perfectly nor that the analysis is complete, nor that my understanding was accurate, or the explanatory suppositions correct. Rather I claim to have taken considerable steps to rigorously apply the most suitable analytical methods to thoroughly illuminate as much of the whole focus of inquiry as was possible, to allow the emergence of a theoretical explanation that is as sufficient and as valid as another could be, in full recognition that such emergence was in part the result of chance, convenience, available resources and institutional rules that surround a study for a doctoral degree. In order to ensure methodological rigour and in a bid to deeply respect the fourteen participants who so generously shared their struggles with me, I decided to go beyond a thematic rendering of the data to include two more detailed analytical approaches each of which could easily have constituted valid research in its

own right. These were narrative inquiry, which I conducted in order to preserve the whole story and benefit from the richness thereof, followed by critical discourse analysis which I conducted to illuminate the resistant and political nature of the power discourses which became evident early in the narrative analysis.

9.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has raised new questions about identity work in organisational and management studies by studying those at the power margins. The sample for this study was purposively restricted to men because women were not in positions of power in organisations during apartheid and remain largely under-represented in management positions even in post-apartheid South African organisations, rendering a direct comparison of political power gain and loss erroneous in a study of this nature. However, future research into identity work at the margins may benefit from studying work contexts such as nursing services or primary schools, where women tend to be overrepresented as the majority at all levels of the organisation, to understand how racio-ethnic politics influences the identity work of women first level managers during times of national political power loss or gain.

In this study I focused on the impact of societal power shifts and the influence of personal power loss or gain on the professional identity work of managers, the most common hierarchically organised profession in organisations. Future studies could focus on the impact of societal power shifts on the identity work of those at the margins of power in other professions in other types of organisations where hierarchy and asymmetrical power are likewise institutionalised such as para-

military services, partner-auditor-intern firms or party political departments within governments or royal sovereignties.

This study privileged first level management as a particular case of marginally powered individuals in South African organisational settings typically characterised by large, global, multinational or parastatal companies where management are typically vested with all decision making power. Further research could be conducted at the other extreme of management, at the margins of executive management and ownership in South African companies where owners have more direct power than top management such as in family dynasties or generational privately owned businesses, majority of whom are White owned, who enjoyed extreme autonomy and remained largely untransformed until the promulgation of the new Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment codes in 2018 which legislated the political transformation of company ownership.

Finally, a theme which arose serendipitously throughout this study, but which fell outside the research objective, was the overtly gendered nature of the participant narratives in this study. This overtly gendered discursivity was observed across all narratives, irrespective of the participant's racio-ethnicity, age or industry represented. Future research may usefully interrogate the extent to which gendered discourses have formed an explicit yet unmarked canon of human rights infringement discourses such as apartheid and post-apartheid discourses and other similar discourses such as the anti-Semitic discourses, slavery discourses and xenophobic discourses to name a few, and how this hidden gendered discourses in power political oppressive systems impact identity work of both men and women managers in organisations within these contexts.

9.6 Conclusion

Brown (2015, p.31) observed that “There is much we still do not know about how contexts – particularly organisational and national cultural settings – affect individuals’ identities and identity work”. This study has answered this call by presenting new theory on the identity work that connects individuals’ past, present and potential future identities with the historical contexts in which they are embedded.

By integrating grounded theory with narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis, this research has given a voice to the participants through thick descriptions of their own narratives about being first level managers in post-apartheid South Africa. This study has applied multiple qualitative inquiry lenses to understand the phenomenon of first level manager identity work, spanning over twenty-five years of varying tenures in their roles, from differing racio-ethnicities and working in various industry contexts. In so doing, this study has succeeded in revealing a richly textured theoretical construction of identity work at the margins, reported in such a way that makes it accessible to management practitioners and scholars alike.

It is my hope that the new knowledge emanating from this study will help South African organisations to better understand the complex challenges of achieving transformation in the workplace, shifting attention deliberately towards organisational transformation that reduces everyday acts of domination, oppression and dehumanisation in organisations.

In the next chapter I share personal reflections about my journey in conducting this study.

Chapter 10: Reflections

In this final chapter I share my personal reflections about my experience of conducting this research and compiling this thesis. I reflect on my learning along the way, how the process of research has changed me, how I impacted on the research process and the outcome, and what this means for my scholarly journey ahead.

Why reflect (some more)?

A very apt question given that the very choice of constructivist grounded theory as a methodology implies that constant reflexivity is already inextricably and unavoidably linked to the analytical strategy (Thornberg, 2012; Charmaz, 2017). The thematic coding of traditional grounded theory is replaced in constructivist grounded theory by focused coding which requires reflexive memoing to move from in-vivo coding, through focused coding to theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2016). So, if reflexivity is built into the research process, why a chapter dedicated to more reflection?

I offer a two-part answer. The first part of the answer to this question begins with a journal entry, which I made almost a year prior to starting the research, and although quite personal and not a coding memo, it nevertheless seems appropriate to share:

So privileged, humbled and awed by Professor Willem Schrunik's powerful message delivered so gently at today's seminar on "Reflexivity and its practice in qualitative research". The key takeaway for me was this line from Prof Schrunik's reflexivity riddle: "What I hear and see depends on me" (Schrunik, 2016). Gives me cold shivers to think of the hectic responsibility that lies ahead: other people will trust me with their experiences, like precious harvested fruits of their labours. My job as a researcher is to do good work,

contribute to building new knowledge and contribute to solving real problems yet my materials of construction has been hard earned by those who will participate. Yet I cannot fall into a trap of wanting to keep what they shared pristine – then I am merely describing, not constructing theory. No that is not how I honour the fruits of their labour. They trust me to mine the gold and make their contribution be a source of good for the world. I need to respect that. In fact, even this thought process is flawed because I am making assumptions about the expectation that each participant has of the researcher and the research. Actually, I think I will ask each participant deliberately why they are willing to participate and what they are hoping will come of their time and experienced shared with me. I think this will be my guiding principle – ask, don't presume! I will need to learn to suspend prejudgements, premature assumptions and other personal filters as far as possible and be vigilant about remaining consciously aware that hearing and seeing starts with being willing to inquire, not ready to conclude. (22 April 2016).

This tension between honouring the participants' stories and producing insightful knowledge led me at first to constructivist grounded theory. In vivo coding kept me grounded in the data while focused and theoretical coding provided a recipe for rigour because of the reflective memoing processes. Thanks to Atlas.ti I could work on several memos simultaneously and could constantly go back and forth between data and memos over several months. The development of two of the key theoretical codes namely, "subjective temporality" and "discursive performativity" arose from the memos of the fore running focused codes, "1994" and "host-guest performativity". One of these memos, which started in May and concluded in September of 2018 is an example of how I remain very aware of my own role in the research, including my own biases and

predispositions, yet use the analytical advantage that my critical positionality affords to better conceptualise what could be going on beneath the words by remaining curious about what is really going on:

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Content:

I created a code called “exemplary quote” so that I could later easily identify those quotes for use in my synthesis of the analysis. However, I came across a number of quotes that so appalled me that I considered labelling them “cringeworthy quotes”. I created this memo to reflect on why I felt so strongly about these quotes and the emotional burden they placed on me while doing my analysis. Upon reflection I realised that these quotes epitomised my own experiences as a coloured girl growing up in apartheid SA and later as a coloured woman working in post-apartheid corporate South Africa. By using the term coloured I am relying on the legal race classification which originally referred to the indigenous people of the Cape, the Khoisan. The more contemporary use of the term coloured refers to people of mixed-race origin. I personally identify as a Cape Coloured woman, in the ancestry of Sara Baartman. In order to be a credible researcher however I had to suspend judgement (advice from Prof Nkomo) and maintain my “poquiry” face (poker-inquiry face) - nodding / uhumming/ leaning in / deep listening skilling and at best if I felt compelled to say something out of the sheer need to scream say “that’s interesting”...followed by the usual probing questions e.g. why do you think that is? can you share an example of what you mean? Etc. and then get home and cry. My father’s ‘show... (pause) no... (pause) emotion’ advice ringing in the back of my head kept me

focused on the task at hand while being able to handle what I was hearing....Although I am doing a critical analysis of a discursive work I will nevertheless have to triangulate other critiques before settling on my own interpretation of apparently exclusionist discourse e.g. "you see you can't give these guys anything. Now they taking over." What was "given" to "these guys" in this context was an "open door" to "come in" and "mingle with us". "They (are) taking over" is central to a common post apartheid white fear discourse in SA - hopefully well documented in work by foremost SA whiteness scholars like Mellissa Steyn. I need to check this.

"Because you will find on a Friday for, for both weekly and monthly, there'll be snacks and some good stuff, some biltong for the guys, then, er, there's more a culture or behaviour on the monthly paid, and then there is no behaviour and there's arguments fighting this and that. Then we started integrating. So, we had all the same things again this side. And now is you see you can't give these guys anything. Now they taking over. So, when the person come the monthly paid come, you find the snacks is finished because now we incorporated them there. So, something else happen also now. So, that monthly paid people did not go to the bar no more. You understand. We had to deal with that. So less and less people go to the bar"

What made this a cringe-worthy quote for me was that the person sitting in front of me speaking these words is a non-white, self-identified as oppressed, part of the struggle etc...This makes me wonder: Is classism a bigger issue than racism in the world of this FLM? And if so is it because of a need to be in the "in group" inside the outgroup? But why? Is the in group in the outgroup more accepted by the real in group? (almost like Rose's mother on Titanic) or is it because within the new powerful there is a self-

established status hierarchy within the recently emancipated - like an Animal Farm type of equality? I need to look for clues in the other transcripts. This new “elite” with “culture” are assuming madam / lord of the house (host) status and “others” may be given guest status.

George said something similar in his story now that I think about it - how he decided to do something good for his workers by building “them” a table to come join “us” so they could all have lunch and tea times together and was stunned when the union intervened and complained when their pause area was unilaterally moved - George could not believe that his “gift” and invitation was snubbed. What is it about the Uncles and Georges that makes them assume ownership/host status in a workplace and assume the power to “gift” integration opportunities to “others”?

(Reflexive memo regarding host-guest cringe-worthy quotes: memo extracted from Atlas.ti)

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Content:

1994 - SA’s first free and fair election. Yet in many narrative’s appears as the pivotal date before which was the apartheid era and after which came a “New dispensation”. This is typically borrowed from the discourse of the New SA, the rainbow nation etc.

Any shift in power, privilege, inclusion before 1994 is seen by Uncle to be insightful (they could see the changes coming), progressive (we made the changes way before the new dispensation) and enlightened (for that time we hired Coloured, Chinese, Indians) etc. This

narrative of being progressive, of not waiting for legislation to change is self-promulgated by many large corporations in SA.

Why does it irk me so much that corporate South Africa declares their inclusion work as progressive? Being irritated isn't good research. Need to look at what is going on here. Okay so the historical facts of the matter are somewhat different. I've gone down a rabbit hole and dug up much more than triangulated "facts" and from this research some of the Apartheid laws were repealed as of 1985 with the core framework legislation (some 100 laws) repealed in 1991 which formally marks the end of Apartheid as a legislative regime (not in practice but the law). Hence any insight and "progressive" thinking - 3 years before 1994 (as in the case of Wattle) was in fact in response to changes in the legislative landscape.

For the next 20 years between 1994 and 2014 over 2000 apartheid laws were repealed. Interesting. By 2016 a further 1850 were identified that would require detailed scrutiny and repeal or amendment. The process continues even today.

Interesting that Uncle's identification with the heroic legendary tales of Wattle does not lead him to verify facts...I recall from Mellissa Steyn's work that this is how whiteness operates to normalise the slow relaxation of apartheid practices so as to peculiarise any early adoption as radicle, progressive and non-discriminatory.

Certainly, a topic on its own but how is it possible that a whole society and maybe even the whole world can be duped into thinking that 1. apartheid is over 2. it ended abruptly in 1994. 3. Blacks are now in power 4. Whites are no longer in power? The answer has something to do with dominant discourses. I need to go back to my notes from Dr Liz Archer's visit.

(Reflexive memo regarding 1994: memo extracted from Atlas.ti)

As these examples illustrate, reflexive memos are vital for making the role of the researcher transparent in the construction of theory. Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti (2016, p.745) argue rather compellingly that the very notion of emergence so central to grounded theory and narrative inquiry relies on knowledge production processes that are the result of “collective generations of meaning that are always shaped by conventions of language, discourses, and social processes”. And therefore, they argue, the methodological habit of making the role of the researcher in emergent knowledge production visible is not only a feature of good quality qualitative research but in fact a key part of the basic methodology. And so, part one of the answer to the question “Why a chapter dedicated to more reflection?” is that as fellow scholars it is beholden on us within our craft to share how we have worked to make ourselves visible to ourselves during the research so as to be critically aware of our own roles but also to declare the footprint we have left by being simultaneously the researched as a researcher.

Of relevance to this study is the concern raised by Ybema et al. (2009) about the reflexivity required when identifying identities within discursive analysis such as when identity talk is privileged for identity work research. They caution that the normal methodological awareness by

the researcher is but one aspect of reflexivity, and that one of the more important aspects of reflexivity requires the awareness of the underlying assumptions for the researcher's epistemic stance. Having reviewed a number of articles for the special edition they edited, Ybema et al. (2009, p.318) conclude that when it comes to discursive identity work research, the underlying epistemological orientation tends towards a "meta-narrative of agency and structure – the seemingly permanent dialectic which suffuses identity theory". Having just concluded this research on identity work I find it hard to argue against this proffered caution, save to add that being aware of this epistemic stance as I was during this process allows the brain to do mental gymnastics as you force yourself to see and hear and conceptualise what could be outside if this dialectic. And even when that is hard to do, being aware that you are operating within this dialectic and how it may be shaping what you see, hear, feel and conceptualise is already a really important quality assurance mechanism.

And this brings me to part two of the answer to the question "Why a chapter dedicated to more reflection? The biggest reflexive work I have done during this research study, even more so than in previous studies, has been to remain keenly aware of my slicing angle.



Source: Sally's Baking Addiction

<https://sallysbakingaddiction.com>



I went back to Mary Midgley's (1979/1995) *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* and read it again because it so profoundly opened the doors to the various corridors in my mind many years prior when I first started doing post graduate research. And there in chapter 4 under the subheading "THE ABSURDITY OF FORGETTING THE INDIVIDUAL", she so vividly etches the following into my mind:

Asking different kinds of questions produces quite different kinds of answers; they are usually not reducible to one another, though they must be compatible. Slicing the world in different directions reveals different patterns. Swiss rolls, sliced downward, have a spiral structure. Sliced across, they have stripes. Stripes are not reducible to spirals, nor vice versa, and will not become so by further analysis. Both are real, and the two patterns can be related if we understand the relation between the two slicing angles.

Midgley (1979/1995). Kindle Edition.

I had concluded all the initial coding, focused coding, memoing, conceptual analytical work and theoretical sampling with constant reflection during slicing when I paused to reflect on the beautiful round spiral slices with my supervisory committee. It was a great committee meeting. The findings were valuable. It was already clear that this research was going to make a contribution to identity work scholarship. I was happy with the feedback yet uneasy. The whole explanation was not yet apparent. I knew it was missing another angle. The swiss roll could not yet be seen and it was not sufficient that I had found the spiralled pattern. It was then that Prof Stella said to me “Lauren, it’s like my mother kneading bread dough. You will know when the dough is ready. It won’t be ready ‘til it is and you will know when that is.” Our feedback sessions were always recorded, and I reflected on this comment as I journaled about the feedback session while listening to the recording. It reminded me of the very early stages of the research when I was preparing the proposal for presentation to the university’s approval board. Prof Stella reminded me that a PhD is a magnanimous endeavour and that a worthy research topic for a PhD when phrased as a question, is one that makes the student stay the course, and the student (researcher) will stay the course when they genuinely want to find the answer to that research question for themselves. I realised that my feeling or awareness that I needed more angles was not about a methodological need, rather it was because I knew I has not yet found the answer to my question. At that stage it would have been easier (and over a year faster!) to write up the thematic analysis and provide a credible answer, but there was more to the answer and I knew it.

That was when I started looking at the narratives again but this time as whole narratives not as lines of code. I started realising at that stage that the interview transcripts were in fact whole narratives not bespoke answers to questions. What else is going on when experiences are storied not merely reported and what could this additional angle tell us? And so, several months later I had completed a full narrative inquiry on all the data and it complemented the focussed and theoretical coding phases of the grounded theory approach so well that it seemed clear to me that I had more than just two dimensional spirals. And yet after the next big pause and reflect moment with my supervisory committee I knew there was even more, the precise way in which the words were expressed in the construction of storied identity narratives begged for attention. I reflected on why this was so. Why did certain words trigger my “I smell racism” sensors and beg for attention? I had previously been trained to conduct critical race research by Claire Kelly who was working with Melissa Steyn at the University of Cape Town at the time at the Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa (iNCUDISA) research programme. We collectively conducted research into the employment equity and diversity management practices at South African organisations (see van Aswegen, 2008; Steyn & Kelly, 2009; Nkomo, 2011). We had found how the maintenance of privilege was practiced through every day language practices. For example, White Afrikaner artisans would exclude Black engineers from participating in meetings at work by conducting entire meetings in Afrikaans (van Aswegen, 2008). Everyday language was used to serve interests such as to discredit employment equity programs, revealing white fear (van Aswegen, 2008; Steyn & Kelly, 2009).

My challenge was to avoid the old trap of seeing every problem as a nail because my ability to “see” racism in everyday language was my only hammer (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000). However, ignoring it would be equally irresponsible and not good research to avoid an angle for fear of

overuse. This is when I turned to one of the foremost methodologists in South Africa, Dr Elizabeth Archer. While reflecting on this dilemma with her, she introduced me to the idea of critical discourse studies. Having a scientific methodology that was completely compatible with my pragmatism approach up to that point that would help me scientifically apply the “hammer” made complete sense and would produce better quality research than blindly applying a method I had learnt many years prior. I then promptly spent a few months learning all there was to know about the various critical discourse analysis/studies from the underlying philosophies to the methodologies and the specific methods. And of course, this was the final icing on the top. It turned out to be worth the extra months because paying attention to the discursive ways in which the identity narratives were narrated reflected so beautifully the societal context within which the identity narrative was relevant. The thick descriptions richly textured finally had a rigorous analytical framework to provide shape. The whole swiss roll emerged.

And so, part two of the answer to the question about more reflection is that constant in-the-process reflection during knowledge production in research needs to be supported by periodic outside-of-the-process reflection about what the researcher’s specific analytical angle has produced compared to what could yet be produced from more and different angles to reveal a fuller richer construction.

And yet as I look through my journal, I feel another part to the answer is warranted, a part three if, dear reader, you will allow. That is to remember my struggles, feel how it felt, and realise how I have changed in the process. So, while the first two parts of the answer explains why I believe reflection is good for the researcher, the third part to the answer is: I reflect for me.

And the struggles I experienced in arriving there was captured one morning when I decided (more than a year ago now) to write a paragraph for the eventual reflections chapter (which at that time would have been chapter 8 back was when I thought one chapter would be sufficient to present the findings):

Journal entry 27 September 2018:

To be included somewhere in chapter 8 when I reflect on my research journey: This quest (no doubt ably facilitated by my inexperience) took me down a path of several consecutive applications of various qualitative analytical methods each time privileging what I believed was a method with “better” analytical rigour. After months of coding, categorising, interpreting, conceptualising, rejecting and repeating, I realised, upon deep reflection, that I was not so much struggling to strike a balance between parsimony and comprehensiveness as I was torn between truth and anarchy. Thematic analysis with initial and axial coding, gave way to grounded theory in-vivo processual and focused coding, followed by the allure of narrative analysis, then the eureka moment discovering the ‘natural fit’ between critical discourse analysis and my study objectives, before returning (nearly) full circle to constructivist grounded theory memo writing, theoretical sampling and theorizing.

My return to constructivist grounded theory was prefaced by a pause in analysis during which time I experienced a period of exceptional frustration brought about by drowning in a veritable sea of data, unable to construct a bridge between what seemed like fragmented labels and what I supposed had to be some grand theory. Through deep inner reflexive work, I came to acknowledge that my objectivist presuppositions on the one hand and my social justice perspective on the other had formed a cognitive stranglehold

on my ability to reason inductively and abductively, blinding me to the highly evident data driven patterns of meaning that I had already uncovered at that stage.

Extensive memo writing released this stranglehold allowing me to conceptualise the mechanisms at work in the lives of the participants as represented through their narrative constructions, ultimately resulting in a substantive theory of first level management in oppressive systems. The tension between truth and anarchy gave way to a tension between credible conceptualisations of the situated, contingent, social constructions and the pragmatic problematisation required to surface social injustice. I paid even closer attention to the rigours of the three methods going back to study all three methods anew. During this third phase of method study I realised the power of each method and decided to integrate the outcomes of all three analytical applications at a higher level of abstraction. This finally rendered a clear picture that I knew represented the theoretical level that I had sought throughout the multiple phases of this project. Now bursting with excitement and teary eyed from anxiety release, I head for the even harder task: the write up.

Reflection and reflexivity make for better quality research. But does it make better researchers? I look at my journals and notice that three years of journaling - during site visits to meet participants, straight after interviews, while transcribing, coding, conceptualizing, and all the way through writing and revising the thesis, which was fraught with many personal family health crises. However, the last few months during the final editing phase felt like the least energising phase and journaling ground to a halt. Interesting.

Yet being aware of a new way of seeing the world has not changed. For example, while looking at a potential client's site for a work project I came across the following verbiage on the client's website and realised how I now instantly recognise ideologies in discourses that otherwise I would be mostly blind to. I paused to reflect. And that above all has been the personal value of doing the research - learning about the experience of others through a structured scientific approach has enabled me to see the world a little differently to how I have always seen. And for that I will be forever grateful.

For example, seeing through the marketing discourse to reveal a company that advertises how it exceptionalises black and female inclusion as “significant strides” even “pioneering” on their part because their actions (initiated 2 years after the repeal of apartheid) predated legislation that mandated (self-managed) black inclusion:

We are a proud South African Business. Our transformation journey began over a quarter of a century ago, and while we are by no means at the end of that journey – we are proud of the significant strides that we have taken and that we continue to take. We have successfully recruited, trained and retained exceptional black and female talent across our business since 1993. Advancing transformation in our industry. Pre-dating BEE legislation in South Africa, we pioneered corporate initiatives that have contributed to meaningful transformation and the development of skills in the financial services industry.

(Source omitted to ensure anonymity)

Yes, indeed Professor Schrunik (2016), “What I hear and see depends on me”. This research journey has given me more ways to see more than just the surface meaning of discourse.

I wonder about the different ways that discourses in everyday conversations, in media and in the organisations where I work are phrased. I think about whose interests are being served and I listen for multiple perspectives. In short, my usual problem solving, puzzle decoding mindset has reached a new level of inquiry-based critical thinking in everyday life that is slowly replacing the taken for granted, face value ways that I used to consume discourses before. I have never been one for normative statements or platitudes and even so I find that over the four years I have grown less hasty to draw conclusions and more inclined to express “that’s interesting...” at reading or hearing a statement made or an experience related or a line of argument proposed, followed by a series of questions as I seek to understand. I enjoy this change.

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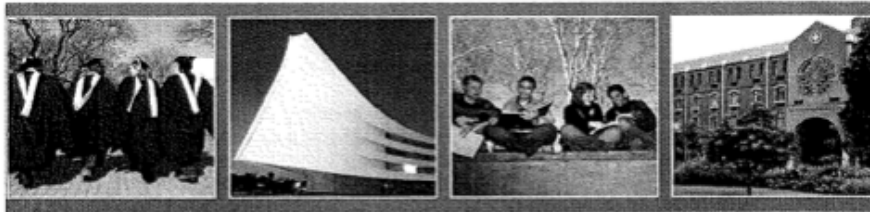
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APPENDIX A

Front page of ethical clearance document:



FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE

- Literature review and the research design should be completed prior to application.
- Electronic forms available on Faculty website > Committees > Ethics Committee.
- Supervisor to submit original application form to Marcel Deysel, EMS Building, Room 2-16.
- Incomplete applications cannot be reviewed.
- Documentation required before final approval can be granted, submit with application:

Approved Title Registration	Research Proposal
Data collection instrument	Introduction, Permission, Informed Consent letter(s)
For proposed surveys amongst UP stakeholders, also complete the Registrar permission request attached hereto	

SECTION A: PROJECT INFORMATION			
Title, initials, surname	Mrs L.M. van Aswegen		
Student or personnel no.	15354319		
Degree	PhD Organisational Behaviour		
Department	Human Resources		
E-mail	lmvanaswegen@gmail.com		
Application	First application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title of research	Indicate title as approved by the Postgraduate Committee		
Supervisor/Co-supervisor			
Purpose of research			
Master's		Doctoral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-degree <input type="checkbox"/>

Problem statement

This research problematizes the overt focus by management and organizational scholars on top management (and occasionally middle management) for generating knowledge about management and leadership in organizations. I propose diverting attention away from top management in order to theorize about the behaviors of managers at the margins of blue collar and white collar status, at the margins of hierarchical power between management and the working class. To do this I introduce the idea of a "power margin" - a metaphorical social location at the bottom of the managerial pyramid. It is simultaneously the location of lowest managerial power in a typical command and control western style organization and yet paradoxically also the position with the highest span of control. Therefore, this study proposes a focus on the identity work of the lowest levels of management in organizations and from a critical scholarship perspective this inquiry focuses on the role of power and privilege in their identity work.

Feb 2015

APPLICATION FORM
Ethics Clearance

APPENDIX B

Letter used to obtain permission to access an organisation to conduct the research:



Faculty of Economic and
Management Science

**Permission to conduct an academic
research study in the organisation**

Dept. of Human Resource Management

Title of the study

*Power, privilege and identity at the margins: Identity work transitions of lower echelon
managers*

Research conducted by:

Ms. L.M. van Aswegen (15354319)

Cell: 082 924 2163

Dear Organisation Representative

Members of the organisation you are duly authorised to represent are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Laureen van Aswegen, Doctoral student from the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to examine the identity work of first level supervisors in corporate South Africa.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey and interviews. Your company name and the name of the participants will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers provided by the participants will be treated as strictly confidential. The company and the participants cannot be identified in person based on the answers they give.
- Participation by members of your organisation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, Professor S.M. Nkomo at Stella.Nkomo@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.
- Note that this consent letter merely grants the researcher consent to invite members of your organisation to participate in this study. Each participant will be provided separately with an informed consent letter as appended hereto.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent for members of your company to be invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Organisation Representative Signature

Date

Organisation Representative Title

APPENDIX C

Each participant signed the following consent letter:



Faculty of Economic and
Management Sciences

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Dept. of Human Resource Management

Title of the study

*Power, privilege and identity at the margins: Identity work transitions of lower echelon
managers*

Research conducted by:

Ms. L.M. van Aswegen (15354319)

Cell: 082 924 2163

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Laureen van Aswegen, Doctoral student from the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to examine the identity work of first level supervisors in corporate South Africa.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, Professor S.M. Nkomo at Stella.Nkomo@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.

- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Respondent's signature

Date

APPENDIX D**Interview Guide used for the pilot**

1. Tell me about your earliest experiences growing up in South Africa. What was it like? What stands out for you?

2. Let's talk about who you are at work. Why did you become a [team leader]? What did it mean to you back then to be a [team leader]? In which ways has it changed from the first time you were appointed? In which ways is it still the same? In which ways have you changed? Why do you think this is? How have the changes in South Africa influenced your work as a [team leader] and how you think of yourself as a [team leader]? How have you dealt with these changes?

3. Tell me about the people you manage as a [team leader] today. In which ways have your direct reports and the way you manage them changed from the first time you were appointed? In which ways is it still the same? How about your managers that you report to? In which ways have your working relationships with your managers changed? Why do you think this is? How do you cope with these changes?

4. So what's next in store for you? How do you see your future unfolding? Why do you hold this view?

5. Is there anything you want to share or add that you feel is important, that I didn't get to ask about?

6. What was this interview process like for you?

7. Why do you think you were willing to participate in this interview?

Additional probing mechanisms:

Tell me more about that...

Can you give me an example of a time...

What else can you say about...

How did you understand that?

How did that make you feel/What were you feeling at that time?

What did that make you think/believe?

Interview guide used for the main interviews - amended after the pilot

1. Tell me about your earliest experiences growing up in South Africa. Tell me about where you grew up. What was it like? What stands out for you?

2. Tell me a little about your career/work path to being where you are today? How did you come to be a [team leader]?

3. Let's talk about who you are at work. What is it like to be a team leader? What do you enjoy about it and what are your struggles? In which ways has it changed from the first time you were appointed? In which ways is it still the same? In which ways have you changed?

4. Tell me about the people you manage. In which ways have your direct reports and the way you manage them changed from the first time you were appointed? In which ways are they still the same?

5. How about your managers that you report to? In which ways have your working relationships with your managers changed? How do you cope with these changes?

6. How have the changes in South Africa influenced your work as a [team leader] and how you think of yourself as a [team leader]? How have you dealt with these changes?

7. So what's next in store for you? How do you see your future unfolding? What obstacles do you see and how are you managing these?

8. Is there anything you want to share or add that you feel is important, that I didn't get to ask about?

9. What was this interview process like for you?
10. Why do you think you were willing to participate in this interview?
Additional probing mechanisms:
Tell me more about that...
Can you give me an example of a time...
What else can you say about...
How did you understand that?
How did that make you feel/What were you feeling at that time?
What did that make you think/believe?

APPENDIX E

Random Afrikaans segment from a participant transcript that was subjected to blind independent translation check:

Afrikaans segment:

[FRS]hoof het jou as skof leier saamgesleep. Hy't nêrens sonder jou gegaan nie. Jy was sy sekretaresse. Jy was sy second in charge. Jy was: as hy nie daar is nie, is jy daar. Jy was die opleidingsbeampte. Jy was die ma en die pa en die sielkundige en die doktor en almal was jy gewees.... Toe ons by [Phoenix] beginne toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil iemand hê onder die [hub] bestuurder.... Onthou ons was eintlik in die [hub] bestuurder se plek gewees. Die [FRS] het die [hub] gerun. Ons het almal se oortyd en hulle admin goeters en ag hulle oortyd geëis en goed. Maandeinde, ek het dit gedoen. Die twee ouens in beheer van die skofte het dit gedoen.... En um toe kom hulle toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil nou iemand hê onder die [hub] bestuurder wat op skof is, nie 'n [FRS]man nie, wat na al die departemente kan kyk. Toe stel hulle twee head of operations aan.... Toe het jy aan hulle gerapporteer. ...En toe na 'n paar jaar toe kom [Phoenix] toe sê hulle nee, hulle wil departementshoofde hê vir elke departement. So jy't 'n [FRS]hoof maar hy's nie 'n departementshoof, by die groot [hubs], by die internasionale [hubs] ja, maar nie by ons domestic [hubs] nie. Toe kom hulle toe stel hulle departementshoofde aan Nou hulle is nou 'n groep wat nou die management team genoem word, soos wat ons in daai tyd was. So ek is nou uit, uit daai scope uit. [Felix] gaan en hy gaan vir my kom vertel miskien in a meeting hier by ons, [en] gaan ek hom vertel wat ons raak. Maar ek gaan nie meer weet vir die res nie. So ek is uit gehou uit die loop uit.

Independent English translation by Prof Carrim:

The [FRS] head took you as shift leader. He did not go anywhere without you. You were his secretary. You were his second in charge. You were: if he is not there, you are there. You were the training official. You were the mother and the father and the psychologist and the doctor and you were everyone... When we began at Phoenix then they said no, they don't want anyone under the [hub] manager... Remember we were actually in the place of the [hub] manager. The [FRS] ran the [hub]. We requested everyone's overtime and their admin things and their overtime and things. I did it during month end. The two guys in charge of the shifts did it... and um then they came and said no, they want someone under the [hub] manager who is on the shift, not a [FRS] person, who can see to all departments. Then they recruited two heads of operations... then you reported to them. Then after a few years [Phoenix] said that they wanted departmental managers. So you had a [FRS] manager but he was not a department manager, at the big [hubs] by the international [hubs] yes, but not at the domestic [hubs]. Then they came and recruited departmental managers.... Now they are a group known as the management team, like we were during those times. Now I am out, out of that scope. [Felix] goes and he will maybe tell me in a meeting here by us, and I will tell him what affects us. But I will no longer know about the rest. So I am kept out of the loop.

English translation conducted independently by Lauren:

The [FRS] chief dragged you as shift leader along. He went nowhere without you. You were his secretary. You were his second in charge. You were: if he was not there, you were there. You were the training officer. You were the mother and the father and the psychologist and the doctor and you were everybody.... Then when we started at Phoenix, they said no, they

wanted someone under the [hub] manager.... Remember we were actually there in place of the [hub] manager. The [FRS] ran the hub. We did everyone's overtime and their admin stuff and oh we did their overtime claims and stuff. Month-end, I did that. The two guys in charge of the shifts did that.... And um then they came, and they said no, they now wanted someone under the [hub] manager to be on shift, but not an [FRS serviceman], to look after all the departments. Then they appointed two heads of operations.... Then you reported to them. ... Then after a few years, then Phoenix came, and they said no, they want heads of department for every department. So, you've got an [FRS] chief but he's not a head of department, at the big [hubs], at the international [hubs] yes, but not at our domestic hubs. Then they came then they appointed heads of department. ... Now they are now a group that are now called the management team, like we were in that time. So now I am out, out of that scope. [Felix] goes, and he will come tell me perhaps at a meeting here with us, [and] I will tell him what's impacting us. But, I am no longer going to know about the rest. So, I am kept out of the loop.

Conclusion:

Both reviewers agreed that the translations were very similar and that any other translator was likely to achieve a similar outcome.