

Leadership in South African Higher Education: A Multifaceted Conceptualisation

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Dedication

To all my contemporaries from insignificant towns in South Africa such as Clanwilliam and Kraaifontein who, through no fault of their own, have been denied opportunities and who therefore could not realise their talent and abilities. This is a promise that the next generation will not struggle to realise their potential in their third age.

and

In loving memory of Ranjita Mishra, brilliant young scholar and wonderful friend who did not see the fruit of her academic labour; your spirit is in here.

Abstract

This thesis explores the meaning of leadership in the context of higher education in South Africa, a society in transition. The higher education system in the country is in a process of change from being fragmented and segregated, to being a democratic one, guided by various policies. Within this facilitative environment, very little is said about leadership yet 'leadership' has been blamed in many instances where things have gone wrong.

This qualitative study consisting of semi-structured interviews with middle-level academic leaders, reveals inequalities in terms of who is leading at that level. The study also reveals an awareness of the existence of these inequities among the manager-leaders; they do, however, hold two distinct viewpoints about the causes of these inequities. A feminist and poststructuralist framework is used to analyse specific dimensions of the manager-leaders' understandings and practices of leadership.

In the absence of a defined discourse of leadership, the manager-leaders are drawing on their own personal experiences of how they have been and are led and their own practices of how they lead in order to conceptualise leadership and what constitutes a leader. The study shows that the manager-leaders understand leadership as a combination of leadership practice, i.e. how it is being enacted and their notions of characteristics desired in leaders. Their descriptions of leadership seem to be characterised by relational elements.

In addition, the findings show that race and gender have specific implications for leadership; from a racial perspective additional roles are added to the general identified leadership practices while a gender perspective reveals several invisible leadership aspects.

The thesis therefore describes leadership as an activity or process influenced by contextual elements: historical imperatives, organisational factors, and personal and group constructs, such as race and gender.

Declaration and Word Length

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count: 75 558

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List of Abbreviations

HE	Higher Education
SAHE	South African higher education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged Institution
HAI	Historically Advantaged Institution
HOD	Head of Department
VC	Vice-Chancellor
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
MoE	Minister of Education
DoE	Department of Education
NRF	National Research Foundation
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DST	Department of Science and Technology
TELP	Tertiary Education Linkages Project (USAID funded capacity building project).
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association, now part of HESA (Higher Education South Africa)
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

Explanation of Quotations Used

I use three styles to distinguish between different types of quotations in this thesis:

Quotation 1 represents words of the respondents

Quotation 2 represents quotations from books and similar sources

Quotation 3 represents extracts from my research journal

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Scene: Researching Leadership in Higher Education in South Africa

This thesis explores the question, *what does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa?* In general, leadership as a concept has received much attention over time but there is no conclusive agreement on its meaning in the literature. Definitions of leadership are dependent on the perspectives and approaches that individuals who theorize on the topic employ in their investigations or explorations of the phenomenon (pp25-6). This thesis approaches the exploration from the position that leadership is dispersed in organisations and that therefore most members would have views about it. The exploration comprises the combination of the perspectives of academic middle manager-leaders¹, a wide spectrum of leadership literature, my reflections on both these data sources and my observations and experiences related to leadership.

Higher education in South Africa has undergone major restructuring over the past twelve years in line with changes taking place in the country at large. The sector is highly legislated with policies guiding transformation. There is, however, no clear definition about leadership in the sector. Apart from the Higher Education Act (Appendix 1) stating that the management and administration of a higher education institution (HEI) is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor (VC), no further reference to leadership occurs. The study uses a feminist and poststructuralist framework to understand what leadership means to a specific group of leaders.

This introductory chapter has several purposes. The first two sections set the context of the study, focusing on the history of the country and its higher

¹ I use this term as a variation of 'manager-academic' as used by Deem and Johnson (2000) – see Chapter 2.

education system. This context also provides an analytical framework for race in the study. The need for the study is the focus of the next section. The research question is introduced next after which the study's objectives and the researcher are presented. The last section outlines the structure of the thesis.

South Africa: A Historical Perspective

This study explores leadership in higher education in South Africa but the sector cannot be removed from the political processes underway in the country. It is therefore necessary to give some background about the country. South Africa is a young democracy, which had its first democratic elections in 1994. This event marked a move away from the country's apartheid past to a present shaped by a liberatory framework. The preamble to the country's constitution is perhaps a good place to find the ideals that were envisaged when the break with the past was made. The injustices and divisions of the past were acknowledged and the diversity of the country's people recognised and embraced as an important building stone for the envisaged new society where the quality of life of all citizens would be improved and the potential of each person could be realised. The foundations on which this new society would be built are "democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The constitution is an indicator of where the country has come from. It is not my intention to pay much attention to that past here because it is extensively documented elsewhere (Barber, 1999; Sparks, 2003). However, as I will explain later, I found that history pervaded the study and for that reason it warrants a mention here. I will briefly refer to the history of colonialism and apartheid (Sparks 2003) because it cannot be denied that centuries of European colonisation and nearly half a century of apartheid (Balintulo, 2001; Ramphele, 2004) especially, had dire consequences for South African society in general and for higher education in particular.

It is well known that the country for a long period was subjected to minority rule, first by colonialists and later by apartheid rulers. Apartheid was a political system based on an economic system that privileged a minority of the country's inhabitants. Apartheid South Africa was a class-based society in which race played a significant role as a separator. The system privileged the minority (mostly White people) and denied the majority (mostly Black people) rights, access to opportunities and the privileges enjoyed by the minority. Race is therefore intricately linked to history. Following examples where authors have focused on race from a historic perspective (Unterhalter, 1995; Unterhalter et al., 2004) this is the perspective which I adopt towards the construct in this thesis. Because of the link between history and race, a focus on history here provides a valuable opportunity to foreground the race factor in the context of South Africa, past and present and specifically in the higher education sector, the overall context of this study. This section, then, gives an overview of the country's history with a specific focus on race.

The two separators, race and class, gave rise to strong lines of division in the country. Chisholm and September (2005) for example refer to apartheid as "a system that fixed women and men in relationships of inferiority and superiority based on their race and class" (p. 1). Historically, race generally received more attention in analyses focusing for example on living conditions in the country. One can argue that this was because the minority referred to above, was mainly comprised of White people while Black people comprised the majority. The system was characterised by vast disparities in the wealth and living conditions of the different people. Various laws (Denton and Vloeberghs, 2003) were behind these disparities: dictating where people could live, with whom they could associate, where and at what levels they could be employed and so on. The labour laws were particularly effective in making sure that the country's wealth was in the hands of a few while the majority of the population were living in poverty. In this way apartheid denied the majority of the country's people not only economic rights but also their basic human rights, effectively marginalising them in the country of their birth. This resulted in a socially segregated

society marked by inequities, injustices, exclusion, fragmentation and inefficiencies (Council on Higher Education, 2000; Gibbon and Parekh, 2001; Walker and Unterhalter, 2004).

Race is one of the issues about which not much discussion takes place in the South African context (McKinney, 2003; Hoeane, 2004) although the situation is slowly changing (Soudien and Sayed, 2004). Consequently, it does not always receive the attention that it should especially given the fact that it still divides people along socio-economic lines with the face of poverty in the country still overwhelmingly Black. The avoidance of the topic might be so for a number of reasons. One reason is that in this historic period it might not be in the interest of nation building to dwell on issues of race (McKeever, 2000). The discussion in this section, however, emphasises the salience of race in the country's history and its impact on the present. As Suttner (2005) points out,

we need to recognise ... (race) has played a real and significant role in people's lives and has left legacies in what people now have or own or what or whether they have jobs and what skills they possess. It also has a significant impact on the way we relate to one another (pp25-6)

In addition I use a feminist perspective (Chapter Three) in this work and I therefore cannot ignore inequities of any kind, including those that are race based. These factors make it imperative to scrutinize race in this study.

One of the pervasive issues surrounding race and one where I do not see a concerted effort to change is the one of race labelling or categorising. It must be recorded that theoretically South Africa moved away from a system of racial classification but the political, social and economic ramifications of the system are still around (Chisholm, 2001; McKinney, 2003). The major reason why this labelling is so persistent in South Africa, I would argue, is that at present these labels are being used by the authorities to try and change the social equation. Black people were divided through a classification system by the apartheid government into three categories, 'african', 'coloured' and 'indian'. My usage of the lower case here indicates

that I do not subscribe to this classification and I use the term Black as a matter of principle. In this thesis I use the term 'Black' for all people who were not seen by the apartheid system as White and this means the majority of the country's inhabitants. Many of these people were against and fought the system of apartheid. In South Africa, academic writers usually explain their choices of 'racial terminology' (Gouws, 2003; Mabokela, 2003; Soudien and Sayed, 2003). I follow this practice and use only two categories, Black and White, which seems to be what most writing on race employs. However, readers are reminded that the categories do not represent homogenous groupings and I am not ascribing any general attributes to either group.

These labels are overall a continuation of those used during apartheid (Mabokela, 2003; McKinney, 2003). I looked for guidance on this issue to the Department of Labour, one of the government's legislative arms tasked with bringing about change in the labour market. One of its most powerful instruments in this regard is the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998), which was promulgated to assist the government in addressing the position of people who were previously discriminated against in the employment market. In order to effect change the act had to define who people were so discriminated against. The Act uses the term 'designated' groups, defined as Blacks, women and people with disabilities. 'Black' previously had hierarchical dimensions attached to it so the act had to explain the term. It therefore defines Black people very specifically as "a generic term, which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians" (Employment Equity Act, 1998, chapter 1). This explains the government's retention of the labels, effectively for reasons of redress (Du Pré, 1999).

The usage of labels in South African society is persistent. A body in the public domain, Statistics South Africa, in their recently released documents about the latest census (2001) explained how their statistics on population groups were compiled. Respondents were asked for a chosen identity even where the population group seemed obvious to the enumerators. Interestingly the response categories (as given by Statistics South Africa)

were Black African, Coloured, Indian or Asian, White or Other, very much the same as the erstwhile apartheid categories. This goes to show that although the country has officially moved away from apartheid classification, in practical terms it is challenging to find new categories. Maybe one should just allow categories to emerge over time? Ali (2000) notes from a British context that current terminologies are limited and that racial categories are false. Is it any wonder that the usage of 'received categories?' (Jansen, 2002) continues?

History of the South African Higher Education Sector

In line with the system of separation that characterised apartheid South Africa, the higher education system and therefore institutions developed along racial and ethnic lines (Habib, 2001; Mabokela, 2001; Badat, 2002), with separate institutions catering for different 'race' and 'ethnic' groups. There were institutions for Whites and others for Blacks. The ones for Blacks were subdivided along cultural (language) lines. Over time the institutions were grouped into two categories, Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) catering for Whites and Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) catering for Blacks. The institutions had specific aims. The HDIs, for example, catered mostly for the training of civil servants, essentially "to create a docile workforce" (McKeever, 2000: 106) and did not promote research of any kind. This was in contrast with the HAIs that were tasked with the development of the intellectuals of the country (McKeever, 2000). HAIs admitted mostly White students and all academics were White; HDIs admitted only Black students and in the beginning all academics were White too (see Bunting, 2002). HAIs under exceptional circumstances admitted Black students but only with permission of the authorities under the notorious permit system. We therefore have a difference between Black and White intellectuals; they were nurtured by very different conditions (Jansen, 2002).

Attitudes and practices that dominate institutions can rightfully be referred back to this history (McKeever, 2000; Mabokela, 2003). One could argue

that specific organisational cultures would prevail at the different institutions given their historical origins. Given the skewed participation in higher education between Black and White people, the organisational cultures in most cases tended to be White Western and in keeping with higher education universally also masculine (Madden, 2002).

An overarching effect of apartheid on higher education was a highly unequal system in a number of key areas. Essentially it meant the “skewed distribution of resources and capacity” (Gibbon and Parekh, 2001, executive summary). One such area of inequality relevant to my study is that of staffing, portrayed by the Council on Higher Education as follows:

The academic and senior administrative staff complements at universities and technikons remain highly inequitable. All institutions have academic staff and senior administrative bodies that are dominated by males. In academic staff bodies this is particularly true of the higher ranks of professor and associate professor. The historically White universities and technikons, including those that have experienced rapid changes in the racial composition of their student bodies, continue to have academic and senior administrative staff bodies that are dominated by Whites (Council on Higher Education, 2000).

The picture in 2004 was not very different. Overall Black academics are a numerical minority in the system and more so at HAIs. This needs explanation in the context of the study. In South African demographic terms, Black people constitute the majority of the population. The expectation therefore is that the group would be represented in different sectors in nearly the same proportion as they are represented in the population. The reality, however, is different. We still have distribution patterns reminiscent of the past (Bodibe and Mhango, 2004). Blacks seem to be over-represented in proportion to their numbers (i.e. population share) in sectors with low status and power, while they are under-represented in sectors with high status and power. This skewed distribution would have specific impact in all areas; this thesis focuses on the impact in higher education.

Why a Study on Leadership in Higher Education in South Africa?

The absence of a discussion on leadership within the highly legislated higher education (HE) system in South Africa is puzzling. I contend that this absence should be seen within a broader South African context where there are some issues that do not get attention. As set out above, one way to understand why is to look at the country and its higher education system from a historical perspective. South Africa has been democratised through a carefully negotiated process aimed at securing stability at all costs. Care was taken not to cause too much upheaval in any system. This was, however, difficult because two very broad and opposing constituencies/populations had to be accommodated – the privileged and the disenfranchised. It was important to keep as much of the former's rights intact while also providing opportunities for the actualisation of the aspirations of the latter. This was a tough task and is part of the reason why there is absence of discussion about certain issues in this society. I have cited race (McKinney, 2003; Hoene, 2004) as an example of this phenomenon. In the preceding section I pointed out that under apartheid race impacted on higher education in the sense that the system offered different opportunities for different groups of people. This had particular implications for leadership in the sector, resulting in the concentration of leadership in the hands of White men. Given the demographics of the country and the impact of apartheid on the higher education sector this thesis therefore investigates the influence of race and gender on leadership in the sector at present.

I argue that the absence of discussion about leadership in South African higher education (SAHE) is partly due to the fact that stake-holders did not have the time to interpret and operationalise the ideas contained in the policies guiding higher education. I have summarised key policy documents and ideas relevant to this thesis in Appendix 1. Of importance is that many changes had to be legislated at the same time with the result that reflection on meaning did not take place. Bell (2003), who studied leadership in the

South African higher education sector, observed the same phenomenon with regard to one specific concept, co-operative governance:

the concept of cooperative governance is explicitly advocated in a range of higher education policy documents, but it is tenuously defined. Vice-Chancellors therefore find themselves in the politically and socially contested positions of interpreting and enacting these ill-defined but critical policy concepts (p. 176)

My interpretation is that the absence of deliberation on leadership resulted in a process of confusion and lack of clarity about what is expected from leaders in the sector. Bell (2003), too, commented on this:

there is a lack of clarity on the specific role and function of the Vice-Chancellor, specifically as this relates to the intersect of the concepts of cooperative governance and institutional leadership (p. 177)

When leadership is mentioned in higher education, attention is immediately focused on the people who are in senior administrative or academic positions. However, leadership happens at all levels in institutions. Foskett and Lumby (2003) point out that, no matter what formal organisational charts may indicate, leadership may be undertaken by a number of people at different levels of the organisation. Bennett and Anderson (2003) support this position and suggest that leaders can be found in various parts of institutions. Their emphasis is on the group of people who are in formal positions such as heads of departments, the so-called “middle leaders”. This position is mostly explored in the realm of school leadership in the literature but it has increasingly received attention in other education sectors (Newton, 2002a; Clegg, 2003). The focus of this study is on this group of leaders in South African higher education.

Genesis of Research Question

This study was motivated by my experiences of, and my observations and thoughts on leadership in higher education in South Africa, from the positions of “product”, “teacher” and “administrator” at various times in the system. It is important to mention that I collected the data in 2004, ten years after the country became a democracy. My interest in the topic of

leadership was sparked during the late-90s when amidst calls for 'transformation', the media reported a perceived 'leadership crisis' in higher education (Xako, 1998; Dagut, 1999; Goodenough, 1999; Lever, 1999). I believe that, although the media reflected it as a crisis, something else was actually happening. People in the sector were affected by the rapid transformation processes, which were not always subjected to formal analysis. The result was that leading figures were blamed for problems, implying that institutions did not have the right management or the right leadership (Kraak, 2004). Blame placed at the doors of leaders and thereby implying that they had failed, is of course not a uniquely South African phenomenon. This happens elsewhere too, as Gardner (1990) pointed out when he suggested that much had been written on the failures of leadership and then went on to ask who would write the essay on the individual and collective failures among followers. My concern was that 'leadership' was never deconstructed in these contexts and so I began a journey (this study) searching for the meaning of leadership in this particular context. I was influenced by literature which said that there are as many definitions of the concept as there are authors; I discuss this literature in detail in the next chapter.

The question, "*What does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa?*" is explored in this study to define what people mean by the concept. There are three sub-questions involved in the exploration. The question is asked of manager-leaders as defined in Chapter Two. The first sub-question is therefore "*what meaning does leadership have for academic middle manager-leaders?*" As pointed out this study took place within the context of a changing higher education system guided by specific policies aimed at democratising a highly autocratic and fragmented system. I am interested to see whether these policies had an impact on definitions of leadership espoused by these manager-leaders. The second sub-question thus asks, "*does the meaning of leadership depend on the environments (here taken to mean policy context) of these middle manager-leaders?*" Lastly I intimated that leadership in the sector is concentrated in the hands of white men, which could give rise to leadership of a particular kind as has

been pointed out in literature, especially in North America (Rusch, 2004; Brown, 2005). Against this background the third sub-question, *“do race and/or gender play a role in constructing the meaning of leadership?”* is posed.

I found that those who work in higher education do not generally discuss the leadership of the institutions in which they work. The exception is when things go wrong and blame is then apportioned to ‘leaders’ or ‘managers’, because the terms get used interchangeably (Chapter Two). There is thus reference to it but it is not debated seriously. So, this study is a contribution to the much-needed debate on understanding leadership in higher education.

Apart from attempting to make a contribution to the understanding of the meaning of leadership, the research is intended to have an impact at another level. It is to be a contribution towards a collective memory about the effects of apartheid on higher education both at the systemic level and on the people who do specific work (leading) in the system. By a collective memory I mean something similar to Gouws’ (2003) observation that “there is no collective memory among the ‘suburb kids’ and the ‘township kids’” (shorthand for White and Black students respectively) (p. 1) when writing about students at the University of Stellenbosch. For me the collective memory is important in a context where the ‘real past’ (Badat, 2004) seems to be forgotten or distorted.

The Study and Researcher

I used a qualitative approach which comprised of interviews, documents related to the present South African higher education policy framework and higher education in general and a journal which I kept to chronicle the research. Authors such as Oakley (2000), Ramsden (1998) and Bennett and Anderson (2003) use the phrase ‘what is going on’ to capture the essence of why research is being done. For me the phrase, ‘what is going

on in leadership in higher education in South Africa?’ captures the focus of this study.

The interviews form the backbone of the study but the thesis contains more than that. It is based on research conducted, a review of a wide literature and my experiences as both student and worker in higher education (Knight and Trowler, 2001). At the time of the interviews the respondents were based at Vermont and Mountana, which are both Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) of higher education (see above). Vermont and Mountana are pseudonyms devised for the institutions in order to keep to the promises of confidentiality and anonymity that I made to all respondents.

Research is seen and shaped by the eye of the beholder (Oakley, 2000). For this reason it is important to say who I am and what my interests are in this work. I am convinced of the importance and centrality of appropriate leadership in South African higher education, a system undergoing fundamental changes at the moment. Guided by my notion of its importance, I prepared this piece of academic writing first for submission as a Ph.D. thesis, and second for it to form the nucleus of several academic publications to support my career development. I put a part of my life, in particular the professional part, on hold to do this. I am committed to higher education and I aspire to contribute to whatever it means in the South African context by the time I re-enter it. I aim to contribute to the knowledge base about leadership in higher education, something I see as an emerging new sub-discipline of the field of higher education.

I wish to state that the thesis contains narrative that reflects my personal experience and views. I consider this ‘personal’ narrative important and relevant because I have ‘lived’ the core issues of the research - apartheid, higher education under apartheid, the changes brought about by 1994 as well as the aftermath of South Africa's history continuing in the present. But it is also in keeping with the fact that the researcher is an important part of a qualitative study (Kvale, 1996; Radnor, 2002; Russell, 2003). First, it has been stated that the researcher is the research instrument in qualitative

research. This researcher is a person who is “fallible, real, sensitive, fearful, fearing, anxious” (Soobrayan, 2003). Second, researchers do not come to the research with only their personalities and emotions but also their history, race, gender, class, social attributes, knowledge, values and meanings (Hughes, 2002). They bring all of that, the so-called ‘intellectual, emotional and political baggage,’ (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002) to the research or more specifically to the text and analysis of the research and it is important to acknowledge this (Hughes, 2002). I am for example specifically interested in race because of my position as a Black South African woman. I am aware that class framed the positions of people in the country and continue to do so but I want to argue that for a person like me it was race (Moultrie and de la Rey, 2003) rather than class that framed my experiences. In the context of my study I come to the text as a rural born, Afrikaans speaking, first generation university educated, Black South African woman, whose experiences have been coloured by influences such as:

- Childhood and primary schooling in a segregated small rural town with high school attendance in a segregated peri-urban area
- Undergraduate education at an HDI (with all postgraduate work done in the UK)
- Working as a Social Worker in segregated Black communities in South Africa (first practice in a deprived area in the UK)
- Brief period of lecturing in South African higher education (HDI)
- A five year term as administrator (project coordinator-manager) in the same system
- Aspiration to play a role as a knowledge maker in the system.

Of particular relevance to this thesis is my formal position related to South African higher education. I joined the sector as a Social Work Lecturer. During this tenure I was appointed acting head of department when the head was granted study leave. I left the position for one in the development field where I worked as the Programme Associate in a donor funded project involved in capacity building at HDIs. In this position I served a portfolio of institutions as well as the organisation representing the Vice-Chancellors of all the institutions. My position just before embarking on my doctoral studies was in the same project but based at an HDI (see section on Conversation

in Chapter Three). I was effectively a one-person department that coordinated activities and programmes across departments and faculties in a number of areas. I worked mainly with academics and reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). Although at the time I did not consider it in that way, I now realise that I have experienced many of the issues that the respondents mentioned in my research. My job description gave me a management role but because the position was funded by an external body, it was only titled 'coordinator' which created problems. I was expected to facilitate change in the different areas and that meant doing it at different levels. Sometimes this meant convening sessions with deans and this did not always go down well with people – they wanted to know why an “administrator” would call a dean to a meeting. Relating my experiences in higher education is important. First, it captures something of the system's structural orientation (Chapter Two). Second, it contributes to understanding why I started this thesis from a position underpinned by structuralism and over time moved to a more poststructuralist position (Chapter Four).

Structure of the Thesis

The data collected to answer the question posed in this study represent a snapshot of the present moment in South Africa and South African higher education juxtaposed against the past of the country and the higher education sector. It is from this position that the structure of the thesis emerges. The present chapter is followed by Chapter 2, which contextualises the research and the research question by reviewing the literature within which the study is situated and which frame my findings theoretically. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical perspectives of the research methodology. Chapter 4 provides an account of my data analysis and a reflection on carrying out the research. Chapter 5 presents the respondents' definitions of leadership. It takes the form of self portrayals of their leadership and the identification of desirable leadership characteristics. The chapter opens with a discussion of the head of department position, which the research showed as important in understanding their perceptions.

Chapter 6 focuses on the manager-leaders' experiences of leadership within the higher education policy framework, revealing a different leadership model than the one they subscribe to. Chapter 7 focuses on the experiences and roles of Black manager-leaders who are still in the minority in the South African higher education sector suggesting that they play additional roles to the ones identified in Chapter Five. Chapter 8 investigates the gender factor in leadership revealing some invisible aspects of leadership and Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with a short reflection on the meaning of leadership constructed by combining my consideration of the manager-leaders' perceptions, the literature and my own experiences. The chapter further includes brief reflections on the limitations of the research, areas for further research and personal benefits derived from conducting the study.

CHAPTER TWO

Theorising Leadership in Higher Education in South Africa

The research question, *what does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa*, brings together three broad areas of interest: leadership, higher education and a changing South Africa. Each of these areas could be investigated from a variety of approaches resulting in a variety of intersections. With all the possibilities available I needed to make choices in terms of what literature to study in order to contextualise the study as well as set up the theoretical frameworks for my data analysis. This chapter is an account of the literature chosen and is structured in three major sections. The first section deals with general definitions of leadership distinguishing between leader-oriented theories and newer paradigms of leadership and culminating in an attempt towards a conception of leadership for this study. The next section discusses higher education, leadership and management, and gender dimensions of leadership in the sector. The specific context of the study, higher education in South Africa, is the focus of the next section of the chapter. Here I set higher education leadership in a historical context and then proceed to discuss the influence of race and gender in the sector. The third section deals with issues of change. Policy formulation responsible for change in South African higher education is briefly introduced followed by a discussion of a framework set up to make sense of change in South African higher education.

LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Leadership concepts: towards an understanding

Initial definitions

There is a rich and growing literature on leadership in general; the writing focuses on definitions of the concept, looks at the roles of leaders and examines the characteristics and attributes of persons in leadership positions. In this thesis I draw on leadership literature in education,

especially the school sector but also general leadership literature in politics and business sciences because the field of educational leadership developed from the more general field of study (Gunter, 2001; Bush, 2003). In the literature there seems to be general agreement that three common elements make up leadership: the concept of leadership or its function, the concept of leading or how and what leaders do as well as peoples' responses to their activities and the concept of leaders or the people who are doing the leading. At the same time there is an understanding that there is no finite and immutable definition or conceptualisation of the notion of leadership (Goddard, 2003; Larsen, 2003). The different definitions of leadership which exist were developed in individual ways by writers on the topic (Goddard, 2003), employing a number of perspectives and approaches (Horner, 2003; Larsen, 2003).

Foskett and Lumby (2003) give some indication of the different approaches that could be employed to develop definitions of leadership. A first approach is to formulate a definition based on data gathered from the beliefs, activities and achievements of people in leadership positions. A second route is to develop a hypothesis of leadership and use this as a criterion against which to test the activities of those in leadership positions. A third way would be a combination of elements of the previous two approaches. My study primarily followed the first approach: I set out to talk to manager-leaders about their beliefs on leadership, their leadership activities and what they have learned from others in positions of leadership.

Leadership is defined in a number of ways: "a force that guides and shapes an institution" (Bond, 2000, p. 81), the function which has to do with issues such as vision, ideas, ideals, stimulation of positive perspectives (Middlehurst, 1995; Marshall et al., 2003). It is further about "vision and strategy and providing the inspiration to the people working in the organisation so that the aims of the organisation can be achieved" (Kydd, Anderson and Newton, 2003: 1) and also as having to do with tasks (Gardner, 1990). In my study a number of these elements seemed to be captured and will be discussed in Chapter Five.

In literature on leadership, Burns (1978) is credited with the first authoritative work distinguishing between two approaches to leadership, which tend to dominate the literature, namely *transformational* and *transactional* approaches (Foskett and Lumby, 2003; Horner, 2003). These two broad categories form the basis for the development of other approaches. Burns (1978) developed his work by looking at historical leaders or rulers including people such as Woodrow Wilson, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler and Vladimir Lenin; men who played political leadership roles.

According to Burns in *transactional* leadership, “leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another” (Burns, 1978: 4) and the bulk of relationships among leaders and followers are structured in that way. The purpose of such transactions is nothing more than the exchange of valued things. Burns argues that it does not have an enduring purpose such as for example the binding together of leader and follower in a “mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose” (*ibid.*, p. 21). Burn’s (1978) definition of *transforming* leadership is that “leaders recognize and exploit an existing need or demand of a potential follower”. In this way, “the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). The distinguishing factor in transformative leadership is that people “engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (*ibid.*, p. 20).

Of the two approaches, transformational leadership seems to be participatory and more values-oriented, an integrative approach to leading (Gupton and Slick, 1996). Its distinguishing factors are first, that leaders engage with others in decision-making; second, that power and information are shared; third, that those concerned in the enterprise as well as those who would be affected by professional decisions are being involved; and fourth, that a participatory approach to leadership is followed. The person leading in this way is said to be oriented towards empowerment,

collaboration, organizational learning, continuing professional development, participatory decision-making, identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, valuing people, using peoples' skills to the best advantage and empathises with difficulty (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999; Day et al., 2000; Briggs, 2003). Transformational leadership also tends to dominate as the preferred approach to leadership in western literature (Bennett and Anderson, 2003; Foskett and Lumby, 2003).

Leader oriented theories

Looking at general descriptions of leadership in the literature, it becomes clear how much responsibility is attached to the concept and the responsibility seems to be vested entirely in one individual, the leader. The individual leader has received much coverage in the literature. Burns (1978) who based his studies on historical figures, reminds us that "traditional conceptions of leadership tend to be so dominated by images of presidents and prime ministers speaking to the masses from on high" (p. 442). The traits, styles, behaviours and so forth of individual leaders are the subjects of numerous works (McCall and Lawlor, 2000; Fullan, 2001). Leader oriented theories abound and are embedded in people's conceptualisations of leadership (Madden, 2002; Eddy, 2003b).

Leader oriented theories make clear distinctions between leaders and followers (Ramsden, 1998). Followers are the people who do not lead in the traditional way, the "people involved with and influenced by the leader and not necessarily under their direct authority" (Russell, 2003: 149). In these traditions, followers are seen to 'do' things, mostly for reward while leaders take charge, have influence and get people to do things based on this influence that sometimes borders on coercion. Gardner (1990) captures the awe in which leaders are sometimes held: "people tend to aggrandize the role of leaders, they tend to exaggerate the capacity of leaders to influence events" (1990: 2). Gardner speculates that the reason why so much responsibility is vested in one person could be that the 'fact' provides some stability. If we can say that one person is responsible for events, "we feel

more in control" (*ibid.*, p. 8). Fullan (2001) expresses the same sentiment when he asserts that there is an expectation that leaders will provide solutions to all the complex problems of today.

Fletcher (2002), who refers to leader oriented theories as traditional views of leadership, draws attention to the gender dynamics inherent in traditional leadership:

the traits commonly associated with traditional, heroic leadership are closely aligned with stereotypical images of masculinity... the traits themselves - such as individualism, assertiveness, and dominance - are socially ascribed to men in our culture and generally understood as masculine (p. 1)

This observation reveals a central feature of leader oriented theories, namely that the leader within this literature is mostly male and White and such leaders, according to Bennett and Anderson (2003), "do' leadership 'to' their followers" (p. 1). These 'flaws' in leader oriented theories lead to a number of authors (Komives, 1996; Sinclair, 1998; Fletcher, 1999) pointing out that these theories result in leadership being defined too narrowly to meet today's general leadership needs. They suggest that in a complex world with all its diversity in which practically all organizations operate, broader and richer descriptions of the concept are needed. I tend to agree with them and because I see the context of the study, South African higher education, as a complex system which is being built from different constituencies as will be discussed in the sections that follow, I argue that a broader description is essential. I therefore looked at literature that proposed broader notions of the concept especially in education.

Newer models of leadership

Leader oriented theories are still taken as the norm but there are various strands of criticism against them or more precisely the individualistic views of leadership interpreted by Gronn (2000) as leadership which consists of the individual doing "something to, for and on behalf of others" (Gronn, 2000). Fletcher (1999) did some work critiquing the 'heroic' leadership

paradigms as she termed them. She identified three central principles of these paradigms: individual achievement, a directive and commanding stance and a 'know-all' expertise.

She contrasted leader oriented theories with what she called new models of leadership but which in this thesis will be called *newer models* because they were developed after the more established traditional views of leadership. It is interesting that the newer models are also presented as focusing on the three components of leadership (see Initial definitions) but that they are presented in an alternative way:

it re-envisioned the who of leadership by challenging the primacy of individual achievement, the what of leadership by focusing on collective learning and mutual influence, and the how of leadership by noting the more egalitarian relational skills and emotional intelligence needed to practice it (Fletcher, 2002:1).

The newer models focus on interactive elements in leadership by drawing attention to those who lead, the people around them and the context in which leadership takes place. These theories foreground social dimensions such as relationships, collaborations, experiences and the deep interwovenness between leadership and followership (Gardner, 1990; Gunter, 2001). Viewed in this way, leaders, leadership, followers and followership are merely categories and people can be in any one at different times. Goddard (2003) elaborates on this view by referring to the "fluid location of leadership", suggesting that leadership and followership may emerge at different times to different people. This is a new way of thinking about leadership, which Goddard reminds us, requires a "focus on the function rather than the role of leadership" (p. 22). I am in agreement with perspectives of leadership that emphasise social dimensions rather than individual achievements. My motivation is that within a changing context such as that of my study it would make more sense to draw on a wider spectrum of capabilities as represented by the collection of actors in the setting than to rely on one individual to provide all the direction that the situation needs. I therefore looked in the literature for examples of new

ways of thinking about leadership and focus on two here: relational and distributed.

Leadership in communities of relationships - relational leadership

Ramsden (1998) makes a simple yet profound statement, “leadership is to do with how people relate to each other” (p. 4). In similar vein, Drath (1996) suggests that leadership can be thought of as a set of relationships, “being created by people making sense of their work together” (p. 2). He suggests that this type of leadership be called relational leadership. The term ‘relational leadership’ signifies the relationships in which people work together. Drath and Palus’ (1994) exploration of this type of leadership offers some further understanding. For them, leadership comes out of a community where people, who are engaged in a common activity, dynamically construct the meaning of leadership. The community they refer to is specific, ‘a community of practice’.

The concept of community (or community of practice) is not unproblematic. At a basic level, it could be taken to mean a unit where people work together, for example an academic department or administrative section in the higher education environment as is the case in my study. However, when one considers the other issues that Drath and Palus associate with ‘community of practice’: self organisation, responsibilities, commitments, agreements, contracts, claims between and among members of such communities of practice, one begins to form a picture of a vast network of relationships, connecting members of these communities to one another and the activities around which the communities are structured. One cannot help but ‘feel’ the energy created by all the activity in their model; everyone involved would be interacting and participating within the community. Drath and Palus see the possible outcome of such participation as the increase of “feelings of significance” by members of the community.

This view of leadership does not negate ‘leaders’ but has a more participatory role for them, namely to structure the activities of the

communities of which they are part. The concept of relational leadership was developed out of a need for leadership in a context where people make sense of their shared work and the world from different viewpoints. It captures the sense of connections, networks, interactions and participation alluded to earlier.

Relational leadership theories emphasise the importance of both leaders and followers in the process (Kleinsmith and Everts-Rogers, 2000). It is within relationships that people construct (their) reality through interaction with one another: explaining things, telling stories, creating theories, forming judgments, evaluating work with and to one another (Drath, 2001). Relationships play a pivotal role in the leadership process because they define people in the process. Drath said in this regard, "a person is not a leader simply on his or her own but as a result of participation in some relational process" (*ibid.*, p. 150).

In leadership literature the relational leadership paradigm is at this stage a relatively young concept, still undergoing further development and evolution. Drath (2001), for example, explained that he and his colleagues were (through collaborative inquiry and research) still working on "bringing into being in [our] communities, groups, and organizations ... a new leadership principle to make a new kind of [relational] leadership make sense" (p. 156). This means that defining relational leadership could be open to various interpretations.

Distributed leadership

Leader oriented theories have also been criticised by proponents of distributed leadership. Gronn (1999) is one of its exponents. He suggests that "the leadership of organisations is normally distributed, dispersed and diffused, rather than concentrated in one or a few hands" (p. 2). A good visualisation of this kind of leadership is Gronn's (2000) exposition of, "a fluid and emergent rather than a fixed phenomenon" (p. 324). Gronn chooses to explain this further with a focus on "conjoint agency", which he views as:

the satisfactory completion of discretionary tasks attributable to the concerted labour performed by pluralities of interdependent organization members. Leadership and influence comprise part of that labour within those structured relationships, but ... the properties displayed by leadership are more likely to take a distributed, rather than a concentrated, form (p. 317).

Further clarification of distributed leadership is provided by Bennett and Anderson's (2003) description of it as " leadership (that) might be exercised by many different people at different times, and in relation to different issues, depending on the circumstances and the demands of each occasion" (p3).

It is not easy to understand leadership in this way in a context of hierarchically organised institutions where leader oriented theories are still dominant. However, Gronn (2000) provides us with examples of distributed leadership in situations with which anyone working in higher education would be familiar with such as the relations between executives and their personal assistants and between organizational heads and their immediate subordinates. The significance of such relationships will, of course, have different meanings to different people depending, one could argue, on how convinced they are of the phenomenon of distributed leadership.

Gronn (2000) also tries to impress upon us the benefits and positive elements of distributed leadership. His suggestion is that these entail the maximizing of sources of information, data and even judgement. At the same time it also means that the consequences of miscalculation and risk can be spread around in organisations. In the final analysis organisations could benefit because their nets of intelligence and resourcefulness widen.

As I will show later higher education is hierarchical so distributed leadership would not so easily be accepted in that context and the theory therefore has its critics. Russell (2003) is an author who voiced criticism in this regard. She expressed the opinion that distributed leadership negates the positional characteristics of hierarchical organizations. In these

organizations influence and power are attached to positions, the higher the position, the more influence is ascribed to it. I encountered similar opposition when introducing distributed leadership in one of the pilot interviews. I decided against using specific leadership models in the interviews which provided the data for this thesis but I am convinced of the merits of distributed leadership and acknowledge it as a constituent of the theoretical framework of this study.

Towards a conceptualisation of leadership for this study

I did not start off this study with a fixed model of leadership in mind. As indicated I reviewed literature which exposed me to theories of leadership which deepened my understanding and guided the study. Having reviewed some leadership literature it seems to me that the newer models of leadership, combining elements of the Drath and Palus project, relational leadership and distributed leadership could offer a new way of looking at leadership. This would mean looking at the connections between and among people and looking at how these relationships assist people to participate in leadership. For me the attraction of these theories is the interactive elements which emphasize possibilities for active participation in the leadership process. My intention is to use this framework in conjunction with the viewpoints, experiences and perspectives of and about leadership of the research participants to build a picture of how leadership is conceptualised in the context which I studied.

The discussion on leadership thus far revealed that there is much ambiguity and uncertainty around leadership concepts in the literature. So maybe the question needs to be asked: "What was the point in doing the study?" Fosskett and Lumby (2003) have suggested that, "researchers and practitioners need some common language (on leadership) in order to communicate and learn from each other" (p.194) and it was in that spirit that this study was conducted. It is an attempt to contribute to the establishment of a common language on leadership. It is done in a specific context because one cannot speak about leadership without situating it within a context. McCall and Lawlor (2000) noted that leadership "only has

meaning and purpose within defined contexts, situations or role relationships” (p. 20). I agree with them and others who hold the view that context is important in studies of leadership (Kempner, 2003) and will now proceed to a discussion of the context of this study.

Higher Education

The context of this study is higher education in South Africa, which necessitates an understanding of higher education in general. Higher education institutions can be seen as complex organisations. First, they are known to be *hierarchical* (Madden, 2002; Moultrie and de la Rey, 2003; Johnson and Cross, 2004). Johnson and Cross give a typical example of this hierarchy when they state that, “deans are typically third-in-command after the vice-chancellor and the deputy vice-chancellors” (p. 43). In this quotation one recognises the hierarchical order – the deputy-vice chancellor is higher up the ‘ladder’ than the dean but lower down than the vice-chancellor and normally accountability is tied hierarchically to these positions too. People with titles such as head of department or vice chancellor would be the ones tasked with formal leadership responsibilities (Ramsden, 1998).

Second, more and more national higher education systems find themselves linked in a very specific way to international systems as a result of ‘*globalisation*’. In the globalised system the ethos in higher education has become “increasingly economic and managerial” (Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000: 269). In a sense, higher education has become marketized with economic rationalism and corporate interests prominent features. *Managerialism* is the term assigned to describe the culture brought about by “social relations premised upon the market” (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000). Authors on marketization in higher education agree on the fundamental shift that has taken place (Ozga and Deem, 2000; Blackmore, 2005). For them higher education was previously concerned with processes while the emphasis is now on outputs or as Blackmore (2005) remarks

there is a “craving for data” (p. 180). Ozga and Deem (2000) succinctly sum up the shift as from:

preoccupation with process, that is enculturation into habits of thought, acquisition of craft skills and culture or academic discipline and culture, to a preoccupation with output as measured by the number of completing students, publications, funding for research and so on (p. 142).

Managerialism is a trend that has been acknowledged in varying degrees in different countries (Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000; Du Toit, 2001; Jansen, 2004). It is considered to have introduced into higher education a number of elements such as decreased public funding, public accountability, demands for efficiency and effectiveness and increased productivity (Ozga and Deem, 2000). Other values and beliefs associated with managerialism include an emphasis on individualism and the customer rather than the producer (Trowler, 2001). These conditions have definite implications for those who work in the academy. Budget constraints, to take one example, put greater pressure on them to devote more and more time to work. Currie et al., (2000) describe the tendency of universities to ‘devour’ academic workers as ‘greedy.’ The constituent parts of higher education institutions as complex organizations reviewed here provided me with a framework to make sense of the formal position of the leaders who are the focus of the study.

Leadership and Management in Higher Education

When ‘leadership’ is mentioned in higher education, attention is immediately focused on the people who are in senior administrative or academic positions (Trowler, 1998), the individuals vested with the responsibility for ensuring that the institution and its members fulfil their educational, social and ethical mandates (Bond, 2000). This responsibility is derived from specific documents, for example, statutes. Writing from the school and college context, Foskett and Lumby (2003) said leadership roles in the school or college might be represented formally by an organisation chart indicating roles and responsibilities. One could, however, argue that senior officials in higher education may be just that, officials who are senior

and not necessarily leaders who guide, provide vision or other activities normally attributed to leaders. In essence this means that one should not be misled by suggestions implied in the formal descriptions of leadership positions that the occupants of such positions actually provide leadership. Leadership should not be taken for granted in such contexts: we could have people who lead well, others who lead poorly and some who do not lead at all. They occupy those positions by virtue of the authority vested in them and the powers that it gives them. They are not necessarily steeped in the art of leadership.

The situation described in the preceding section could be attributable to the ways in which people in higher education are recruited or promoted to these positions, mostly for their academic skills (Tann, 1995b; Thorley, 1995; Henkel, 2002). I would suggest a look at two types of documents to verify this statement, namely advertisements for the filling of positions and job descriptions for such positions. With regard to the latter Tann (1995a), referring to head of department positions, argues that job descriptions rarely contain any reference to dynamic elements such as (departmental) leadership and management in the role. In cases where they do appear in advertisements, one could ask when 'providing leadership' becomes a requirement for a position. Further, what does 'leadership' mean in these advertisements? Was consensus reached on such meaning and importantly, how would 'leadership' be assessed in candidates for these positions?

The hierarchical nature of the system is a further factor responsible for equating of leadership in higher education with people in senior administrative and academic positions. In Ramsden's (1998) study, he equated leadership not only with "the people who retain titles such as head of department or vice chancellor" but took it to be located in the "practical and everyday process of supporting, managing, developing and inspiring academic colleagues" (*ibid.*, p. 4). This is a view with which I tend to agree. My motivation is that because of the enormous number of challenges which the sector faces it cannot be expected from a small minority (those in formal

positions of leadership or management responsibility) to be the only ones exercising leadership; there has to be a movement towards more collective or shared leadership. The research of this thesis is therefore structured on this premise.

In my discussion of general leadership concepts, I have pointed out that leadership happens at all levels in institutions; the suggestion is that leaders are found in various parts of institutions (Bennett and Anderson, 2003). The emphasis in this thesis is on the group of people who are in formal positions such as heads of departments, the “middle leaders”. This ‘label’ contains the recognition that leaders “cannot lead alone” and that leadership is therefore not, “an individually located function” (Bennett and Anderson, 2003:3).

My study explores leadership in higher education exclusively from the perspectives of academic middle leaders. The perspectives of senior leaders or “those in a position of leaders of leaders” as Fullan (2001: 134) refers to them are not considered. I decided to talk to this category of staff because there is a scarcity of different voices on issues in higher education (Trowler, 1998). In relation to leadership those who are ‘receivers of leadership’ are usually left out when debates on leadership take place. One example of such practice from personal experience springs to mind. During my tenure as an educational administrator, the project which I managed, the Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP) initially ran an annual training workshop on leadership which was generally open only to deans and people higher up in the hierarchy, an indication of where leadership was perceived to be located. As stated in Chapter One, one aim of this study is to contribute towards a common understanding of leadership in South African Higher Education; developing and sharing knowledge on leadership. It is hoped that this new knowledge can be shared in contexts such as TELP. At this point it is most probably also appropriate to say more about this category of leaders. Bennett and Anderson (2003) assert that middle leaders:

exercise that leadership within the clear constraints of policy and culture created by those senior to them, and still carry out the tasks required as individuals with formal responsibilities in a system (p. 2)

What my study brought to the fore was a strong responsibility expected from the respondents, namely to manage at the levels where they operated. This opens up discussion around the terms *management* and *leadership* because it seems that at this level the two concepts emerge as deeply connected, something that is not always pointed out in the literature. I have pointed out that generally leadership is defined in quite a number of ways. It seems that management is easier to define. A widespread practice in leadership and management literature is to depict a rigid divide between the two concepts. An example of this practice is the following:

managers deal with the moment ... make do, monitor and maintain. They manage what is there without doing much to make it better

leaders ... energize and excite the organization and the people in it by showing what it can become. Leaders deal with vision, dreams and possibilities (Ramsey, 2006: xix)

There is a great difference between the two definitions, one can almost sense the energy of leadership while management sounds more 'mundane'. It seems to me that descriptions of management tend to emphasize a focus on tasks which is narrower than leadership definitions which stress the broader picture. No wonder Ramsey also says the following about managers and leaders:

being a manager is hard work and not much fun

being a leader is harder than being a manager but it's a lot more fun (Ramsey, 2006: xix)

What we have here is what Caldwell (2003) calls the "positive affirmation" of leadership against the "counter image" of traditional management roles (p. 286). I want to suggest that the different perceptions of management and leadership might have negative consequences for people in middle

management positions. This was certainly the case in my study (Chapter Five). However, when reviewing my data I was struck by an interdependence between the concepts and I would therefore view them as complementary rather than parallel.

Hellawell and Hancock (2001) define academic middle management as managers “at the level of Dean, Associate Dean and Head of Department (HOD) or its equivalent” (p. 184). Writings on higher education in South Africa tend to include deans at a more senior level (Austin, 2001; Lalendle, 2003) and that is the definition which I adopted. Deem and Johnson (2000) use the term “manager-academic” for academics operating at this level, indicating their take-up of management roles. The respondents in my study are in this category. However, I describe them as “manager-leaders” to depict the tension between management and leadership reported by them (Chapter Five). The term captures the tensions and dilemmas that manager-academics experience when they perceive more conflict than complementarity between leadership and management.

Higher Education Leadership and Gender

Much of the literature on leadership gives the impression that it is a gender neutral field (Sinclair, 1998; Grogan, 1999). The implication is that “equality for men and women is assumed” in this literature (Foskett and Lumby, 2003: 191). There are, however, writers on leadership in education who argue that leadership is gendered (Coleman, 2003; Morley, 2003). In general, it is not easily acknowledged that leadership is gendered as Soobrayan (1998) explained, “I am left with the uneasy feeling that those in leadership may be reluctant to admit to the gendered nature of the job because it may be indicative of weakness” (p. 44). Coleman (2003) explains further what ‘gender free’ means in the context of leadership theory. According to her, when authors elaborate on specifics like leadership styles, they do so without pointing out that there could have been difficulties for people to reach such leadership positions. She refers specifically to the difficulties that women may encounter in trying to access leadership positions and, in

passing, mentions that the same difficulties are true for other variables such as race and class.

The neglect of gender in leadership theory, I would argue, has to do with the fact that most organisations in most countries are managed and led by men. This practice tends to make men and management nearly synonymous (Mavin and Bryans, 2002), leading to an “association, even conflation, of men with organizational power, authority and prestige” (Collinson and Hearn, 2003: 201).

Gender does not always receive attention in higher education although it has been said, “every aspect of university life is infused with ‘gender’ in the form of undisclosed bias” (Howie and Tauchert, 2002: 3). Morley (2002) informs of exclusionary practices that are gendered (and raced). Blackmore and Sachs (2000) point out that “some naturalizing gender binary” (p. 11) exists in higher education, specifically around leadership. It is important to consider the gender factor in leadership in higher education because “it has impact, which is unarguable and monodirectional in its effects” (Howie and Tauchert, 2002:3). Essentially the gender factor results in fewer women in leading positions in the field. This has to do with the masculine nature of higher education and the climate for women in management and leadership in the field (Manya, 2000; Onsongo, 2000; Smit, 2000). There is at present a wider recognition of where women are in the field but their positions are still sometimes ascribed to their own “failure” by, for example, not being qualified enough (Katjavivi, 2000). It is for this and related reasons that I feel that it is important to look at the impact of gender and keep it on the leadership agenda. As I have pointed out in Chapter One I also look at gender (and race) in relation to leadership because of my own societal position.

There are writers who point out that there are differences between men and women and that those differences matter. Christine King (1995) is one of them and she argues:

we are all different, of course, as people and as managers. Yet I firmly

believe that men and women, because of their upbringing, do think and speak and operate in ways that are different, with some notable exceptions, from each other (p. 48).

Gupton and Slick (1996) seem to hold a similar view. They observe:

despite *individual* similarities, with regard to *gender*, men and women clearly have differences in approaching tasks, dealing with people, and achieving career success (pxiii).

What this means is that men and women do have different experiences or “cultural realities” (Gupton and Slick, 1996), which would provide frameworks for diverse ideas about the world and understandings of concepts like leadership. This gives rise to the thesis that people may experience and therefore perceive leadership in a gendered way. This is one of the subquestions which I investigate in the study, ‘*does gender play a role in constructing the meaning of leadership?*’ This is a complex issue and I examine the perspectives of both men and women, which arguably put me in a position to make comparisons to decide whether their perspectives are different, what the nature of the differences is and in what ways it impacts on their understandings of leadership.

I want to add that I draw upon the wider literature on gender and leadership not only to frame gender related issues but also to discuss the influence of race, effectively borrowing from this literature to frame my investigation of race and leadership. I make extensive use of this literature as underpinnings for my discussions in Chapters Five, Seven and Eight where I look at leadership and the influence of race and gender on it respectively.

SOUTH AFRICA: HISTORY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

History of Leadership in Higher Education

Higher Education is a context where advancement is officially gained through tangibles such as publications and promotions (Creamer, 2001). Generally the advancement starts with a lectureship that through promotions develops to senior levels – head of department, dean, etc. and

it is from this layer that Vice-Chancellors and their deputies are recruited. Sponsorship to gain promotion is a prominent feature of this process and generally takes place within a collegial context. In South Africa, Black and White academics do not have the same opportunities to partake in these processes given the historical situation sketched in Chapter One. Collegiality in this context could be viewed as only benefiting part of the academic community, a fact Johnson and Cross (2004) commented on. They draw attention to the fact that collegiality:

“was predominantly race and gender-based. Constellations of collegial practice were constituted in faculties and departments along racial or gender lines and at best along identity and social affinity” (p. 38).

The impact of such practices are still felt especially when one looks at the positions occupied by Blacks and women. Table 1 reflects the latest figures for the sector.

Table 1: Number of academics - in system and at institutional level

Component	Total	Level (Cat 01 & 02)	Total different figure used for gender	Gender		Total different figure used for race	Race	
				Women	Men		Black	White
Total: system	41666.61	17772.5	13492	5405	8086	13492	4129	9175
Mountana	3222.07	1395.26	915	313	601	913	92	821
Vermont	3926.14	1509.39	832	272	560	823	142	681

(2003 figures. Compiled from DoE data in August 2004)

These totals were for academics occupying the first two categories of occupational levels namely instructional and research professionals (level 01) and executive, administrative and managerial professionals (level 02). These are the categories used in the South African higher education system to differentiate between the different professional levels. According to the figures in Table 1, 40% of permanent academics at levels 01 and 02 are women and 31% are Black. The figures do not take account of categories that combine race and gender. Women constitute 33% and Blacks 17% of academics at Vermont while 34% are women and 10% Black at Mountana. All of these figures are below the national for similar

categories. Note that in the case of Vermont race was unknown for 9 staff members; at Mountana two similar instances occurred, which explain the differences between the race and gender totals. The differences in the totals for academics in the system (column 3) and totals used for the purposes of calculating race (column 7) and gender (column 4) figures could be ascribed to temporary staff included in column 3 figures reflecting a huge inflation. These figures indicate that in most cases Black staff are still in the numerical minority on HAI campuses as observed by Vokwana (2005).

The impact of previous discriminatory practices on staffing receives further attention in Chapters Seven and Eight. Students, too, one could argue, are affected by the skewed distribution of Black and White staff in the system. Mabokela (2000a) reported the perceptions of Black students in this context: feelings of alienation, lack of role models, lack of trust in the sincerity and concern of White academics whom they find unsupportive. On the other hand, White students are not given the opportunities to see Black academics in meaningful roles. For now I want to consider possible effects of the skewed distribution of staff on leadership in the sector.

I mentioned earlier that academics advanced to leadership positions through specific processes. In South Africa, historically, the processes were intricately linked to who the academics were. Mabokela (2003), a commentator in this regard, observes:

in the history of South African higher education, rewards, promotions and opportunities were allocated along racial lines, rather than based on one's accomplishments and achievements (p. 138).

This practice was highly problematic. For instance, the academics that advanced in this way did not always deserve to. This is an issue Edigheji (2005) reflects on. He informs that during apartheid

some White academics without masters and doctoral degrees and without strong research and publishing records (<http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/Articles/TarkArticle.aspx?ID=1498829>)

were appointed as professors and as occupiers of senior decision-making positions. In addition it seemed that it was management rather than leadership that was practised and this management was of a particular kind: autocratic and bureaucratic (Johnson and Cross, 2004).

Historical processes left leadership concentrated in the hands of White males. Although leadership was not debated we get a glimpse of its nature in apartheid South Africa from the following extract:

the primary task of the Afrikaans-speaking universities in SA was to identify and develop young leaders in all fields who would become the heirs apparent to those father figures already in power - male members of the White Afrikaans-speaking minority headed almost all the major institutions in South Africa - including a number of tertiary educational institutions (Ullyat, 2003: 285)

The leadership is described as White and male, head of household type, very individualistic. The “young leaders” were also effectively used in higher education’s mission to uphold the apartheid agenda. They were deployed as academics in the Black institutions where they advanced the intellectual agenda of the system. This was leadership of a particular kind (Cloete, Bunting and Bunting, 2002: 53; Jansen, 2005). Higher education leadership, then, was concentrated in the hands of (authoritarian) White males but over time in some instances also in the hands of Black males. This was particularly so at HDIs (Cloete, Bunting and Bunting, 2002). In most cases prestigious positions were occupied by these same men (Mabokela, 2003).

Lastly it needs to be remembered that leadership in higher education in South Africa historically did not receive the attention that it obviously merits, in fact the observation is made that the concept “is a fairly novel one in the context of South African higher education” (Cloete, Bunting and Kulati, 2000:10). This study was motivated by the issue of non-discussion of leadership in higher education in the country.

Race and Gender in Higher Education in South Africa

Following from my discussion of the higher education system in South Africa in Chapter One, I think it would be negligent not to look at the impact of race and gender on it. However, it is important to be clear on the meaning of these terms in a work like this. This is a difficult exercise as Bryson (1999) pointed out:

the meaning of the terms 'gender', 'race' and 'class' cannot be established by a single act of definition, for they are deeply contested and fraught with theoretical and political implications. They are also linked with a number of other terms whose usage is constantly shifting and equally disputed (p. 45).

Bryson also reminds us of the importance:

to see that race, like gender, is not simply a matter of individual attributes or identity, but that it is a source of social identity and power which involves relations of domination and oppression (p. 52).

I agree with Bryson's caution and consider race and gender as social constructs imbued with differential power in the context of South Africa. I want to argue that race and gender have tremendous influence on individuals, affecting how people interpret experiences and events. My position is influenced by perspectives that suggest that behaviour is filtered through schemas or frameworks such as race and gender (Gupton and Slick, 1996; Fletcher, 2002) and that these influence our ways of seeing, our expectations and our interpretations.

I have already pointed out that race as a concept is not widely discussed in South Africa post-1994 (McKinney, 2003; Hoeane, 2004). I think for some people it might be a case of 'it's something that we no longer need to talk about, we have a new dispensation, let's just get on with building a new order' but when I look around me and see that the material conditions of the country are such that there is still so much socio-economic disparity (Wasserman and Jacobs, 2003; Hoeane, 2004) reflected in extreme poverty, the face of which is unmistakably Black, I feel that we have to address the issue of race. For me it is a necessity that we talk about it for

historical reasons (for purposes of a collective memory) so that its disastrous effects would not be forgotten, ensuring that it would not happen again and for contemporary reasons so that we would continuously work for justice and fairness for all. I do not find it easy to engage in issues around race (unlike with gender) but for a variety of reasons it was important to address the issue and study its impact on leadership in higher education in this study. Discomfort with engagement in issues of race has also been reported in another recently completed study (McKinney, 2003). My discomfort had to do with the fact that dealing with race at this level 'forced' me to deal with personal history and educational experiences, issues which I had suppressed for decades.

Race enters specifically into the South African higher education system (as in other societal systems) because of the legacy of apartheid (de la Rey, 1999) as pointed out in Chapter One. The constructed divisions and inequities of the apartheid past left the higher education system with imbalances in the racial and gender demographics of staff with Black staff being underrepresented, especially at senior levels (Table 1, p43). Potgieter (2002), referring to the position of Black academics, states that they have:

usually been employed at one end or the other of the employment spectrum – at the lecturer level or at senior management level, illustrated by the fact that the figures for Black women employed at the professorial level have not advanced on the pre-1994 levels (p. 5).

She illustrates the above practice with her own situation, "one of only two Black women employed at the professorial level at the University of Pretoria" (p. 5). There is, then, more than enough evidence that race needs to be addressed in higher education. Thaver (2003) draws our attention to two results of these race demographics– that we still have predominantly White permanent staff members at some universities in South Africa and the predominance of White output in aggregated academic research in the late 1990s.

With regard to knowledge production, one could argue that White intellectuals are the dominant players in South African higher education (Vokwana, 2005) while Black intellectuals on the whole are not, except for a small number of them. White intellectuals are therefore not only still the dominant researchers and makers and disseminators of knowledge in higher education in South Africa, they are also the gatekeepers and in charge of the knowledge (and other) networks in the sector, which has specific impact on the leadership of minority groupings in the sector as will be discussed in Chapter Seven. I have already pointed out that this situation also applies to women (de la Rey, 1999; Chisholm, 2001; Mabokela, 2003; Zulu, 2003). There are, however, exceptions; I will explain those in Chapter Seven. This section reveals numerous reasons for exploring leadership from a historical race perspective. It showed inequities in the system which impacted on knowledge production for example and one could argue that social justice champions are needed to ensure that the situation gets dedicated attention and action.

ISSUES OF CHANGE

Understanding Change in South African Higher Education Through a Lens of “Feelings”.

The purpose of this section is to develop a language with which to interpret change as manifested in South African higher education. 1994 was a watershed year for South Africa. Sweeping new laws heralded a new dispensation for the country, taking it from an apartheid past to a more democratic present. The current state of the country is described in various ways: “relatively freer, more transparent and democratic” (Africa, 2004: 1) and “a new democratic order” (Gibbon and Parekh, 2001: 6). The new political dispensation brought with it opportunities for change and transformation in all spheres of society. The new democratic government had the power to formulate policies to guide transformation in all sectors. In higher education democratisation was driven by specific pieces of legislation and various policies (Appendix 1). The sector was provided with the chance to reconfigure the system “in a principled and imaginative way,

so that it is more suited to the needs of a democracy and of all its citizens” (Badat, 2002). These needs can be translated among others into institutions becoming national assets serving the interests of all students and addressing gender and racial disparities (Mabokela, 2001).

These needs represent important elements of the higher education policy framework (Appendix 1). Respondents articulated perceptions about them and it seems to me that these perceptions embody the respondents' interaction with the policies and in that way shape the environment in which they lead. What I discerned in these perceptions were expressions of how respondents “feel” about the policies, either about their value base or their effects, hence my naming the overall framework as one of feelings. In my study these perceptions represented the main barometers of change in the sector. Change literature (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kezar and Eckel, 2002; Eddy, 2003a; Jackson, 2004a) suggests that one could think about change in a number of ways and I made the decision to use these prominent indicators as the lens through which to investigate change in my study. I therefore needed to draw on literature that would assist me in making sense of these insights. In the light of the afore-mentioned I am focusing here on theories that examine the ‘human dimension’ of change, i.e. the impact on and the responses of those affected by and who have to deal with the consequences of externally introduced change. Kezar and Eckel (2002) are guiding me here with their observation that research on organisational change tend to be in two broad categories. The first category focuses on “antecedents and consequences of change” and the second on “the role of actors in the change process (Kezar and Eckel, 2002: 297). In this respect, I suppose I am trying to understand Fullan and Stiegelbauer’s (1991) “small picture” rather than the “big picture”. They define the small picture as concerned with:

the subjective meaning or lack of meaning for individuals at all levels of the educational system.” (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991: 4)

The perceptions of my respondents are the vehicles through which I can develop an understanding what meaning or lack of meaning they have of



the changes in the sector. Jackson (2004) provides a list of factors which can have an influence on perceptions:

The reasons for change (imposed or self-determined).

The scale (quantity/amount of difference).

The quality (characteristics of difference).

The time (rate at which a difference is created e.g. slow incremental or rapid radical).

Whether the benefits outweigh the investment made in terms of personal time and costs.

Whether changing is a solitary or collaborative activity.

Whether it is supported/unsupported.

Whether it is valued by students, colleagues and managers.

(Jackson, 2004:3)

I will keep these factors or influences in mind when making sense of the responses of the respondents to the policy elements. These influences are also indicators of the characteristics of change, categorised as the need for change, the clarity of change, the complexity and the quality and practicality of change (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991: 68-73). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) further observe that real change is characterised by:

a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty... the anxieties of uncertainty (and the joys of mastery) are central to the subjective meaning of educational change (p. 32)

From this observation we can deduce that change is associated with a range of feelings. The feelings could be positive or negative. Jackson (2004) created a table to show this:

Table 2: Feelings associated with change

<i>Positive associations</i>	<i>Negative associations</i>
Excitement	Fear
Transformation	Resistance
Adrenaline	Threat
Improvement	Disimprovement
Challenge	Chaos
Energising	Management speak
Sense of achievement	Denial "Wake me up when it's over ..."
Relief	Weariness - exhaustion
	Change for change sake ...
	Sceptical of reasons for and benefits of...
	Sense of loss - bereavement
	Pain
	Uncertainty - Insecurity
	Demoralising

(Jackson, 2004a: 4)

Of interest to me is the fact that Jackson's table contains more negative than positive feelings of change, an indication of what the state of "the lived experience of policy" (Chan, 2005) could be. This seemed to have been the case in my study too, which should not be surprising if it is considered that the changes were politically oriented, aimed at addressing inequalities which are historical in origin. One could equate these feelings to Soobrayan's (2003) "historical political emotions" (p. 113). This discussion about feelings leads one to wonder about the ownership of the change process, i.e. who owns the process, or has "the feeling that this innovation is 'ours'" (Trowler, Saunders and Knight 2003: 18). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) explain that ownership is a process that involves "clarity, skill and commitment" and that it does not "occur magically at the beginning" (p. 92) of the change process but rather develops over time. Allen (2003) identifies in his research factors that may enhance ownership of change processes. These include among others situations where participants can participate

and negotiate decisions in such processes. Where this does not happen, trust in the managers of change tends to reduce and insecurity among participants seems to increase.

A further model for understanding how change works in higher education is the social practice theory model suggested by Trowler, Saunders and Knight (2003). They suggest:

That any innovation will be received, understood and consequently implemented differently in different contexts

Important contextual differences will affect the reception and implementation of an innovation which would relate to a) discipline and b) departmental context. The history of departments, the identities and practices of their members are in understanding (and managing) how innovations are put into practice.

Successful change, like successful learning, is a constructive process – the change is integrated into the heads and hearts of those involved. Like learned 'knowledge', the change is uniquely shaped during this process - which is sometimes referred to as acquiring 'ownership' of change but is actually broader than that (if ownership is understood as the feeling that this innovation is 'ours').

If there is congruence between an innovation and the context of its introduction at a particular time, then dissemination will be successful even if some 'pre-requisites' aren't in place. However both the context and innovation will be re-shaped in the process.

(adapted from Trowler, Saunders and Knight, 2003, p. 18)

From the various components considered in this section I have developed a "framework of feelings", which I will apply in the context of my study to determine the impact of the (policy) environment on leadership. This "framework of feelings" takes into consideration the social practice theory of change, influences on peoples' perceptions of change and the feelings associated with change. In addition, the framework takes cognisance of the history of the country and specifically higher education as explained at various points in this thesis. Establishing the impact of the environment on leadership is important for my research because one of the sub-questions

is, “does the meaning of leadership depend on the environments of (these) middle manager-leaders?”

Summary and restatement of research question

It has been said that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are investigators of the topic. This chapter revealed that definitions of leadership depend on the approaches that investigators take. These definitions might be influenced by dominant perspectives on leadership and in numerous investigations important dimensions such as gender and race are not considered (Rusch, 2004; Brown, 2005). The chapter paid particular attention to newer models of leadership contrasting them with leader oriented theories which it suggested are the prevailing perspectives in most leadership literature.

The wider context of the study is higher education and this chapter introduced some of the features of contemporary higher education systems that seem to influence leadership at the level where my respondents operate. Particular consideration was given to the tension between leadership and management that appears to be heightened at this level.

South Africa and its higher education system constitute the particular context of the study. The chapter focused on leadership in higher education in South Africa historically and in the present. It also showed that some of the inequalities of the past are still present in the wider social context as well as in higher education. These topics set the scene for a short discussion of issues of change.

These elements, then, constitute the components of the research question namely,

what does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa

and its sub questions,

*what meaning does leadership have for academic middle manager-leaders,
does the meaning of leadership depend on the environments of these
middle manager-leaders and
do race and/or gender play a role in constructing the meaning of
leadership?*

The rationale for these is a contribution towards a common language on leadership, i.e. the understanding of what leadership means, the development of this knowledge and the sharing of this knowledge in South African higher education. Having outlined the context of the study and the theoretical framework, I will now proceed with an account of its design and execution.

CHAPTER THREE

The Research Process: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology in two parts. In the first part I discuss the theoretical perspectives of the research methodology: qualitative, feminist and poststructuralist. I then describe the research as a 'conversation,' conceptually developed during the course of the study. The second part focuses on the data collection strategies: interviews, policy documents and a research journal. I also conducted four additional interviews to the ones discussed here and studied institutional documents such as mission and vision statements and other in-house publications to provide further context. These data sources were not subjected to rigorous analysis although they provided important data. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of access to the institutions, sampling, introduction of the respondents and lastly the conduct and transcription of the interviews.

Qualitative nature

The research is primarily qualitative in nature. Robson (2002) asserts that qualitative research lends itself to 'what' questions, which is the category in which the question of this study falls. A definition of qualitative research is that it affords researchers opportunities to:

explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginations of (our) research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate (Mason, 2002: 1)

This statement eloquently captures my interest in the exploration of leadership which I did by examining the understandings and experiences of the respondents. My interest was not in the counting of opinions; I wanted to understand the meaning behind people's perspectives; I was interested in capturing the depth of these (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001). If my interest lay in the counting of opinions and only the extent to which people exercise leadership I would have designed a quantitative study. I was, however,

convinced that such a study would not have yielded the results produced through the qualitative study.

Many writers describe qualitative research as exciting and creative (Bassey, 1999; Mason, 2002). Bassey (1999) views qualitative research as a creative activity with each enquiry or study having “its own unique character” (p. 65). This is most probably possible because research could be in one of three categories identified by him as ‘(an) issue to be explored, (a) problem to be tackled or (a) hypothesis to be tested’ (*ibid.*, p. 66, emphasis in original text). I view my research as an issue to be explored. Some of the strengths of qualitative data are said to be:

- Local groundedness – the collection of data in close proximity to a specific situation, so the influences of the local context are being considered, which opens the possibility for understanding latent, underlying, or non-obvious issues.
- Flexibility – as a study proceeds the data collection times and methods can be adapted to circumstances.
- Emphasis on people’s “lived experience” – possibility of locating the *meanings* that people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10).

I argue that all of the above strengths manifest themselves in my research at different points and in different forms. It is grounded in the context of higher education in a changing South Africa, it required a lot of flexibility to fit in with busy schedules and I could locate what people said within the fabric of their individual ‘lived experience’.

Feminist Perspective

The study looks at leadership from the perspectives of men and women, and for that reason, feminist research, which puts women’s experiences at the centre of any research (Jackson, 2002), has been employed. Ramazanoglu with Holland’s (2002) definition of feminist approaches to research was used as the frame which guided my feminist gaze in this research. They observed that such approaches:

"can be identified largely by their theories of gender and power, their normative frameworks, and their notions of transformation and accountability" (p147).

Their definition provides a summary of the most common themes in feminist perspectives. Francis (2001) explains what the concern with gender means:

- a perception of women as generally disadvantaged in gender relations
- a perception of this gender inequity as wrong
- an aim to change things for the better (p126)

One of the objectives of the research is to gain insight into the gendered and raced construction of the meaning of leadership and feminism, "provides theory, language and politics for making sense of gendered lives" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 4). Feminism also allows people to "express their experiences of living gendered (and raced, my insertion) lives in conditions of social inequality" (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002:4). These tenets of feminism provide a framework for me as a Black South African woman to make sense of my data. I hope to fulfil the feminist maxim that research should make a difference (Maynard, 2002). For me, the study through its incorporation of various perspectives, especially those of Blacks, women and manager-leaders at the middle rather than senior levels, challenges the dominant leader oriented (traditional) models of leadership (Chapter Two) that feature (White) males as leaders. In addition, the research also tries to meet elements of the substantive agenda of feminist research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), namely giving voice and representation to these people.

Feminism requires researchers to put themselves on the agenda. I have done this in Chapter One, acknowledging some of my "intellectual, emotional and political baggage" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). It could be argued that a feminist view is a partial perspective and that findings based on such a perspective could be subjected to criticism. I do, however, find intellectual solace in the words of Jackson (2002) who argues:

there is nothing unusual in taking a partial perspective: most of what is 'known', what counts as 'knowledge', is also particular and partial – the

particular and partial perspectives of men's experiences, albeit a hidden partiality, universalised as 'truth' (p. 3).

I am aware that I can only tell part of the story about leadership in higher education in South Africa based on my observations, interpretations and reflections on the data that I have collected and that it is just "one story among others that could be told" (Fletcher, 1999:8) about leadership in that context. It is, however, important to note that this story is being told by someone who has a very special relationship with the academy and higher education in South Africa specifically (Smit, 2002).

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is generally considered to have its roots in the French philosophy of the 1960s, which challenged the work of structuralists (Atkinson, 2003; Ream, 2005). A key feature of poststructuralism seems to be its challenging of structuralism (Collins, 2003; Humes and Bryce, 2003; Peters and Humes, 2003). A common remark made about poststructuralism is that it is a "slippery term" (Bush, 2005) and generally difficult to define (Peters, 1999; Humes and Bryce, 2003). Different descriptions of poststructuralism are around: "a group of approaches", "a set of theoretical positions" (Lye, 1996, 1997) "a movement of thought" (Peters, 1999). This movement of thought "offers a range of theories (of the text), critiques (of institutions), new concepts, and forms of analysis (of power)" Peters (1999). Poststructuralist approaches to research have been criticized (Humes and Bryce, 2003) and in certain cases even authors who employ them have done so with hesitation (Francis, 1998).

Why then with all the challenges inherent in it, did I consider and decide to adopt elements of poststructuralism in my research? I indicated in the previous chapter that my research question was located within three broad areas. I therefore expected from the outset that my investigation would produce much more data than what I could use in one thesis. There is also a political side to my thesis. MacNaughton (2005) observed that "identifying the stories of individuals or societies that are silenced or marginalised and

then sharing them” (MacNaughton, 2005: 4) constitutes a political act. I focused on the minorities in higher education thereby concerning myself with politics. I therefore needed to broaden my theoretical ‘arsenal’ to make sense of all the data that I expected to emerge from my investigation.

A characteristic of poststructuralism is said to be that it “provides new practices of ‘reading’ – both texts and text analogues” (Peters and Humes, 2003). In terms of my research poststructuralist concepts offered new ways of understanding leadership. I drew inspiration from a number of writers who use poststructuralism in their research and theoretical explications and especially those whose work is steeped in frameworks combining feminism and poststructuralism (Grogan, 1999; Paechter, 2001; Atkinson, 2003; Franzén, 2005).

Various writers (Grogan, 1999; Paechter, 2001; Court, 2004; Court, 2005; Franzén, 2005) identify a number of ideas that are central to poststructuralism: discourse, subjectivity, power, knowledge and language among others. These can be considered as a toolbox of ideas or theoretical tools (Burke, 2002; Atkinson, 2003; Court, 2004) on which one can draw to aid understanding and interpretation of data. I drew extensively on one of these, namely discourse. However, I was acutely aware that a second concept, power, was present in the study but for pragmatic reasons I decided not to focus on it. There were, however, instances where I could not get away from it and for that reason I discuss both discourse and power as poststructuralist concepts in the sections that follow.

Discourse

Court (2005) defines discourses as:

“not just language, or ideas and beliefs, or theories about the world. They exist in, produce and are produced by social practices, such as the way we make meanings with words and actions and the ways we organize institutions” (p. 5).

Discourses are invariably described as “structuring mechanisms” (Weedon, 1987; Farish et al., 1995; Paechter, 2001) for practices of individuals and

institutions. Discourses govern what it is possible to say, do or even think and what is not (St. Pierre, 2000; Franzén, 2005; Walker, 2005b). Further, there is an understanding in poststructuralism that not all discourses have the same value or currency; they “represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power” (Weedon, 1987: 40). This was a useful mechanism in helping me to identify different discourses about concepts. I could also break these discourses up in their constituent parts, which is one of the benefits of discourses. As St. Pierre (2000) said the value of discourses lies in their ability to “allow us to understand how knowledge, truth, and subjects are produced in language and cultural practice as well as how they might be reconfigured” (p. 486). I employed this insight to guide my understanding of the different components of the various topics that my research revealed.

I could identify a number of discourses in my research: discourses of leadership, discourses resulting from higher education policies such as transformation, democracy, equity; discourses of an academic and what it means to lead as differently positioned academics. In various parts of the thesis it is clear that the respondents are captured by specific discourses. What this means is that dominant discourses can “capture’ and fix the ways in which the world is seen” (Trowler, 2001: 183). Where it happens I draw the attention of readers to it.

Power

Intricately linked to the concept of discourse is power. Paechter (2001) observes in this regard:

discourses are intimately involved with power relations; one is not free simply to choose which discourse one wishes to operate in. Some discourses are more powerful than others (p. 42).

Paechter makes it clear that she follows Foucault's usage of power here. Foucault's (1980) view of power is that it:

traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body (p. 119)

According to Foucault, then, power is everywhere and in everything: practices, language, institutions and structures. There is another angle to the power–discourse relationship: Paechter (2001) explains that different discourses represent different forms of knowledge resulting in forms of knowledge being in different relations of power. Those who have access to different forms of knowledge would then also be in specific power relations. However, often they might not know this because “those who wield power are often unconscious of both their position in dominating discourse and the effects of that discourse on the status of others” (Watson and Grogan, 2005 : 65). I have indicated that I did not focus specifically on power in this thesis because my interest was more on how the manager-leaders were making meaning of leadership. The analysis which I offer in this thesis was developed from what they said they do. I did not observe their practice where I could examine power relations more closely. I also did not ask them about their perceptions of power relations in their practices or positionings. The little comment about power that I do offer at a few points in the thesis I inferred from what the manager-leaders said to me.

A poststructuralist discussion of power is not complete without a mention of resistance, a concept said to be inseparable from power (Paechter, 2001). In practical terms this means that where there are power relations, relations of resistance are to be found. Resistance has an important function in poststructuralism; it raises prospects for alternatives. As Court (2004) said resistance offers “the possibility of the construction of a counter discourse” (p. 592).

Conversation

I also view my research as an ongoing conversation. ‘Conversation’ is the approach I adopted in the conceptualisation of the research, the development of the question and sub-questions, the research design and which I then continued to use until the completion of the thesis. ‘Conversation’ was

specifically framed during the pilot phase when I reflected on the changes that took place in the questions that guide the study. This was reflected in the way I discussed my research ideas on an ongoing basis with people whom I call research partners and this became part of the methodology, which I adopted for my research project. The evolution of 'conversation' is the focus of this section.

My research partners are ex-colleagues and friends with whom I started having conversations from the start of my study; when I had an idea, I would take it to one of them in a face-to-face situation, via email or in a telephone conversation. In one instance I actually surveyed most of my partners. I was 'checking' whether the ideas would work in practice. I listened to what my partners had to say, sometimes questioning their viewpoints, sometimes agreeing with it. The same happened to me; they questioned what I had to say, sometimes they agreed with me. I would take our deliberations into consideration and reflected them in my thinking. If the original thinking was changed during the process, I would then test the altered view to see if it worked. This process permeated my research and it is this process, which I refer to as 'conversation'.

I had no name for the process at the start of my research; naming took place by looking at the literature. Conversation as research methodology features in the field of teaching, predominantly in action research among teachers and adult learning in that field (Brookfield, 1987; Stone, 1993; Feldman, 1999). Feldman (1999) describes conversation as a "dialectical process" with participants sharing "knowledge, views, understanding and feelings" (p. 9). This is done through "talking, listening, questioning and reflecting" (Feldman, 1999: 10) and these activities are very similar to those that characterised the process that permeate my research, hence my naming of it as 'conversation'. For Feldman the process leads to the development of understanding, a process Brookfield (1987) views as critical thinking. He describes it as entailing:

diversity of opinion, disagreement over "correct" interpretations of an idea,

rule, or behaviour, and challenges to existing ways of thinking and acting (pp. 240-1).

I hope that it would become clear in this section that 'conversation' in more than one case challenged my thinking and that I was 'forced' from time to time to alter my thinking, especially as it related to my questions. I want to argue that two factors influenced my decision to employ 'conversation' as a means to construct my research. The factors are feelings of uncertainty and my preferred way of working. I view my preferred way of working as having developed out of and being rooted in my cultural orientation. By this I mean that I see myself as a social being who enjoys talking to others and who is happy in an environment where I can have continuous conversations with people who share that environment. In a work environment it translates in a space where people work collaboratively and where resources are shared for individual and communal good. In a wider sense it means that networks and connections matter to me and I see them as essential in situations where there are power imbalances such as in my research, concerning race and gender. It also means that I try to be part of networks, especially ones that can make a difference.

Prior to starting doctoral studies, I was part of a strong network of Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP) Coordinators (TCs), a connection of individuals "bound together by shared values, expertise and standards" (Kogan, 2000) and this network formed the foundation of my group of research partners. My wider network of research partners (partners from here on) has played an important part in helping me frame my research but it was the TELP group that was particularly instrumental and I therefore see it as important to focus on the group here.

Reflecting on the group, I can now say that we started a practice of continuous conversations practically from the start of our employment in a major donor-funded capacity building programme in 1997. We were overwhelmed by some of the programmes that we had to implement. In most cases we were without informed guidance and we felt that we had to develop

our own methodologies. With hindsight I know that we were facilitators of externally introduced change in which the human dimension (Chapter Two) was ignored by the policy makers as well as the directors of the overall project. We developed the habit of contacting each other: to talk about the situation, to consider options, to discuss it with other TCs telephonically and via email and to then take action. We would, also, from time to time organise our own national and regional meetings where the same processes would take place. During such occasions a lot of conversation would happen, usually around drinks or meals; all of us in one TC's hotel room, the hotel lounge or in someone's favourite restaurant. I think these 'socials' cemented our professional and personal bonds and we became conversation partners for various activities. The majority of the group are no longer TCs but we are still constantly in conversation. This insight into the relationship with a specific group of my partners was given to illustrate the nature of my relationship with people who are part of my wider network of partners: people whom I trust and with whom I feel safe enough to risk revealing uncertainty.

This process might, however, also have its roots in the way that generations of South Africans operated under repressive governments. Here I mean both colonial and nationalist governments of the pre-1994 era. I stated that I do not want to review the country's history and I will therefore draw on my personal experience to comment briefly on these ways of operation. As a young person in the early 1980's I participated in church, community and student organisations that were aligned to the visions of banned political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), known as peoples' organisations. In these organisations processes similar to my outline of conversation took place. Concepts were discussed and debated with participants listening and questioning, agreeing and disagreeing. Learning took place in the process. In fact one of the slogans of ANC-aligned organisations at some point was, "each one teach one". I would therefore argue that my preferred way of working originated from my socio-political education.

The feelings of uncertainty that I referred to and which I see as partly framing the way in which I work can be related back to the start of my PhD journey. I started it for very personal reasons, not thoroughly thinking it through before embarking on it. I therefore found myself with lots of doubts at the start of the journey, which would continue and be prominent at various stages as will become apparent in Chapter Four. 'Conversation' provided one way of dealing with it, affording me the opportunity to check my ideas with people with various experiences. My partners have generally lived and worked in apartheid South Africa and continue to do so in contemporary South Africa. All but one of them has at least an undergraduate degree from one of the HEIs in the country and all of them have worked in higher education in South Africa; a number of them are still employed in the sector. Their combined experiences and thoughts about the core areas of my research, leadership, higher education and South Africa enriched my thinking and consequently my practice and writing.

Elements of 'conversation'

Reflecting on the research project and specifically the pilot phase, I argue that various activities took place that individually and collectively contributed to the development of my conceptualisation of the research as 'conversation'. I have identified them as:

- Engagement
- Reflection
- Warning about sensitive issues and questions that were not working
- Offering of criticism
- Affirmation of feelings, intuitions and way of doing

Before starting the discussion I need to clarify two related issues. First, I started my discussion on conversation by stressing that it was conceptualised during the pilot phase and this should be remembered in this discussion. Second, the participants in my pilot study were constituted opportunistically. There were ten, some of whom were research partners. This information is important for understanding the elements of conversation.

Engagement

I found that pilot *research participants* (to distinguish between them and respondents of the main study, 'participants' is used in this discussion) really engaged with me during the interviews. One participant for example used the opportunity to ask 'why' questions in response to my questions, something that does not normally happen in interviews. This participant at some stage asked me, 'why are you asking people about their educational background?' He explained his motivation for challenging me as an attempt to get me to consider a different set of questions. He considered my existing questions as 'loaded', which he perceived as having the potential to make participants feel uncomfortable. The result was that I prefaced my original question of 'what and where did you study' with 'tell me about your educational experiences, post secondary school', allowing participants to tell stories.

Reflection

I invited participants to reflect on the questions. During reflection, one of them pointed out that something was missing for him. He identified a statement on leadership by interviewees as necessary and suggested that I build that into my schedule. I decided to 'test' this with the next two participants who had no problems with it. Subsequently all participants were asked for statements on leadership, which in my view contribute to building up a picture of individual perceptions on leadership.

Another outcome of the reflection process was that participants could provide me with guidance. Here I am specifically thinking of instances where I struggled with the framing of questions. Through reflection participants helped me to think it through and provided guidance as can be seen from the extract below (interview was with participant named **R4**, **P** represents my input):

R4: '... the question on demographics should be, I think refined a bit better. I mean to just say, in terms of demographics, how do you see yourself? Are you talking race, are you talking equity issues.'

P: 'I'm talking race'

R4: 'Then call it race, call it what it is'

P: 'So how do I ask? How do you see yourself racially?'

Here **R4** was guiding me in a direct manner. He started off by challenging my position of trying to conceal an important question. At that point I could not ask a 'race' question in a straight forward way. **R4** thought that it was necessary to do so and said so. I then went through a number of steps before eventually deciding on the best way in which to frame the race question.

Warning about sensitive issues and questions that were not working

The participants were willing to point out sensitive areas in the research. More than one of them warned me to deal thoughtfully with the questions on race as reflected in extracts from two interviews:

R9: '... I think it is in particular in those two groups ('Coloureds' and 'Indians') where you're going to find it very difficult to get a response, where there is sensitivity around a question like that. People would think you're trying to mess around with their minds when you ask them when you can see exactly what they are'

R3: 'I know, that's fine ... I'm not like X. You know X?'

P: 'No, I just hear about her a lot'

R3: 'Well, X would refuse to talk to you about that from a point of principle, I mean she challenges (research bodies) and the government and refuses to write down on her application form for R100 000,00 for research what race she is'

Race in this study was quite a sensitive issue, which was not a surprise given that the issue is not easily discussed in contemporary South Africa (Chapter One). Working out how to frame the question on race went through a long evolution, eventually ending up as something that is inferred rather than directly posed as a question.

Participants also pointed out where they thought questions would not work. One such example was where I asked them, 'who do you regard as leaders in higher education in South Africa today?' One of them responded as follows:

R7: 'I think the question on the leaders in higher education, who are the leaders it is almost as if you must list the names, a number of names. I

feel that you need to say what type of profiles, give a profile of the people that you think should lead'

I reflected on this feedback and realised that **R7** had a valid point. Her opinion was considered and in the end the question was changed to 'please talk to me about the type of leadership that you think higher education in South Africa need today'. This question offered much more scope for discussion.

Offering of criticism

Participants also used the opportunity to offer criticism in cases where they did not agree with the questions that I asked. Two extracts from one interview (with **R6**) show how one participant tried to argue against a particular question:

I think your question on gender is a bit superfluous. I understand where you come from. The idea that women and men lead differently perhaps if we think past gender beyond gender and think about the issues, then the ideas of leadership and their practices will live themselves out accordingly. I think that we will have to look beyond the idea of gender but in South Africa you cannot ignore the fact that women are being discriminated against

I'll say that people come up with their own suggestions that they feel discriminated against as a woman, that's just the question "as a person do you feel discriminated against?" or "do you feel you are capable of leading", so you've already asked that question about gender because a male has given you an answer but I don't want to be looked at as an academic leader for example who is a man or even a Black person but as a person (Interview with **R6**).

Conversation partners do not always agree with one another (Brookfield, 1987). In the case above, I considered **R6**'s viewpoint, listened to his arguments against asking direct gender questions but did not think that the questions should be discarded on the basis of his viewpoint because I consider gender as an important factor in leadership (Chapter Two). However, I acknowledged his objection and considered that with another partner's view. The latter thought that generally I was a strategist in the way that I posed questions but this did not apply to my approach to the gender questions. In

the end I collapsed the gender questions into one and placed it in a more strategic place in the schedule (Appendix 2).

Affirmation of feelings, intuitions and my way of doing

Where I had doubts about whether people would respond to certain questions, which I considered important, I could talk about it and in a number of cases I received affirmation of the importance of such questions. I could then go ahead and include the questions on the schedule. An example of this was when I was not sure whether to ask a question about connections (with whom participants made connections) although I thought that it was an important issue that emerged from my reading on leadership. I discussed this with **R3** and he felt that it was an important question and in that way affirmed what was at that stage an intuitive feeling. His words were:

I think it is a very important thing to look at connections because all these things happen within groups with often different opinions, you're not really doing it on your own.

The schedule (Appendix 2) at that stage ended up with an item on connections that is intertwined with collaboration in response to this element of conversation. Through 'conversation' the participants also affirmed my research and the way of doing it. Here are two examples of such affirmation:

R3: ... I think you've got the right approach, I think you do it in quite an open way I think that quite encourage people to talk and so I think you'll always get rich data

R4: I think this study you are engaged in is going to bring forth a number of issues we had neglected in this country ... I'm convinced that the things that we talked about now should form some of the categories around which the questionnaire should be structured and the research would be very, very interesting

Using 'conversation' for change

Following from the above examples, I will now proceed to try and show in a more elaborate way what effect 'conversation' had on my research design, i.e. the way in which it influenced decisions about the research. This is framed by Feldman's (1999) position that understanding develops through conversation

that can then be “used to support decisions about the choice of goals or actions” (p.10). I illustrate the concept of change through ‘conversation’ by focusing on the evolution of one specific question, namely questioning people about their racial background. This development can be seen in the way in which I posed the question. For that purpose I **(P)** include here extracts from all the pilot interviews.

P: Interesting that we talk about that (Black students at Mountana). The one thing with being South African, I’m going to look at things coming from different race groups but I’m not going to decide who people are, I’m going to ask people ... how do you describe yourself ... yes I will say it racially (Interview with **R3**).

P: The one thing that I’d like to bring out, which I have not really, is how people see themselves in terms of the demographics of the country because I think for the profile it is important but I want to ask people to self-declare, so how would you describe yourself in terms of demographics at this point? (Interview with **R4**)

This was the first time that I used the word ‘demographically’ and **R4** responded positively to it. I therefore used it again in the next interview where I had the opportunity but then I got a very different response:

P: I’m glad that when you talked about everybody going to university, you said something that I still find difficult to talk about even past HERS America (women in higher education leadership programme in which we participated in 2002). How do you see yourself racially? (Interview with **R5**)

P: I’d like you to – this is for me, it is a difficult question to ask, I still don’t know how to ask it but I do want to ask it because it is important. I think that in South Africa you cannot get away without talking about what most of us see as race so I’m going to ask people, I don’t know in what way but in some way, how do you see yourself racially? I tell you why because I want to look at the profile of the people that I interviewed and I think in South Africa and higher education specifically it is still important to say you know out of which community the people come (Interview with **R7**)

P: demographically in South Africa, how do you see yourself?

R8: I’d like to, I think I see myself as still being at (institution).

P: No, no, demographically in terms of South Africa, who we are and ...

The extracts show that I found the ‘race’ question challenging. This is evident from the way in which I had to justify it; in some cases I had a very long

introduction to the question (interview with **R7**) while also trying to explain why I was asking it. I did not justify other questions in the same way. For this question I also change the angle a number of times. At some point I asked them to describe themselves demographically (interviews with **R4** and **R8**). This was a complex way of asking because answers could comprise many categories: advantaged versus disadvantaged, female versus male (White versus Indian versus Coloured versus Black), White (English versus Afrikaans speaking) versus Black. Where participants brought up the issue, I found talking about it easier. After a lot of thinking about this and talking to a number of partners I decided that I would no longer ask people to self-declare their racial positions. This decision was specifically influenced by my research consultant's (an ex-colleague and friend who pledged continued support for my research specifically as a constant sounding board) viewpoint that in the South African context people would think that I was 'messing with their heads' if I asked for racial self-declaration in a face-to-face situation.

My struggle with race was intense; it was present in the research specifically because of historical reasons but initially I was ambivalent about including it. At some point I decided that maybe I should ask interviewees why race is not being talked about in South Africa and in higher education specifically. I put the question to one of my partners. She responded that it would put South Africans in categories or camps, that it was unpleasant and that it reminded them of privilege and advantage versus disadvantage. In higher education specifically it would remind them about affirmative action; she said people would like to believe that they were appointed in positions in the sector on merit but when race enters the conversation they might begin to doubt this. In Chapter Six more is said about a view in South African higher education that Black academics are not always "up to standard"; an issue that is taken up further in Chapter Seven.

The discussion in this sub-section is indicative of the serious process of conversation that took place around race in this research. I have pondered and deliberated on this with various people. In the end I made the decision to ask respondents, 'talking as a leader in higher education in South Africa,

would you say the system and institutions are free from discriminatory practices?' (Appendix 2). From responses to this question and inferences from responses to other questions, I try to answer the third sub-question, "*do race and/or gender play a role in constructing the meaning of leadership?*"

This section introduced 'conversation' as research methodology, a deliberation with research partners (for purposes of the discussion specifically set within the pilot phase of the research), drawing on their knowledge, experiences, and insights to clarify ideas and thoughts on especially sensitive issues and to develop questions (for the schedule) that would be acceptable to all prospective participants in the study. The process continued for the duration of the thesis 'project' with my network of research partners on various issues albeit not in such a focused way and with such an extended network. One of the last issues that went through the 'conversation' process was the naming of 'Extenders' (see below) in which two partners were involved.

Reflecting on "conversation", led me to consider this way of working as a possible way of leading in a context of change in order to acknowledge the human dimension of change process (Chapter Two). I want to suggest that "conversation" offers opportunities for participants in change processes to actively play a part and negotiate decisions, activities which Allen (2003) suggests may enhance ownership of such processes.

Multiple Methods of Data Collection

I used interviews, documents, and a research journal to collect data to answer my question. This section discusses each of these.

The interviews

The main data collection method for this study was the interview which is "one of the most common methods of data collection" (Sarantakos, 2005: 268). Kvale (1996) makes a case for interviews as follows:

interviews are particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world (Kvale, 1996: 104).

Cohen et al.'s (2000) opinion is similar; they observe:

interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (p. 267).

These viewpoints exemplified my justification for using interviews to get to an understanding of what leadership in higher education means to the respondents. They could describe in their own words their understandings and viewpoints; they could also explain why. In addition, I could engage them for clarification or further elaboration. Denscombe (1998) writes about the advantages of interviewing and these were further influences in my consideration of the method. First, they are relatively easy to arrange because only two people's diaries need to be coordinated. Second, the interviewee is the only source expressing opinions and views throughout the interview resulting in the location of specific ideas with specific people. Third, the researcher can control the one-to-one interview with relative ease because only one person needs to be guided through the agenda of the interview and only the ideas of that person need to be grasped and interrogated.

I used semi-structured interviews which according to Knight (2002) give “the researcher the opportunity to improvise or patch up defects in research design that only become apparent when the investigation is under way” (p. 80). The following interviews were conducted:

- Twenty-four interviews with sixteen heads of academic departments and eight senior academics based at two higher education institutions (HEIs), which I called Vermont and Mountana (Chapter One); these manager-leaders are the respondents referred to in the thesis
- Two interviews with national players in the higher education sector, one attached to the National Department of Education (DoE) and one representing a national higher education association (SAUVCA, now

known as HESA). Data from these interviews are not reported, mainly because of the status of the interview with the two SAUVCA persons. They stated at the start of the interview that they did not want to be quoted because they were not speaking on behalf of the organisation, which surprised me because I requested an interview with the institution. This development meant that I should seek permission whenever I wanted to quote them. I would have to do this at various points in the thesis and not being sure at which points and how many times, I decided against including them. In the light of this decision I then decided not to use the data from the DoE source because I would not have any comparable data as originally planned.

- Two interviews with persons tasked with transformation at the two institutions. Data from these interviews are excluded because the interviews were conducted more for scene-setting. However, information from the last two data-sets may unwittingly have affected my understanding and subsequent writing.

A standard set of open-ended questions as reflected in the schedule (Appendix 2) was presented across the interviews in order to give me the flexibility to follow up answers and probe research participants further as the need arose. The schedule went through various processes of revision and adaptation. It underwent a few changes during the pilot study as reflected above (Conversation). During the fieldwork phase two more questions were dropped when I considered them to be obsolete.

Documents

Knight (2002) informs us that “most research studies use documents to clarify policies, expectations and issues” (p. 104). I looked at documents primarily to clarify policies. I have indicated earlier that higher education in South Africa is highly legislated to guide transformation; policy documents reflect the legislation processes. I also paid cursory attention to several other documents to gain insight into institutional practices: vision and mission statements and documents related to leadership/management structures of the selected institutions. I feel that these documents could be interrogated for what they say (and how) and what they do not say about leadership in higher education in general as well as at the different institutions. I also looked at job advertisements (descriptions and specifications) to view leadership demands and expectations. I employed deconstruction to look at documents:

the process of taking apart the text and analysing it to challenge implicit dichotomies, reveal suppressed contradictions, and call attention to what has been obscured or made invisible. It is a powerful tool for challenging the assumptions that lie beneath the text (Fletcher, 1999:24).

Martin (1999) reminds us that (good) research looks at both detail and the big picture. This was a useful reminder for my own work where I looked at institutional leadership situations against the broader South African higher education landscape comparing the institutional situation against national pronouncements on transformation and leadership.

Keeping a research journal

Keeping a research journal was an integral part of my data collection. I reflected on a continuous basis on the development of the research, starting with my initial thoughts about the research – considering various options, planning, considering research methodologies and carrying on throughout the process. During the fieldwork phase I reflected for example on the settings in which the interviews took place, what happened before, during and after the interviews, especially looking at interactions between respondents and other persons in the work environment and the power relations and dynamics between me and the respondents. The latter practice was guided by Kvale's (1996) observation that:

it may be worthwhile for the interviewer to set aside 10 minutes of quiet time after each interview to recall and reflect on what has been learned from the particular interview, including the interpersonal interaction. These immediate impressions, based on the interviewer's empathic access to the meanings communicated, may – in the form of notes or simply recorded onto the interview tape-provide a valuable context for the later analysis of transcripts (p129).

I also kept notes on the process of gaining access to institutions, challenges in securing appointments, the ease or otherwise of finding documents and the general progress (or not) made in the research process. The research journal is therefore a detailed account of the research process, chronicling its beginning, the field work, analysis, writing-up stage and my reflections throughout the whole process. The journal in the end became an invaluable

resource in assisting me with the completion of this thesis (Blaxter, Hughes et al, 2001).

Access

I attempted to gain access to the institutions while still in the UK by contacting the Human Resource Departments at Mountana and Vermont electronically. I was advised by a Human Resources Manager and a Transformation Coordinator/Manager (my request was referred to her) to follow proper protocol, i.e. to seek permission from the Vice Chancellors, which seems to be standard procedure for conducting research in South African HEIs (Cassim and Brun, 2005). Following this advice I sent written requests (Appendix 3) to both institutions' Vice-Chancellors' offices, informing them of my intended research and requesting appointments for courtesy visits. In one case I was informed that the office would be too busy at the time of my research to accommodate such a visit. I responded to this message stressing that I also needed official permission to access their staff database; permission was granted. In the second case I received no response and decided against pursuing it further after a second written follow-up attempt.

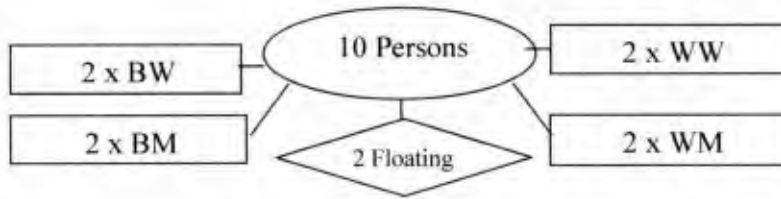
The next step was to gain access to the staff databases of the institutions upon arrival in South Africa. At first I was not successful, primarily because in December offices tend to concentrate on ending their activities for the year; the South African academic year runs from January to December. During the first working week in January I was granted an appointment with the HR Director of one of the institutions; I had a 45-minute conversation about my research and specific requirements for this with him. The meeting was concluded with him requesting an outline of my research, which he could use as a basis to seek approval from senior management to make the database available to me. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to get an indication of the outcome of this process, I decided that I would proceed without the necessary permission. At the other institution I did not meet the HR person to whom I was referred despite attempts to establish contact by means of

electronic mail and telephonic messages left both on voicemail and with the office assistant. The result was that in one case I had no official permission to work with their staff database and in the other I implicitly had such permission by virtue of the fact that one of the institutions' senior offices sanctioned it although I could not get the appropriate HR member to release it to me. I considered the ethical implications of these situations and decided that I did nothing unethical. I requested permission for access to both the institutions and their staff databases and the requests were not handled ethically by the institutions because they simply ignored my requests. At this point I am also wondering if this behaviour could be a characteristic of managerialist practice? Where does a (student) researcher's request for access to information fit into a practice based on outcomes and performance? In the end I worked with the databases, which were public documents by virtue of the fact that they were on the institutional web pages (see next section).

The Sample

The discovery of staff data bases on the institutions' websites helped me tremendously in constituting my sample. In the case of Vermont I could get to the database of all heads of departments listing their electronic mail addresses, telephone numbers and their first names making decisions about their gender relatively easy. I would, however, need help in assigning race categories. With respect to Mountana the process was a little easier. A first click revealed the initials of the heads of departments while a second click would bring one pictures of the individuals concerned, which helped with race and gender classification. It was a long process to complete the database because I had to do this manually. The dimensions of the sample were decided via a two-pronged process. Using my rudimentary mathematics I first worked out ratios (10 persons at each institution) as represented in Figure 1. The first set of letters W and B represents race and the second W and M represents gender respectively.

Figure 1: Sample Strategy Step 1



A study of the two databases revealed that there were far fewer Black academic heads of departments than I had anticipated. Based on this information, I worked out more realistic ratios represented graphically here in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Sample Strategy Step 2



In the end the sample looked as represented here in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Sample Strategy Step 3



The representation in figures 1-3 reflected the reality that Black academics especially at head of department level are in the minority at HAIs and that the distribution could be different at different institutions. I could not make up the sample amongst heads of departments as planned in the research design; I had to broaden the database to include other senior academics. This was primarily because both institutions still had a majority of White heads of departments, a direct outflow of the racial make-up of the staffing (Chapter Two).

In the end I used purposive sampling (Gobo, 2004) where I chose the respondents because I considered them to have the knowledge and

expertise relevant to my research. The sample was also guided by decisions about who would be excluded:

- Academics from Education Departments because I am to a certain extent based in the field, without a specific 'home' and I did not want to expose this
- Academics who I personally knew in order to keep biases to the minimum
- Foreign Nationals in order to control for more comparable educational experiences
- Academics from the medical field based on my experience during the pilot stage of the research.

During the pilot study I realised that there might be disciplinary areas where academics are more attuned to their specific professions or fields than to higher education and that this might impact on the study if a number of such respondents were to be included. One of the pilot participants, a health professional, was one such case. She was clear about being much more knowledgeable about her field than about higher education. This influenced her view of higher education and especially whom she regarded as leaders in higher education for example. For me this meant that I had to think carefully about the fields which I would include in the study. This phenomenon has received attention in higher education literature (Deem and Johnson, 2000; Knight and Trowler, 2000).

In the end the study includes one person from Education because of my struggle to constitute the sample. She is also one of two academics who I knew previously who are included in the sample. The other person ended up in the sample for reasons of comparison; he was the counterpart of someone included from Mountana. I tried to include where possible, people from the same field but this was not always possible. Two people from the medical field are also included, mainly for reasons of comparison.

At first I selected similar departments from both institutions and approached their heads to be part of the study. I tried to keep race and gender considerations in mind during this process. I compiled the sample as I received positive (and negative) responses to my requests. Some people

initially agreed to be part of the sample but indicated a preference to be put last on the list expressing the hope that they would have more time by then. When approached later they stated that they were still too busy to be part of the study. I recalled my conversation with one of them as follows:

... follow up a contact who previously agreed to be interviewed by me – she didn't have time then and suggested that I call later in month to look at time. Now she informs me that a colleague had a family member murdered; she has to pick up colleague's teaching so won't have time to be interviewed. Can see door closing so I'm giving up on her, no use chasing wind. Really sad as there are not many of her around. Must pin G down in light of above ... don't want to get in same situation (journal, 23/02/04).

In one case I could not find one prospective respondent; she was never in her office and did not respond to any of my electronic or telephonic messages. I think that prospective respondents' requests for a later slot as well as the respondent who was never in her office were indicative of the busyness of the head of department position and the incumbents' dilemmas around priorities which will receive attention in Chapter Five. Only one person refused straight away to be part of the study, saying he was a newly appointed head of department and did not see what he could contribute to my research. A number of others were in the same boat but as with him I informed them that they could contribute by virtue of their seniority.

After a while, when I could not find the appropriate Black women at Vermont and Black women and men at Mountana, I had to change my sampling strategy into snowball sampling (Gobo, 2004; Sarantakos, 2005) asking for recommendations "of people who meet the criteria of the research and who might be willing to participate in the project" (Sarantakos, 2005: 165). My struggle to complete the sample was far from unique: Mabokela (2000a) reported similar difficulties. I decided to have conversations with a new group of people whom I call 'sample informants'. At Mountana I talked to two academics whom I had met previously. At Vermont I approached a former colleague who referred me to one of her colleagues who she said was part of the institutional memory.

Completing the sample was difficult. At some point I needed only a few more respondents as illustrated by this entry:

taking stock – email last three respondents notes of thanks. Draw up table of interviews done. Need 3 Black women [wherever] and 2 Black women (journal entry dated 2 March 2004).

Finding especially the '3 Black women' was an arduous task. I decided to alter the way I approached people slightly by calling them telephonically before sending off the request for participation which then became a "thank-you-for-agreeing-to-participate" note. In this way, people would know they were specifically targeted. One of the first people called in this way, declined to be interviewed. She did not view herself as someone who could help with a study on leadership. Her reason was that she had inadequate knowledge of the South African higher education system by virtue of not having received training in it (she was a foreign national). In response to my question of how long she had been part of it (given her seniority), she answered 10 years. She wanted to know why she was chosen. My answer was that she was a senior academic and I also explained that I wanted a gender balance in the study. She still declined by asking whether it would influence my study significantly if she did not participate.

The two other women whom I tried to contact were very busy because they were much closer to senior management level (one was an acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the second a Deputy Dean). It took weeks to set up an appointment with the one and we eventually met one afternoon at 4.30pm, the latest start time for an interview. The second person did not respond in person but sent me a message suggesting that I speak to someone else. I explained to the 'messenger' that I targeted the prospective respondent for specific reasons and would therefore not follow up the referral. This very detailed account of constituting the sample was provided to show how difficult sampling can be in situations of inequality, i.e. where prospective respondents are not equally spread in the population under study. What became clear was that one cannot approach sampling in such situations in a "fixed way" because as my study showed one might not find enough people or not enough of the type that you desire. Or you might find them but they might be overextended as I suspect some of the women were. As first senior Black academics they were expected to play numerous roles – as committee

members and constituting taskforces, commissions and so on. Problems in this regard have also been reported by Mabokela (2000a).

The Respondents

For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality I assigned a **RNIRG** label to the respondents where:

- **RN** represents a respondent number between 11 and 34 (both inclusive) signifying the order in which they were interviewed. This practice was developed during the pilot stage of the study, which consisted of 10 interviews. The pilot research participants were assigned **RN** labels only
- **I** represents the institution, either Vermont or Mountana
- **R** indicates the race of the respondent, either Black or White
- **G** indicates the gender of the respondent, either man or woman

According to this labelling system **R15MWW** therefore means the 5th respondent: a White woman from Mountana. Table 3 and Table 4 reflect the different characteristics of the respondents. In the field column a distinction is made between the Social (S/S) and Natural Sciences (N/S). U/G and P/G institutions represent the institutions where the respondents completed their undergraduate and postgraduate studies respectively. These institutions, too, have pseudonyms. In a number of cases the P/G institution was located abroad and in those cases only countries are indicated.

Table 3: Characteristics of Respondents –Institution, Race, Sex, Field & Educational Background

Respondent	Institution	Race	Gender	Field	U/G Institution	Degree	P/G Institution
R11	Mountana	W	W	S/S	Mountana	PhD	Mountana
R12	Mountana	W	M	N/S	Mountana	PhD	Mountana
R13	Mountana	W	W	S/S	Mountana	PhD	Mountana
R14	Vermont	W	M	S/S	Vermont	Masters	REU2
R15	Mountana	W	W	S/S	Mountana	PhD	Mountana
R16	Mountana	W	M	S/S	Private	PhD	Vermont
R17	Vermont	W	W	N/S	Vermont	PhD	Vermont
R18	Vermont	W	W	N/S	REU2	PhD	REU2
R19	Vermont	B	M	S/S	RSU1	PhD	USA
R20	Vermont	W	W	N/S	RNU2	PhD	RNU2
R21	Vermont	W	M	N/S	Vermont	PhD	Vermont
R22	Vermont	B	M	S/S	RSU1	PhD	USA
R23	Mountana	W	M	N/S	RWU1	PhD	RWU1
R24	Mountana	W	M	S/S	RNU1	PhD	Mountana
R25	Mountana	B	M	N/S	RSU1	PhD	USA
R26	Mountana	W	W	N/S	REU1	PhD	RNU2
R27	Vermont	B	W	N/S	RNU2	PhD	RNU2
R28	Mountana	B	W	S/S	Vermont	PhD	Europe (UK)
R29	Vermont	B	M	N/S	Vermont	PhD	USA
R30	Vermont	B	M	S/S	CCU2	PhD	Europe
R31	Mountana	B	W	N/S	Vermont	Masters	Mountana
R32	Mountana	B	M	N/S	CCU1	PhD	RNU2
R33	Mountana	B	W	S/S	RSU1	PhD	USA
R34	Vermont	B	W	S/S	RNU3	PhD	USA

Table 4: Characteristics of Respondents: Career Experience

Respondent	Institution	Race	Gender	Ex HE experience	Yrs in academe	HOD	Yrs as HOD
R11	Mountana	W	W	Teaching	21	Yes	4
R12	Mountana	W	M	Industry	24	Yes	6
R13	Mountana	W	W	Industry	27	Yes	3
R14	Vermont	W	M	Industry	17	Yes	2
R15	Mountana	W	W	Industry	3	Yes	3
R16	Mountana	W	M	Industry	8	Yes	6
R17	Vermont	W	W	No	+30	Yes	1.5
R18	Vermont	W	W	No	11	Yes	<1
R19	Vermont	B	M	No	17	Yes	2
R20	Vermont	W	W	Teaching	20	Yes	2
R21	Vermont	W	M	Industry	30	Yes	11
R22	Vermont	B	M	Industry	25	Yes	3
R23	Mountana	W	M	No	38	Yes	+10
R24	Mountana	W	M	Industry	20	Yes	4
R25	Mountana	B	M	Industry	23	No	N/A
R26	Mountana	W	W	Industry	4	Yes	4
R27	Vermont	B	W	Industry	17	No	N/A
R28	Mountana	B	W	No	7	No	N/A
R29	Vermont	B	M	Industry	7	No	N/A
R30	Vermont	B	M	Industry	20	No	N/A
R31	Mountana	B	W	Industry	3	No	N/A
R32	Mountana	B	M	No	7	No	N/A
R33	Mountana	B	W	Teaching	7	No	N/A
R34	Vermont	B	W	Industry	22	Yes	unknown

Thirteen of the respondents were academics at Mountana and eleven at Vermont; twelve women and twelve men; thirteen White and eleven Black people. Eight of the Mountana respondents were White and five were Black. Six of the Vermont respondents were Black and five White. Of the women, seven were attached to Mountana and five to Vermont. The men were evenly divided between the two institutions. Half of the respondents were social scientists while the other half were from the natural sciences. Twenty-two respondents held doctoral degrees of which eight were obtained outside South Africa, predominantly in North America and Western Europe. Significant was that the 'foreign' degrees were all obtained by Black respondents. This was a reminder that the previous higher education system offered limited opportunities to Blacks (Chapter One). Only two Black respondents obtained doctoral degrees inside the country while all the White respondents completed theirs in-country.

I identify a new category of academic in my study, 'Extenders'. This is not a term which any of my respondents used or which I encountered in any literature. I decided to use the term in my analysis to denote some of the people who are in the minority groupings in 'main stream academia' in South Africa, namely Blacks. In general the term describes Black academics working in HAIs after having started their academic careers at HDIs. They, I argue, have a greater understanding of the issues that the system is grappling with having lived through a separated system and now being in a situation where they serve the 'changed' system but from a very different base. Another group includes academics who I view as a 'newer generation'. By this I mean a generation of Black academics with about ten years experience in the system and who have completed most (now progressively all) of their education at HAIs. R28MBW, R31MBW and R32MBM belong to this subgroup of Black academics. The 'Extenders' are R19VBM, R25MBM and R34VBW. R30VBM, R22VBM and R33MBW are partly 'Extenders' because they joined higher education from industry but they have an HDI background. R27VBW and R29VBM studied under the permit system and were in a sense treated like other alumnae of their institutions.

Conducting the Interviews

I set up interviews as soon as the sample began to take shape. This was done by means of a letter (Appendix 4) that I sent to prospective respondents via electronic mail. In contrast with the difficulties I encountered in accessing the data bases and constituting the sample, most of the people responded positive (albeit in some cases with some hesitation and/or reservation) to requests for interviews. This was a pleasant surprise to me. I expected more refusals to be interviewed due to time constraints (Chapter Five).

As set out in the request for an interview (Appendix 4), I followed up the electronic mail with telephone conversations to the respondents in which we agreed upon dates and suitable times for conducting the interviews. All interviews were conducted in the departments where the respondents worked, and in most cases, in their offices. Most interviews took place at the times initially agreed and where there were changes the respondents informed me of these either personally or through one of their departmental staff members. Surprisingly the interviews were not usually interrupted unless personal assistants appeared to remind respondents of their next appointments. I do not know how many of the respondents switched their phones off or diverted them but very few telephone conversations were conducted during the interviews and in almost all these cases respondents mentioned that they were expecting important phone calls. In at least one interview the phone rang twice without the respondent paying attention to it. Somehow I did not hear the phone ringing until transcribing the interview. One respondent ignored a couple of phone calls and when her mobile phone started ringing afterwards she switched that off, commenting that people must really be searching for her but that they could wait till after the interview.

I interviewed the respondents for between 30 minutes and an hour each, most lasting around 45 minutes. Prior to the commencement of the interviews I asked respondents' permission to tape-record the interviews which was granted in all cases. In a few cases the interviews did not run their entire course because of time constraints. In such cases I tried to make sure that

the most salient questions were asked and I always asked respondents at the end of the interview whether I could get back to them electronically if I needed to. All of them agreed but I have not acted upon any of these agreements because of my concern that I might not get appropriate responses given my experience in trying to get hold of the respondents during the fieldwork phase. They were all very busy; in a number of cases my appointment was literally 'squeezed' in between others with personal assistants interrupting interviews to remind respondents of their next meeting. In one case, a respondent observed that I was the seventieth person whom she had seen that day, "in an equally heavy conversation" (R20VWW). In this way I got a glimpse of the busyness of the head of department position on which I comment in more detail in Chapter Five.

Overall I would say that the majority, if not all, respondents were very accommodating – they fitted me into busy programmes, treated the research and me with respect and were attentive during the interviews. Two short extracts from my research journal serve as illustration:

Waiting in secretary's office... is my appointment late? He eventually turns up, delayed in lecture. Gives impression of passionate teacher... Lots of eye contact, lots of talking with the hands (24/02/04)

Someone who cannot handle bureaucracy but she is also passionate about... Sounded very committed to a number of causes... dedicated to whatever she's busy with and very involved in activities, a hands-on kind of person. She gave a lot of time to the interview despite having had to come from home at that stage – she was at home with an allergy (27/02/04)

There were a number of surprises. First, I was accepted as an insider, which I sensed from numerous "you knows" in the interviews. Second, there was great candidness: people were open. R14VWM told me about a PhD that he did not manage to complete, R13MWW shared with me (read to me) the content of a letter received from a student in financial difficulties to make a point about some the problems they were experiencing, R15MWW told me about her left wing political beliefs in a conservative department during her student years and the difficulties which that created. Third, White respondents on the whole were diplomatic regarding transformation issues. They did not talk about racial imbalances easily, both men and women

respondents talked more easily about gender issues. Some of the Black respondents on the other hand were quite emotional about the slow rate of change, much more than I have expected from people at their level in an interview of this kind. All of this, however, contributed to rich data.

I ended the interviews by inviting feedback on the interview process and further questions. A number of the respondents used the opportunity to reiterate statements that they made during the interview while others wanted to know more about the research. Others emphasised the value of the research while a number offered encouragement and wished me well with the rest of the research process.

Transcribing the Interviews

During the pilot stage of the research I became aware of the amount of time that interview transcription consumes (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001; Bryman, 2001) and I therefore started this process early during fieldwork. My first venturing into it was slow related here to one of my partners:

I stayed at home to make follow-up calls for interviews and started transcribing the interviews. I borrowed a transcriber but I'm taking it back as soon as I can: it is defective!!! I'll keep to the tape recorder even though getting two taped words into written words takes 10 minutes. Will have to learn to live with it until I get back to IoE ... So there, the joys of interviewing and didn't I say I'll transcribe all of them fully? I now don't know... (correspondence, 23/02/04)

I kept going because I found that there was value in transcription, giving the researcher the chance to relive the interview once more, a feature acknowledged in the literature (Wengraf, 2001). At some point my fieldwork supporter (a partner who during fieldwork became an active contributor in the sense of being there from start to end, encouraging me through low points and providing me with various resources) suggested assistance with the transcription of the interviews. I was not in favour of this but after persuasion eventually succumbed to the idea.

My reservations about assistance with transcription were correct in the end. My fieldwork supporter and I assigned the task to a student on a post-diploma degree programme. I was not happy with the results as could be

detected from the way I 'complained' in my journal over the course of three days, mostly in monosyllables:

Looking at printout (1st 5 pages) of transcription done by student, horror! Kept me awake because I realise I will have to go carefully through all the transcripts that she had done.

I was listening to tape – well I knew that I would have to redo this but didn't think it would be on such a huge scale and I don't have the time; I have other plans for next week

Most of working day spent going through 1st transcript and completing it by 2pm. Started on 2nd one but there are so many problems' (entries entered on 1, 2 and 3 May 2004).

From this experience I would like to suggest that there is a place for transcription services but that this needs rather careful consideration such as being sure that the transcriber would be able to capture the contents of interviews properly. The researcher must also be aware of the benefits that they would forego such as opportunities to relive interviews and whether they would be comfortable with that.

Summary

In this chapter I first set out the research methodology employed in the study: qualitative, feminist, poststructuralist and 'conversation'. I then considered the data collection focusing on the twenty-four interviews, policy documents and the research journal. Next came access to the institutions, sampling, conducting and transcription of the interviews. This was done in order to give a picture of why and how the data for this study were collected. I considered an qualitative study important in order to get to a "deep" understanding of what leadership mean to manager-leaders. The approach offer opportunities for clarification, probing and explanations of ideas. Poststructuralism opens up different ways of understanding concepts. Feminist perspectives give voice to those who are not generally heard. Dealing with a sensitive issue such as race in the study could be dealt with by employing 'conversation'. Interviews lend themselves well for the application of all these approaches and because I used a research methodology that combined these approaches I conducted interviews to collect data about the manager-leaders' understandings of leadership. In the last part of this chapter I explained how the interviews were conducted and transcribed and the focus

will now shift to the data analysis and a number of personal issues brought up by the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysing the Data and Reflecting on the Research Process

In this chapter I describe the data analysis process. I explain how I dealt with ethical issues, discuss issues of validity and generalisability and the chapter closes with a reflection on a number of personal issues which arose through the research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis can be arduous, although this is not always pointed out in research texts. It has invariably been described by authors as creative (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Basit, 2003; Van Hoven and Poelman, 2003). It is an interactive and a continuous process (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001; Knight, 2002). Knight (2002) gives us a concise description of what it entails:

it begins with the research design and data capture and it continues as repeated thinking about meanings that might be identified in the data. It is an all-pervasive musing about the likely units of coding, possible coding categories, definitions and indicators; and a persistent reflection on what categories, patterns and stories might mean, both in terms of the research questions and in terms of understandings that had not been envisaged when the research was designed (p. 175)

Data analysis is further “the search for explanation and understanding” (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001: 206), a process that may result in the consideration and development of concepts and theories (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). It also entails a “reflective, reactive interaction” between the researcher and the data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 282). What is clear from definitions, but also from my experiences, are that concepts and theories can only develop from an intensive process involving the researcher in constant interaction with the data.

Analysis cannot be completed in one go. Descombe (1998) warns that qualitative data ‘need to be organized before they can lend themselves to a

process of analysis' (p. 209). I followed his advice for the preparation of data by ensuring that all my material (specifically the interviews) were in similar format (transcribed from the tapes with spaces for notes and comments) and properly identified with a reference number.

I tried various ways of analysing the data guided by Bell and Opie's (2002) observation that "raw data are of little use until they have undergone some form of processing" (p. 157). I first read through the transcripts and made biographical summaries for all respondents to give me some indication about the possible position from which each of them could be speaking.

Then I started to look closely at the content and identified various topics related to my literature review and interview schedule, a process that can be equated to a broad sweep through the data, after which I wrote down interesting quotations related to the various topics (codes). This was my first attempt at coding. Cohen et. al. (2000) offer a helpful explanation of coding as "the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, with the category label either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected" (p. 283). They observed that after a first round of coding, "the researcher is able to detect patterns, themes and begin to make generalizations (e.g. by counting the frequencies of codes)" (p. 284). They also advise on a possible next step, grouping "codes into more general clusters, each with a code, i.e. begin the move towards factoring the data" (op cit). I followed this advice, ending up with a near mountain of codes and an unsatisfactory array of themes. I realise that part of the problem was an underdeveloped analysis framework (see below).

I learned a significant lesson about method during this process, namely how data can get lost during analysis. I reflected on this process:

What we lose in the analysis process. Looking at transcripts – when I listened to the tapes and transcribed I highlighted words meaning they were emphasised. Looking at the texts now – some of these emphases have no meaning to me!!! Same with silences – I've inscribed silences but they do not have the effect of being 'heard' like one would do on tape. The silences now become 'silent' and lose their effect, what a shame. One can never capture everything especially feelings. Emphasis or rather repetition of words like in this example from a transcript ... 'over years and years and years and years' in print does not have the same effect

on one as hearing the repetition on the tape: one hears the respondent making a very pertinent point while seeing it on paper seems devoid of feeling (journal entry, 15/06/04)

Such “loss” has received attention in the methodology literature and has been commented on in the following way:

any representation of a complex event such as an interview interaction will be less complex and more selective/simplified than the event itself. Consequently... an audio-tape is even less of a complete record (Wengraf, 2001: 222)

The coding of the interviews left me therefore with numerous themes which were significantly increased by the coding ‘thrown up’ by the analysis of the policy documents. Blaxter et al.’s (2001) observation on documentary analysis guided my analysis of these documents. They observed:

documents, whatever their nature, cannot be taken at face value. They are artificial and partial accounts, which need to be critically assessed for research purposes. Much of the significance and interest in documents is revealed when they are considered in relation to each other. We develop our understanding of the ideas, issues and policies with which documents deal through a comparative analysis (pp. 208-9).

I followed their advice in the analysis of the documents, focusing on what each document said and what it did not say and the relationship of individual documents to earlier and later ones and the viewpoints of other sources about it.

The result of the first round of coding was enormous: there was so much more in the data than I was prepared for. I realised that although I asked questions about leadership other contextual issues surfaced prominently and I needed to decide how to deal with that. The issues were the country’s past that hovered in the data and policy issues over which there seemed to be contestation. I needed to reduce the numerous themes (codes) to facilitate interpretation (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). I decided to use NVivo, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package to facilitate the coding process as explained below.

Using NVivo in Data Analysis

In keeping with 'conversation', I talked to various 'research contributors' (a collective noun for the group of people who have been supporting me from the start of the study) about the amount of time that I was spending on coding my data and two of them nearly simultaneously suggested that I consider using a CAQDAS package. I decided to use NVivo mainly because it was available at the institution in which I was enrolled.

NVivo is a programme that contains "various tools that assist the researcher to develop theoretical ideas" (Gibbs and Open University, 2002, p. 11). Being able to use NVivo added value to my research training. I initially used free nodes to code and ended up with 130 of them. Through a process of merging I then reduced them. The NVivo package enabled me to manage and organise a large quantity of data. This feature of CAQDAS has been identified by authors such as Van Hoven and Poelman (2003) as an important reason why they use computers in their research. One of the advantages of NVivo is its flexibility which allowed me to work with different combination of codes. I could merge and expand the codes as needed, all manual tasks which the computer could take over (Bryman, 2001). The package also has the ability to clearly show the spread of each code through the individual documents making up a data set. This feature assisted me in making decisions on whether the codes were significant or not in terms of findings. Through the use of the computer I could reduce the time spent on manual searching (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001; Basit, 2003). I enclose an example of a transcript with NVivo coding as Appendix 5.

Through a process of combining codes, I eventually arrived at the stage where I could classify my data into eight categories:

- Historical issues
- Personal history
- Leadership issues
- Head of department issues
- Policy issues
- General South African higher education issues
- Gender issues
- Race issues

Through combining various subsections in these categories I could eventually structure the contents of my thesis: Leadership and head of department issues addressed the main question and first sub-question. Historical, policy and general South African higher education issues provided background and context about the environment in which the respondents work and provided information on whether the environment impacts on their leadership practice, addressing the second sub-question. Gender and race issues addressed the third sub-question.

Ethical Considerations

I attempted to work as ethically as possible in conducting my study. Here I was guided by various authors (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001; Robson, 2002). According to Robson (2002) carrying out research ethically, “means that you follow a code of conduct for the research which ensures that the interests and concerns of those taking part in, or possibly affected by, the research are safeguarded” (p. 18). To Blaxter et al. (2001), “all social research gives rise to a range of ethical issues around privacy, informed consent, anonymity, secrecy, being truthful and the desirability of the research” (p. 158). I attempted to be sensitive to all of these issues in my study. Here I focus on a few to illustrate my practice: confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent, dealing ethically with sensitive issues and relationships.

Confidentiality and anonymity

I assured respondents that all data would be treated confidentially (Appendix 2). As a first step, I disguised the names of respondents and institutions where they work (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000). However, I am not sure how well this will work because the South African higher education system is small making the disguise of institutions a near impossibility. There is always the possibility of people figuring out the respondents if they happen to recognise a particular institution. I know how easy it is to recognise institutions; I could nearly instantly recognise the institutions disguised in three recent texts located in South African higher education (McKinney,

2003; Moore, 2003; Walker, 2005a). I think if someone is familiar with the institutions the possibility is great that they might then identify the respondents too. In the case of my study I tried my best to remove all specifics about institutions and respondents in order to guarantee a measure of anonymity and to not compromise my promise of confidentiality.

Informed consent

Denscombe (1998) explains that “an agreement to be interviewed generally means that there is informed consent” (p. 109, emphasis in original text). For him the implicit understanding would be that the interview would be a meeting with the sole purpose of producing material to be used exclusively for purposes of research. The respondents would agree to this when they agree to be interviewed.

I was guided by the above explication in the interview process. I approached respondents, secured interviews, explained the nature and usage of data, i.e. subscribed to honesty and openness in the research process. By agreeing to be interviewed I inferred that respondents gave me consent.

Dealing ethically with sensitive issues

One of the dimensions which I interrogated in this study, race, arguably falls in the category of sensitive issues, for both the respondents and me. I have explained how I dealt with my discomfort with the issue in the previous chapter. There are, however, other ethical questions to be asked about my usage of the binary categories, Black and White for example. I am aware that some of the respondents might have objected to being categorised into these groups if I asked them. My fear was that asking about their race might have impacted on the interviews and data obtained – respondents might have become wary and defensive, which would not have made for a trust relationship between us. I deliberated on this and decided in line with popular academic usage and my convictions as explained in Chapter One to use only Black and White. I am also honest about this as reflected here in my open declaration. Moreover, I have worked in a context where self-declaration of

race is a rarity rather than a norm and through 'conversation' I could work out a way to deal with the issue which would be acceptable to most respondents.

Dealing ethically with relationships

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) remind us that when people are one's prospective sources, one's relationship with them become an ethical issue. Within this relationship, people need to understand what the researcher is doing. The issue of power in the process comes to the fore and they caution that researchers will have to make important decisions in that regard. This would include the conceptualisation of power and its relations in research projects. Translated into practice, to me this meant a number of things. First, my power in relation to the data that I collected especially how it related to this thesis. The thesis is the sum total of data collected from the respondents and the crucial issue is how I made sense of it. Second, there is the issue of how I was viewed by the participants. In relation to most of the participants I was in a relatively junior position, I do not have a strong academic background and in fifty percent of the cases I was also from the opposite sex and/or a different race group. I expected these dynamics to influence my interactions with the participants, however, as I have already pointed out the interviews went off relatively well, respondents treated me with respect and I therefore assess the relationships as respectful. I also obtained useful data from the interviews with which I was able to develop this thesis.

Validity and Generalisability

Validity is "something to do with being accurate, or correct or true" (Robson, 2002: 170). Because validity is something that is difficult to be sure about, Robson suggested as an alternative "to focus on the credibility or trustworthiness of the research" (op cit). Francis (2001) has advice in this regard:

"Validity can still be maintained by ensuring that we do not over generalise our findings, recognising the limitations of our research, and by openly declaring the material factors which impact upon the perspective which we bring to bear on the world" (Francis, 2001: 168).

I have taken account of this. I am not making extra-ordinary claims for the data and am mindful that this is just one account of the truth about leadership in South African higher education, one of many truths (Francis, 2001). This was a small scale study and I therefore do not make claims of typicality for my data (Deem, Ozga and Prichard, 2000). What the data gave me were opportunities to explore the views and disclosed experiences of the respondents to help me come to a specific understanding of leadership in South African higher education. I have also tried to make known the factors which I consider may have a possible influence on my thinking and reflection in this work; I set them out in Chapter One. I have mentioned that the research brought up a number of personal issues and I focus on these in the next part of the chapter.

Writing the Research Journey: Journeying Alongside Leadership

I am aware that in years to come when someone reads this thesis they might be impressed by the linearity reflected in the methodology chapters. Doing a thesis is, however, far from a linear process; I want to show this by drawing on my experiences throughout the years of engagement with the study. I am doing this because I have been privileged to have this study funded by a Commonwealth Scholarship and so I was in a position of doing it full-time. I spent a lot of time during this period on campus with other students and many a day I felt overburdened by yet another person experiencing some setback in their research. First I was perplexed but over time I realised that doing a thesis is a complex process consisting of at least two deeply connected components.

The first component is very similar to what I have described thus far about methodology and what forms the bulk of the content of this thesis, i.e. what I did intellectually in order to produce a thesis on leadership in South African higher education. The second component rarely makes it into the public although there is a movement towards it (Piantanida and Garman, 1999). However, using a poststructuralist analysis helped me in recognising its existence. This is the personal journey which takes place alongside the development of the subject matter which forms the heart of most completed

theses. What became clear to me was that this has to do with discourses of what counts as academic work, what can be presented as a thesis. Above all I would argue this feeds into the body/mind dichotomy (Paechter, 2006) which is characteristic of the academy. Within this framework the mind is the important element. For me this translates into the mind being allowed on the (academic) centre stage while the body has to stay backstage if at all it is given any recognition. In terms of learning there is recognition in the academy that it includes more than just a cognitive dimension. Yet to be 'academic' generally "excludes the personal and emotional" (Jackson, 2004b: 55).

The next section draws on my personal experiences; it aims to put the personal and emotional costs of engaging in doctoral research in the public domain. It is organised in two subsections focusing on two distinct periods/phases in the research process which brought these issues to the fore. The first subsection focuses on the 'personal/emotional' costs of engaging in doctoral research and the second is a reflection on making sense of all the nuances related to a research study.

Data analysis process 101: Emotional cost of engaging in doctoral research

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that my data analysis showed more than I had expected. I was especially struck by the presence of history in the study. I did not prepare myself for this but it was not at all surprising. The new political dispensation in South Africa is just over a decade old, a rather short time in the life of a country. I did not come to the study with history foremost in my mind but I was confronted during its genesis with the fact that it had to be put within the context of the country's past. I grappled with this realisation for a while and succumbed to its force by acknowledging it in one of my earliest thesis writings stating, "higher education in South Africa cannot be removed from the democratic processes underway in the country. It is therefore necessary to start the study with some background about the country" (Smit, 2003: 11). That background included the country's past and at

that stage I indicated my hesitation to deal with that extensively. I also gave a short explanation of apartheid as, “a political system that used race as a basis to build an economic system that privileged a minority of the country’s inhabitants” (Smit, 2003:12).

Before I gathered my data, this was enough. My research, however, enforced upon me the realisation that such a broad brush stroke was not adequate. What became necessary was to state some of the effects that apartheid had on the lives of the respondents in my study because that represented effects on the lives of the majority of South Africans during that time and those effects are at the heart of the higher education system today. I had to broaden Chapter Two to deal in depth with these. I feel that these effects need to be recorded so that the readers of this work can have a better understanding of why things are like they are at the moment but also to make sure that the people who are within the system and especially those who are called upon to lead within the system or “to show the way” in the words of one respondent are fully aware of the lived experiences of all within the system and incorporate that knowledge/awareness in the way that they lead. In a way this is my contribution towards a collective memory.

The realisation that history loomed large in my work weighed heavily on me, paralysing me for a while. I conducted my last interview at the end of April 2004 and returned to London in the latter part of May to continue with the analysis and start the process of writing the thesis. However, I found that from the end of the interviewing process till nearly the end of July I went through a process, which I later for want of better terminology described as ‘depression’. For days I could not work, it was like a block in my way. I knew that I had to finish analysing the data in order to make writing the thesis a priority. However hard I tried, I could not move. A journal entry from that time reflected a sense of that paralysis:

Goodness look at the date!!! Got up this morning with one intention, to put some order in my life (read get discipline into the PhD journey). At the end of the day I need to have the PhD plan drawn up. Took me a very long time to actually do something.

Mid pm. At long last work on Plan. Just completed and plan to look at data again – long telecon with X. Good because we talked a bit about data analysis; he'd heard something new, will investigate and let me know (journal, 6/6/04).

At least one researcher in South Africa reported how a researcher could be confronted with the legacy of apartheid in research. Soobrayan (2003) related her colleague and fellow researcher's awareness of how the inequities and political power disparities of the past shadowed the subject of her research, the merger process of two higher education institutions. The colleague felt that she:

had to balance her own historical political emotions with her current role as a researcher who had a responsibility to the project as a whole (Soobrayan, 2003: 113).

Her framing of what was happening in this way helped me make peace with the discomfort I experienced with the 'burden' of history which I felt was present in my research. The history included my personal history and experiences of past difficult times. Soobrayan further assisted me in clarifying what I needed to do. She said, "my main task was to hear what they [the respondents] had to say" (Soobrayan 2003:115) and I decided that this was what I would have to do in order to move on.

Working through the 'discovery' of history's presence in my study and its impact on me brought me to the stage where I could finally begin to deal with the findings of the study and move to the next phase, active writing. However, it was important that I analysed what happened during the phase where I felt no movement occurred in my work. With hindsight I would argue that there were a number of factors at play. First and extremely important, was the presence of history in the study which I have just referred to. It meant that I had to deal with my personal history and educational experiences which I have suppressed for a long time.

Second, I returned to the Institute at a time when a number of my 'research contributors' were not in London or if they were, they were busy with their

own activities, which meant that they could not provide the customarily support which characterises the pre-fieldwork phase. It was only upon reflection that I realised what contributions people had collectively made to my work. I was accustomed to being surrounded by research contributors in London even if I was on my own for most of the time; they used to be a room, block or telephone call away. It felt as if all my research partners were distant and I felt lonely for the first time on the thesis journey. I described my 'condition' as said earlier as 'depression'. I related this to one of my student colleagues who was not in London at the time:

Believe it or not, I've been severely depressed; the whole thing about not seeing movement in my work and honestly my support base is eroded. You are not around, M [supporter] has been busy since my return preparing for ... and this will continue till the end of next week, X [research consultant] is in Southern Africa and email contact between us is sporadic and telephone contact even more so (BUT he sensed that I'm really in a state and sent me a very inspiring email yesterday AND called me last night which I really appreciated), M [supporter] is around but busy with her assignments, His Excellency [student colleague] has family over so Girlfriend I am on my own (correspondence, 18/6/04)

Third, there were new developments in the material resources at the disposal of students at the institution, which I felt slowed down the process I was involved in. I reflected on this:

the steep increase in printing cost is an impediment. I'm trying to code my work and now have to manually write it out very slowly in order to ensure legibility. How much easier this would have been if I could just select the relevant texts from the transcripts and copy them to the right places? Also I do not want to scribble too much on transcripts because I need to use it for as long as possible in order to save on printing costs. Have a principle objection towards paying 7p to print a page (journal, 29/06/04)

Fourth, I was also extremely unhappy with my living arrangements. I guess it had to do with having to re-adjust as a student, after having been in my country of origin for an extended length of time. However, I realised that the power to get the thesis going and keeping it going rested entirely with me. I therefore slowly started to deal with some of the issues hinted at here to my research consultant:

I might change rooms within a week or so. One of the reasons for my 'state' is my unhappiness with my present living arrangements; I've now been invited to go and view a room in one of the other residences. I think they've said I should view it before making up my mind because they think I'm difficult!!! All that it is, is that I want to live in a clean environment. One of my

acquaintances thinks that my problem is that I don't want to live with lots of people and she's right!!! (15/07/04)

Fifth, my working habits were most probably also part of the problem. I told people that I had a writing block: that I wanted to write but could not. Looking at literature later, I found that it could be pinned down on bad working habits, which Knight and Trowler (2001) explained as follows:

Many of us have learned some deeply unhelpful ways of working. For example, it is usual for writers to wait until they have a substantial and large block of time in which to write; to try and read everything before writing; to hover endlessly over the exact wording of a paragraph; to plan, plan and plan rather than to write; to fail to see that half of writing is done through conversations with others as a part of normal daily intercourse; and to try and do things alone, so that no one gets to see plans, fragments or drafts. For most people these are the practices of the damned (p. 128)

I now know with hindsight that the total situation in the end created in my mind the feeling that my work would not be good enough, which translated into me not being good enough and I could not deal with that assessment. Reviewing the situation now, one could pose the question, what was going on? In retrospect, the answer is clear to me. This was a classic case of a novice researcher who armed herself with the tools of the trade, knowledge of research methodology, focusing exclusively on the 'how-to-do-it' component. In other words, the 'intellectual' preparation was done but I now know that there is also some 'emotional' preparation to be done. Maybe it is not possible to do this adequately in advance but I do think that there is a place to focus on it during the preparation phase of doctoral training programmes. The emotional aspects of doing qualitative research have been recorded in the literature (see for example Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Leonard, 2001; Meloy, 2002) but I would like to argue that somehow the issue does not feature prominently in the popular texts used in training programmes. This is an issue that I feel needs to be pursued further.

Data Analysis 201: Making sense of nuances in a research study

The above process repeated itself at a later stage in the research process but this time around another theme and for a protracted period: the issue was

theorising from the data. Over a couple of months I wrote up the data findings and then found myself questioning whether there were links between them; no links were apparent to me. I also felt that the data did not say anything significant about leadership. I felt that somehow I went on a journey in search of the meaning of leadership and found in the end that I did not have a neat and tidy definition. This 'finding' took a while to develop and this reflection is about that process and my eventual coming to terms with it.

I was not satisfied with the results, in a sense I was disappointed and I believe that it is important to analyse the reasons for my disappointment. This disappointment weighed me down as much as my earlier struggle with the presence of history in the data. I can now say from a poststructuralist framework that part of my problem was that the study was framed in a structuralist framework. First, it was in the setting – higher education is a highly structured system. Second, I selected the respondents from a structured position – they were located on a specific level in the hierarchy, i.e. the middle one. Third, the questions which I asked were developed within a structuralist framework. "Do you see yourself in a different leadership capacity?" for example had structuralist overtones attached to it. The question was not interrogated in this way at the time but now I recognise it as being located within the structure of the higher education hierarchy, i.e. higher up the academic career ladder. This was also how the respondents interpreted the question and was the foundation of their protestations about moving up in the hierarchy to deanships for example (Chapter Five). The respondents saw deanship as the next step in a highly structured hierarchy. Within this perspective the concept of career also has a specific structure. In this study the career of an academic comes under the spotlight as a highly structured concept and one of the fundamental reasons why the staffing profiles remain problematic as will be pointed out in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Leadership is shaped in a specific way in this structured context, namely individualistic and mostly male (Chapter Two). This structure was at the heart of my initial disappointment with the findings of the study, i.e. it did not match

my expectations. My study was informed by an extensive literature review covering both leader oriented and newer perspectives of leadership. I was biased towards the latter and therefore surprised and disappointed when they did not show up significantly in my study. This was a reflection of what could happen in any piece of research – the research could throw up more questions than answers.

Upon reflection I can also say that I found leadership to be a taken-for-granted concept. It is easily talked about but not always thought about or defined. In a sense everybody lives with it but what does it mean? The question is, how often do people living with it critically look at it? In my study I thought that the respondents were surrounded by it, that they were involved in it and that it was expected from them yet it was as if it did not matter enough to them for them to critically interrogate it. This makes me wonder, how often do people other than scholars of the subject really interrogate leadership?

When you go out and do research, you expect to find answer(s). I was interested in leadership, more importantly the meaning of leadership in the context of higher education in South Africa. I carefully targeted a group of academic middle manager-leaders. Studies about leadership are mostly conducted with people who are leading from the top. In South Africa studies on leadership in higher education are still in infancy but were also started with top leaders (Kulati and Moja, 2002; Lalendle, 2003). I was surprised when most of the respondents in my study did not consider themselves as leaders. They are academics in management positions (I am not sure how much of the management discourse they have accepted). They are much more focused on their academic careers; most of them see the management part as temporary and although they did not say so explicitly, I could read in a couple of responses the desire to break free from this component (Chapter Five).

At the end of my research I also find myself wondering whether it could be that we take leadership “pretty much at face value” as Gronn (2003)

suggested. Drawing on personal experience, he observed, "there was no conceptual mystery about leadership and leaders, ... for 'leader' was simply the label by which they were known" (p. 268).

Summary

This chapter dealt with data analysis and general research issues: working ethically and validity and generalisation of findings and offered a personal reflection on doing my research. My aim with the focus on the emotional 'turmoil' was to put the 'personal/emotional' costs of engaging in doctoral research in the public domain. The research showed that doctoral studies do not only entail intellectual processes but also emotional ones and that the latter do not receive the attention which they deserve. My contention is that the intellectual processes develop through the emotional ones and need to be acknowledged as such.

Having covered the terrain of conceptualising and executing the study, and analysis of the data I will now proceed to discuss the findings of the study in Chapters Five to Eight.

CHAPTER FIVE

Definitions Of Leadership

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the framing of leadership by the respondents, that is how they define leadership in general and how they regard themselves as leaders (Franzén, 2005). The study addresses the question, "*what does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa?*" The responses discussed in this chapter come from people occupying a very specific position in the hierarchical structure of South African higher education. The theme of position in a hierarchical structure emerges from the study as important. On the strength of my data, I argue that a position such as head of department has an influence on how individuals perceive leadership and that it is therefore important to discuss the position to understand why the respondents in this study had specific viewpoints on leadership. The respondents' experiences of the position is the focus of the first section of the chapter.

The second section of the chapter focuses on what leadership in general means to the respondents and draws on the respondents' responses to questions about:

- The qualities they have identified in people who were leading figures in their formative years, i.e. before they became manager-leaders. This spanned the whole spectrum from childhood till beyond student years
- Their understandings of leadership in general
- Their expectations of leadership. I asked them what they expected from people whom they lead as well as from people who lead them.
- Their leadership roles
- Their leadership aspirations

Their responses can be divided into two categories, namely

- Enacting Leadership (their perceptions of how they were practising it)
- Understandings of leadership in general (definitions, expectations, etc)

'Enacting leadership' comprises the respondents' portrayals of themselves as leaders. Their understandings of leadership were expressed in discussions

about past and present leading figures in their lives, particularly their expectations of leaders and followers. The section discusses these expectations as desirable characteristics of leaders. The chapter closes with a discussion of their preferred leadership model, which seems to be relational.

Respondents' experience of the head of department position

In Chapter One I explained that most of the respondents occupy the position of head of department. This position tends to be a formal one in higher education universally (Larsen, 2003). It is interesting to note that both Mountana and Vermont describe the academic head of department position in their policies as pivotal (Mountana and Vermont Human Resource Policies). Pivotal is defined by the Encarta Dictionary (UK English edition) as 'vitally important, especially in determining the outcome, progress, or success of something'. Both institutions mentioned leadership as a function of the position, which seems to be the representation of pivotal. In the case of Mountana this leadership is linked to teaching and research with the head of department expected to lead and inspire the academic staff in the two areas.

I regard all respondents as 'leadership watchers' based on the comments that they made. Respondents who are not heads of departments did not say so explicitly but they must have been 'observing' various heads of departments and other administrators, especially Deans and Vice Chancellors over time, to make the comments and observations that they did during the interviews. The heads of departments made similar comments with regard to Deans and Vice Chancellors. This seems to me to be not only an indication of them working closely together but also being acutely aware of what the other was doing. My sense is that watching others being so 'busy' while their own experience is already one of busyness must have reduced their aspirations in this regard, hence their continued referrals to the pressures of more senior positions. Drawing on the respondents' views and perceptions of the head of department role, I found that it can be described as busy, greedy (Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000; Knight and Trowler, 2000) and as something that people are reluctant to take up.

A Busy Position

The respondents experienced the head of department position as extremely busy, which was what I observed during my visits (Chapter Three) and some extracts from my journal attest to this. One example is of my reflection upon arrival for the interview with R13MWW:

Respondent in middle of preparation for faculty chairpersons' meeting later this afternoon. At the same time she was also looking at what work to take home with her over the weekend. She was remarking how the work was never done (journal, 13/2/04)

Among the activities which the respondents identified as occupying their day were meetings, committee work, overwhelming administration, arduous reporting, in short 'a huge work load' (R14VWM). R20VWW describes the position as 'onerous' and it therefore comes as no surprise that at least one respondent regarded the position as a 'burden' (R33MBW).

Respondents pointed out that complex issues characterise the position and that all of these come with tight deadlines. To navigate such a 'crazy schedule' (R19VBM) lead several respondents to question whether heads of department are leading or mostly managing tasks. By questioning their 'work', respondents grappled with an enduring issue in organizational studies, i.e. the relationship between leadership and management. Perhaps this reflects the problems with definitions (Chapter Two). Management has to do with the organising of activities and the controlling thereof while leadership has to do with the inspiration or guidance of others (McCaffery, 2004). Some people believe that management and leadership are exclusive capacities but this is not really so, my research seems to suggest interdependence between the two concepts.

On the basis of my reflections on the respondents' depictions of the demands of and my observation of the busyness of the position, it would seem the position is characterised by work intensification. Similar observations have been reported elsewhere (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000; Clegg, 2003; Yelder and Codling, 2004; Acker, 2005; Blackmore, 2005). Acker's (2005) research is significant because it reports on work intensification in three countries. This

"punitive work rate" (Hey, 2004) therefore characterises higher education on a more global scale.

What seems to bother respondents most about the busyness of the position is that they do not have time to devote to what they perceived their primary identity to be, that of scholar. Their situation is not unique. Wolverton et. al. (2005) reported a similar trend in their research with a group of respondents expressing concern about keeping their identities as scholars and fulfilling the chairship (term used in their study).

I think unless there is a re-think/re-definition of departmental headship the position would always present incumbents with difficulties around priorities. There are distinct components in the job and to do justice to the different segments might call for a changed allocation of duties. From my experience as acting head of department, I recall wanting to be a scholar because I needed to establish such a profile given that I was only in my second year as an academic when I had to start acting. I did not really have the chance to be a 'leadership watcher'. I was still struggling to make the transition from practitioner to academic when I ended up as head of department. I was expected to teach, I tried to continue with the research project I embarked on shortly before the appointment while struggling to keep up with the demands of the head of department position, which I did not really understand. Was it then a surprise that I planned my exit the minute I stepped into the office? If my duties could have been allocated differently I might have dealt with the situation differently. Smith (2002), too, suggested that more research was needed on the head of department position, he was specifically interested in whether the head's job could be done by a single individual.

A 'greedy' position

A large proportion of the respondents experienced the head of department position as 'greedy' (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000; Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000). This is reflected in respondents' remarks that the position "grabs" (R11MWW), "consumes" (R11MWW), "stress individuals out" (R21VWM), "asks for sacrifices" (R22VBM, R16MWM), "sucks one's breath out"

(R25MBM), “does not allow space to do research” (R28MBW) and “causes people to steal (time from ‘other’ relationships)” (R21VWM). Two respondents shared examples of their experiences of the greediness of the position:

I still want time to work on my discipline and that is something which has unfortunately not been possible. I mean this university has grabbed a lot of my time over the past three, four years so (R11MWW)

unfortunately one has to spend a lot of time on admin work, there's very little time for ... leadership and research and so forth ... it takes you out of research, your industry context, it is difficult to keep them up (R12MWM)

Based on the respondents' experiences I want to argue that the position could be viewed as a 'dispossessor' that deprives or dispossesses people in a number of ways. Specific examples of dispossession which I could identify are:

- of their 'passion' which the respondents pronounced to be teaching and research
- of time, for example to talk to staff, to think about important things, to pursue academic interests, to spend in (other) relationships, etc.
- of opportunities to be involved in extra-mural activities
- of opportunities to be creative

What comes to the fore in these phrases and examples of dispossession is the respondents' explication of the 'greedy' head of department position. Other studies, too, reported that department heads suffered deprivations of various kinds, especially time for research (Wolverton, Ackerman and Holt, 2005). When examining closely the respondents' concern about their deprivation one can recognise a yearning for a different position, maybe one free of management responsibilities. Acker (2005) identifies a similar longing which she describes as “tones of yearning and sacrifice” (p. 108). In her work, which focuses on women, she explains their yearning:

because research is a forgone pleasure, something that is important for the women's (respondents' in my study) self-image, and something that would give them credibility with colleagues (Acker, 2005: 108).

My respondents' longing seems to be for opportunities to be scholars. Their experiences as head of department, however, portray them as being in the grip of a greedy position with not much space to manoeuvre. I would translate their yearning for a different position with space to 'be' who they want to be (scholars), a desire to break free from the restrictions of their present position.

A position that people are reluctant to take up

Having considered the intensity of the head of department position reflected in its busyness and its depiction as a greedy entity, it comes as no surprise that the respondents reported a measure of reluctance among academics to take on the role. These depictions came from all groupings (R13MWW, R14VWM, R19VBM, R20VWW, R33MBW, R11MWW, R21VWM, R22VBM, R16MWM, R25MBM, R28MBW). A number of them hinted at being in the job not out of choice but having 'been pushed' or even 'forced' into the position (R18VWW, R20VWW). This comes clearly to the fore in the following declaration:

I didn't want this job. As I've said I just happened to do a fairly good job when I stood in for our HOD ... She decided she didn't want to continue ... so I was forced into it at the end of last year because I think they thought I did a fair job (R18VWW)

One of the respondents who voiced reluctance in taking on the role of head of department was adamant about why she would not easily accept such a position. She explained her reluctance as follows:

I don't like the bureaucracy. I can't stand that and I know and I see what our HOD does and the kinds of things that they have to do. I don't see myself in that role, I can't but I know that as professor maybe I might be called on to do because that's one of the things they expect you to do (R27VBW)

It may be that bureaucracy puts people off because it seems that this issue was also behind another respondent's reluctance to consider moving into the position. This is how she verbalizes her reluctance:

I would not want to do that for example be the next HOD because that is an administrative job; it doesn't allow you space to do your research (R28MBW)

Their attitude is not unique – elsewhere the same attitude was recorded (Henkel, 2002). She reported that people viewed the head of department position as “unwelcome, even if temporary, interruption to the narrative of their career, a duty or a ‘community service’” (p. 35). I would argue that this reported reluctance reveals a struggle amongst manager-leaders to achieve a balance in what they are doing: being leaders in the broad sense, managing the workload that comes with the position and continue with teaching and research to preserve their identities as scholars to keep their academic careers on course. These issues will receive more attention in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Tensions and Dilemmas in the Head of Department Position

Informed by the respondents’ reluctance to take up head of department roles I want to look at the tensions and dilemmas that the position creates for heads of departments and possible consequences of these. I would like to argue that the busyness and greediness of the head of department position are manifestations of managerialism. This argument is supported by the literature which describes the culture of South African higher education as managerialist (Moultrie and de la Rey, 2003; Johnson and Cross, 2004). In that context it was found that, “the management responsibilities of heads of departments tend to overshadow their academic leadership roles” (Johnson and Cross, 2004: 48). This imbalance between management and leadership was pointed out repeatedly by the respondents. My discussion of the experiences of my respondents suggests a tension between the demands of managerialism and what they thought were the responsibilities of the position. The tension seems to create a range of dilemmas for them observable in three areas: their desire to serve, their academic identities and their desire to uphold a social justice agenda.

A major dilemma for them was to keep to *their desire to serve*. Some of them, for example, believed that their role as head of department was first and foremost to serve people around them (see section on servant leadership that follows). It could be their aim to want to use the power vested in the position to that effect. However, their context might not allow this. I have

pointed out above that they were extremely busy, pressurised by work intensification and greedy workplaces. I want to argue that they found themselves in the powerful grip of the position which makes the serving of others (colleagues and students, see below) difficult. The dilemma is that they want to be of service, i.e. wanting to attend for example to a colleague who is in need of advice or guidance while the expectation is that they will meet the demands of the head of department position. It is clear that these heads of department are made to play their role within a managerial context which makes serving others difficult. The following extract from an interview demonstrates part of that difficulty:

the struggle in my heart is that I have certain deadlines that I need to meet. What is my attitude to this person who comes to see me, who needs my input to solve a problem? (R21VWM)

The above extract illustrates the dilemma that could be created when respondents want to be of service to a colleague but have to meet the bureaucratic demands of the head of department position. In the case cited the respondent later expressed his concern that he might come over as aggressive rather than helpful as he would prefer to be seen. There was also an element of guilt observable as he tried to find a solution to this role conflict. Sinclair (2004), senior academic and longstanding researcher on leadership and management, reported similar feelings. She reflected on her management position:

these experiences can turn you into someone you don't recognize and someone you don't like ... uneasy feeling that I had been coopted into a system endorsing values of competition, materialism and achievement at the cost of relationships (p. 13).

The bureaucracy inherent in the head of department position lead to the respondents compromising on people-centredness, i.e. their desire to put people first or as Henkel (2002) names it, "the desire to nurture individuals" (p. 37) . This, one can argue is a direct outflow of the position's greediness, leaving incumbents with no time to exercise their person-centred values. We get a glimpse of this dilemma in the following interview:

I feel that I don't have time to talk to my staff and to sit down as I'm sitting down now talking to you. To me it is a rare pleasure to sit down with a staff member in the tea-room and just chat. Sometimes it bothers me a lot. Sometimes I'm wondering, am I giving enough time for that kind of conversations? I have time for all the committees but do I have enough time for the people that I really want to give my time to?
(R11MWW)

This respondent, too, is concerned about having to balance the focus on tasks and devoting time to people. Her concern echoed that of the coordinators in Clegg's (2003) study who felt that they were squeezed out of time for reflection, supportive debate and understanding. One could argue that these situations result from managerialism's emphasis on outcomes rather than human factors (Johnson and Cross, 2004).

Another dilemma is that the heads of department have to balance *their academic identities* which they believe are their first priorities with what the position demands of them, namely to be managers. Most of the respondents in the study see themselves as scholars first but find that their present role curtails that activity (Blackmore and Sachs, 2000; Henkel, 2002). It is therefore not surprising that most of them expressed the desire to return to a more academic role after their period in the position. I expand on this issue in Chapter Eight where I discuss the respondents' leadership aspirations. Their position is consistent with literature that suggests that middle manager-leaders want to stay close to their disciplines (Cloete and Kulati, 2003). This may be because of their views that the disciplines give them the opportunity to stay creative, something which they report not to find in their present position. This seems to be an experience that is not confined to this study. One of the interviewees in Lawrence-Lightfoot's (1994) study expressed thoughts in this regard: "I think of **administration** as status and stasis, not intellectual or moral growth" (p. 395, emphasised term is American). Another factor might be the temporary nature of the position, a unique feature of departmental headship (Wolverton, Ackerman and Holt, 2005). Overall there seems to be a sense of struggling to achieve a balance between different components of the position (Yielder and Codling, 2004).

The *upholding of a social justice agenda* is another dilemma identified in the study. As has been pointed out at various points in this study, the

respondents occupy their positions within a context of change (Chapter Two), which in the words of one respondent brings:

lots of things ... (to) heads of departments unexpectedly ... We'll probably be in transformation for a long time and so certain things need to be done. They seem to be complex, they seem to be things that are quite scary and intimidating to do. They would create some anxiety and uncertainty because we have not done it before (R21VWM)

The social justice agenda is a complex one and in some cases something that people cannot cope with. R20VWW's grappling to come to terms with 'Extenders' in the academy (Chapter Three) illustrates this. R20VWW generalises about this group as follows:

in this country there is a lot of saving face still whereas in an academic environment it's the natural process not to know something and to ask it. That is normal and you are expected to be asking all the time whereas lot of people here don't come from this tradition. It's when you're failing to ask that you're actually not doing so well. But **people from other cultures and that come from other universities** that have had less experience of this do find it very hard (R20VWW, emphasis mine)

Against this background of uncertainty and anxiety, and coming to terms with 'Extenders', there is the struggle of those for whom the social justice agenda is a mission and who find the dilemmas of managerialism hard to deal with. I would suggest that this is because managerialism as dominant discourse 'dictate' what they can and cannot do. With its focus on process and outcomes (Chapter Two), the human factor has to be neglected. I would further suggest that it might be that in a busy, greedy organisation it might be difficult to be nurturing or a nurturer.

One has to wonder, what are the consequences of the dilemmas the HODs are confronted with? My data suggest stress, a sense of loss and the questioning of the status of the position. First, the respondents implied that one person cannot adequately cope with the demands of managerialism on the one hand as well as stay true to their values, to person-centeredness and keeping a social justice agenda going. They implied that no person can do all of this adequately and instances of stress would therefore be likely, as was reported in this study by R14VWM, R18VWW and R21VWM. R14VWM, for example, remarked:

... speak to any HOD, they'll be quite stressed out... You know it is quite a stressful operation, something that people take on quite reluctantly in many cases ... It is quite a responsibility and in some ways I found it quite I suppose stressful (R14VWM)

A second consequence of trying to manage especially the busyness of the head of department position is a sense of loss. R22VBM hints at this as follows:

... lose touch with the academics and become so absorbed in management functions ... you ask questions about what is the core business of the university, is it not academic ... we as HODs we by and large perform the functions that we perform at a sacrifice because you have to spend more time providing that leadership and performing the management functions and not pursuing your own academic interests (R22VBM)

R22VBM's dilemma illustrates two levels of loss that heads of departments could experience: related to their discipline and interaction with their colleagues. This can also be seen as the sum total of the deprivations which they suffer as suggested earlier in this chapter. One of the interviewees in Acker's (2005) study shared a similar experience of loss although she saw it as the loss of a teaching identity. I want to argue that in the final analysis my respondents suffer similar kinds of identity loss, those of scholar, (academic) colleague and even leader. I draw on R17VWW's comment to illustrate the loss of leader identity:

... what most of my time is spent on is busy work. HR, management, administration, nonsense and very little on leadership. I would say maybe 10% of my time I can actually put as leadership and the other 90% is management of various kinds but usually very trivial stuff which the university requires (R17VWW)

The respondents were clear that they were scholars but I detected doubt among them about the possibility of being scholars **and** manager-leaders. It was important to them to maintain their scholarship because, given the temporariness of the position, most if not all of them will have to return to former positions (Wolverton, Ackerman and Holt, 2005).

How representative of the academic head of department role in South African higher education these narratives are I am not sure but it certainly represented the experiences of my respondents capturing what might be happening to heads of departments in the sector. The head of department

position is a formal one with specific power attached to it. However, the discussion so far shows that the people who occupy the position have a different experience. The balance of power seems to be in favour of the position rather than the people. The 'busyness', greediness and dispossession in the position seem to indicate a situation where the position has 'power over' (Coleman, 2005) the people. From the discussion in this section, it seems that power is represented in the form of external pressures (Henkel, 2002). Nevertheless, it is important to remind ourselves of Foucault's (1980) view that power is "a productive network" (p. 119) and that therefore people in the positions can be considered to have power, regardless of whether the positions have "power over" them. The heads of departments are caught up in various dilemmas with no attention being paid to the impact of these on them. In this study I have just started to point out some of the effects.

This section discussed how heads of departments in the study experienced the position. They experienced it as busy and 'greedy' making it not attractive to most of them and they reported a certain measure of reluctance in taking it up. It is interesting to note that their experiences resonate with reported research. What is, however, peculiar is that such research comes mainly from the gender field and studies in the area. With my respondents coming from different groupings and reporting similar experiences I would like to suggest that sometimes that literature could frame the experiences of both women and men. It might be that some studies in those fields only focus on the experiences of women, which mean that conclusions so reached might also apply to the experiences of some men if they would be investigated. My research shows that the head of department position presented respondents with specific struggles: around their desire to serve, their academic identity and upholding a social justice agenda. In essence they experienced the position more as managers than leaders although they are reluctant to identify as managers (Henkel, 2002; Johnson, 2002). From their reported experiences it also seems that race and gender are not significant factors. However, they are leaders of and in departments and as such I asked them for their views on leadership and it is to these that the discussion now turns.

Enacting Leadership

When analysing the respondents' perspectives on leadership, two elements emerge: portrayals of themselves as leaders and the characteristics they identified as desirable for leaders. Before I go on to discuss these two elements, I want to point out a major contradiction in the data. Most of the respondents in principle supported and spoke of various types of collective or 'shared' leadership but their interviews were indicative of individual or 'traditional' leadership (Chapter Two). The following extract from an interview illustrates the point:

I **would** be able to meet people at all levels ... the cleaning staff and scientists ... **make them feel** as though they really are important in what they were doing, it is really important to the whole organisation because if one part doesn't work everything else would actually collapse ... they were so upset **when I left** and I think it is because I **made them feel** what they were doing was so important, ... **make people** realise that they aren't just doing one little isolated job but where does it fit into the whole thing. (R27VBW, emphasis mine)

The extract is filled with elements of relational leadership (Chapter Two), hinting at a belief in shared leadership. However, by putting so much emphasis on her own contribution a picture emerges of R27VBW as the actor and the people with whom she shares a leadership relationship as rather passive. I would like to suggest that the intention here is participative, shared or distributed but that the practice is modelled on the traditional. This is not surprising because in general the discourse of leader oriented (traditional) model of leadership is dominant in most societies and therefore the one with which the majority of people are conversant (Madden, 2002; Eddy, 2003b). R25MBM observes in this regard, "many people see leadership as the person standing on the podium and making all the noises".

This leaves me with a question, could it be that it is difficult to put the self in a discourse of collaborative or shared or distributed leadership when the dominant discourse is traditional or individualistic? In my review of the leadership literature, I pointed out that collaborative or shared or distributed leadership would not easily be accepted in a sector which is organised in a hierarchical way. It should therefore not come as a surprise that people find it difficult to place themselves in a discourse other than the dominant one of

leader oriented model of leadership. The issue is that they have only this discourse available to them. In this regard, it is important to remember that “once a discourse becomes “normal” and “natural,” it is difficult to think and act outside it” (St. Pierre, 2000: 485).

Leadership Portrayals

These portrayals have been built from the respondents’ descriptions of themselves as leaders. From these I could develop five different descriptors: Interactors, Enablers, Transformers, Servants and Accentuators reflected here in Table 5. Respondents in bold appear in more than one category. I developed these descriptors to represent as closely as possible the activities and actions of the respondents in their accounts of their leadership practices.

Table 5: Respondents' self portrayals of their leadership

INTERACTOR	ENABLER	TRANSFORMER	SERVANT	ACCENTUATOR
R11MWW	R13MWW	R11MWW	R16MWM	R13MWW
R18VWW	R15MWW	R19VBM	R19VBM	R24MWM
R19VBM	R20VWW	R25MBM	R21VWM	R25MBM
R20VWW	R22VBM	R29VBM	R23MWM	
R24MWM	R23MWM	R30VBM		
R27VBW	R28MBW	R13MWW		
R31MBW	R34VBW	R26MWW		
R32MBM				
R33MBW				
R34VBW				
10	7	7	4	3

It was interesting that these portrayals seemed to be characterised by an underlying theme of leadership that makes a difference, which was in sharp contrast with their portrayals of the head of department position in which they all seemed to be uncomfortable and portraying themselves without much power. I would argue that they may be portraying themselves differently in different relationships using discourses that are dependent on who (or what) they see themselves positioned in relation to.

Before explaining the individual representations, I need to state a shortcoming in the research, in particular with regard to the data collection techniques. The respondents were not observed in their enactment of leadership nor were their colleagues interviewed about their impressions of the respondents as leaders. It would have been enriching to see the

respondents in everyday practice and examining the congruence between their portrayals of their leadership and their practice. Not having studied the respondents in their leadership roles, I am aware that what they told me might be different from what they do in everyday practice, a fact Franzén (2005) reminds us of when observing that, "what we say is not always the same as how we act" (p. 68).

Interactors

Interaction between people in a leadership relationship is the motivation of Interactors. They believe in the full participation of every member in the relationship and because of that they strive for the elimination of distance between those who have formal leadership positions and those who do not have. For them engagement between relationship members is of the utmost importance and consultation is a central feature of their practice. In order to facilitate consultation they believe in an open door policy (R18VWW, R19VBM and R31MBW), articulated in one case as follows:

engage with me as and when they need to. I do have an open door policy, we have.. I expect them, I will implement what the majority want. I expect them to come.. If I have a decision to make I expect them to help me make it (R18VWW)

This open door policy was the feature receiving most coverage. An open door policy seems to be favoured in departments, both by heads and departmental members according to other research (Smith, 2005). In my research it seemed that to Interactors an open door policy was important to facilitate the interaction in which they believe. To them it was an indication of a two-way flow of information which they deemed important for consultation. Through this they felt they could get to know the expectations of people around them as well as getting to know if things were not going according to plan because an open door policy implied that leadership relationship members "would come and tell" (R20VWW) if there were problems. At the same time this served as a conduit for the sharing of ideas, views and concerns as articulated here by one of the Interactors:

I don't mind if people who I am leading come to me and say, we don't think that you are going in the right direction (R34VBW)

Interactors have to have excellent people skills. They have to be good communicators because dialogue features strongly in their practice. This also means that they will listen and hear what their fellow members say as part of their commitment to get to know the members, which to them is an imperative. One of them remarked that if you do not know the people you cannot lead them. According to Interactors, communication and true dialogue are essential to forge an understanding of fellow leadership relationship members. R34VBW remarked that true dialogue is beneficial to all in a leadership relationship:

it is usually helpful when they say that (leader is going in a wrong direction) because whether or not they are right, something triggers my mind to say maybe I didn't handle this well therefore they got this impression or maybe it's true or perhaps they did not quite understand it so it gives us the opportunity to work together (R34VBW)

The practice of an Interactor, then, seems to be characterised by participation, engagement, consultation and communication. An interesting race and gender pattern emerged among the Interactors: ninety percent of them are from minority groupings. This distribution raises the question whether members of such groupings have been subjected to leadership practices that were characterised by distance between leadership relationship members, lack of consultation and genuine participation which caused them to value relationships of interaction.

Enablers

The focus of Enablers seems to be on accomplishment. They talked about the accomplishment of goals and these were of two kinds – institutional and individual. In this context individual means 'other' as in colleague and not the respondents as individuals. The interrelationship of individuals and institutions is noticeable in the perspectives of the respondents. Two examples illustrate the point:

to encourage my junior colleagues to do their doctorates ... to build the profile of this department ... to do whatever I can to help to establish a strong group of academics in this department (R13MWW)

it is very important to make sure that one through the leadership position facilitates the objectives of the institution or organisation ... you make it possible for that to happen, ensuring that the environment is suitable (R34VBW)

Both respondents have institutional goals in mind. For R34VBW the realisation of the institutions' objectives is paramount and she sees capacity building in individuals as a means to achieve that. R13MWW on the other hand put her colleagues' capacity first – she sees it as important that they complete their doctorates because these are in the interest of her department and institution. She is of the opinion that within a context where mergers and “forced” collaborations (Chapter Six) hang over departments and institutions, with more completed doctorates, the department would be able to go into a situation of merger/collaboration from a position of strength. They would then not be overwhelmed by merging departments with higher numbers of staff with doctorates that could adopt a superior stance. Building capacity amongst academics is important because where earlier in an uncoordinated system there were no benchmarks for academic careers, at present with a coordinated system in development, ‘standard’ qualifications are becoming more common, something that is evident in job advertisements. Earlier in the history of higher education factors other than qualifications were sometimes used in academic appointments (Chapter Seven).

Enabling is further about being in a relationship of a specific nature with individuals around you. The following extracts give some indication of the relationship:

you are supportive to others ... I think one has to listen to others, be willing to listen and to hear what people are conveying to you and to synthesize what you hear and then to determine a course of action (R22VBM)

perceptive of the ambitions and the needs of the people in your surroundings so that you become a sort of a conduit, a sort of a channel (R23MWM)

create an environment where they can achieve everything they want to achieve. Because I want to be the facilitator in their lives so that they can reach the goals which they have set for themselves (R15MWW)

An important aspect of an enabler is being supportive to others. This may involve a range of activities, including listening and really 'hearing' what people say so that any action is based on relevant input. Enablers also sought to be in close contact with people in order to be in a position to 'know' them well, i.e. to get to know what their goals and ambitions are in order to create opportunities for them and give them the feeling that the Enabler will do "whatever possible to help them grow" (R13MWW). An Enabler seeks to connect abilities, potential, and ideals with relevant resources in this way.

By focusing on these elements Enablers create environments in which people can accomplish their goals. I will argue that such environments give people the assurance that they can explore possibilities within a supportive framework, an environment in which they feel supported and where their ambitions matter. It is evident from reviewing the responses of Enablers that they focus on confidence building and thereby establishing secure emotional environments. When one takes into consideration that most (86%) of the Enablers in the study come from minority groupings (Blacks and women) in South African higher education, one begins to wonder whether their commitment to the establishment of secure emotional environments might be linked to the fact that they lost out on these in the early stages of their careers (Chapters Seven and Eight). One could argue that now that they have formal power they want to put that to work in the interest of others. For corroboration I drew on the view of the Vice-Chancellor of Wits who said that having lost numerous opportunities as a result of the previous socio-political dispensation, his generation has a passion for enabling environments for everyone (Nongxa, 2005).

Transformers

Transformers situated their leadership in transformation, i.e. they linked their leadership to transformation and make specific reference to it in their responses. For four of the six respondents in this category issues of transformation were paramount while for the other two it was the effects of transformation that mattered. From their responses I could identify five

aspects of this role. The first aspect was mediation, illustrated in this observation:

we have a different system [now] and in order to run the system effectively, we got to do certain things... I mean, they [referring to her colleagues and SA academics in general] were doing what they want to and now it is very different. But I think they do see that in the end we are working towards a more effective system (R11MWW)

Mediation takes place between the 'old' and the 'new' in the system, working for a balance.

Second, it seemed that the 'work' of transformation matters to Transformers. They felt for example that the issues of transformation needed to be foregrounded. R19VBM mentioned in this regard:

I wanted to come back to SA because I saw the need for Black South Africans to be here at this time and I felt very strongly that I could contribute to bringing equity and high standards and all the kinds of transformation issues that I think we're still facing (R19VBM)

'Work' in this context is an active process, ongoing and something in need of active involvement. R29VBM reiterated that there was 'work' to be done:

I'm concerned about transformation, I'll do whatever I can to transform these whether slowly or loudly or whatever, whatever I feel will have some impact, I will do it (R29VBM)

Third, Transformers act as change agents. I think, that in their opinion, change cannot be left to chance, a opinion which is validated by the literature (Kloot, 2004). R25MBM's viewpoint in this regard serves as an illustration:

I believe that if one has to change the culture of institutions like Mountana you cannot leave it to the institution alone, you have to have outside influences and I saw myself as an outside influence to come here (R25MBM)

Fourth, for Transformers the collective is important. Most of the time they take on the role of advocate, seeing themselves as representatives of people who do not have the necessary power. An example from the study is the following:

I represent a generation that is determined to be present in the engine room of leadership ... we are there where the future of education in this country is discussed we are collectively there ... to create a voice, a voice which in this wilderness of voicelessness ... where leadership is discussed the views and visions of this marginal constituency must be taken into consideration (R30VBM)

Lastly, because transformation is so important to Transformers, they also see it as their task to help keep everyone focused on their vision which necessarily includes transformation. R22VBM gives some insight into this when he says:

on those things that we have agreed we will do we must I must keep the focus on those things otherwise you can be here there and everywhere and so that's part of what I do (R22VBM)

Action seems to be the operational word for Transformers. They see themselves involved in the work of transformation in a variety of ways: mediation, working for change and advocacy among others.

Servants

The respondents in this category declared their leadership as 'in service of others', they all used the words 'servant' or 'service' to describe their leadership. Here one of them describes himself:

leadership is actually about being a servant because by being a leader I serve ... I serve others I serve post graduate students and the younger staff ... I serve others, the support staff and the academic staff. So a good leader I think should have a servant attitude (R21VWM)

The 'others' they refer to are three 'entities', their discipline, their colleagues and their students, with colleagues and students receiving most attention. They stated that they see service to their colleagues as providing opportunities for the colleagues to get ahead in their careers. They wanted to assist them in achieving their goals, which would be career-related. The respondents who subscribed to servanthship tended to see themselves as selfless as expressed here by R23MWM:

you are simply a servant of the others so that they can achieve their goals and can get where you are in your position ... you must allow people to grow past you, become bigger than yourself (R23MWM)

The involvement of heads of departments in their colleagues' careers is not unique to this study, it has been noted by others (Henkel, 2002; Johnson, 2002). Henkel (2002) for example recorded in her study that:

many heads spoke of the satisfaction they gained from observing and facilitating the development of their junior colleagues. Staff career development was perceived as an important and welcome aspect of their role (p. 38).

The respondents in the study, who saw themselves as servants in relation to their colleagues, had to see their colleagues in a particular way. An analysis of their viewpoints reveals that they position their colleagues as ambitious, achievement-driven individuals. Their position towards their students is more or less similar, highlighted in this statement by R19VBM:

I need to ensure that I offer the best quality service to students but ultimately also make sure that I protect and serve the ambitions that they all hold (R19VBM)

Service to students is therefore seen as assisting them to realize their ambitions by creating appropriate opportunities or providing 'a quality service'. There is a striking feature in the positioning of colleagues and students as ambitious, career-driven individuals. The individual in question seems to be a 'neutral' person – not 'gendered', 'raced', 'classed', i.e. without any identity marker. Positioning a person in this way mean that they would be seen as having equal chances to achieve their ambitions or advance in their careers because they would have equal access to opportunities.

These respondents are all male; three of them are from the numerical majority groupings and one from the numerical minority groupings in academia. They, and others like them have been in powerful positions for decades and they could have been using this opportunity to contradict the viewpoint that might exist that their leadership has overtones of autocracy. By portraying themselves as servants, they want their leadership to be seen as benevolent and they therefore stress that their leadership is in the service of others.

Middle managers portraying themselves as servants, or, more elaborately as in service of others have been reported in other research. In fact, Franzén (2005) in the realm of school leadership identified six discourses of 'in service'. She names them as for teachers, for children, for parents, for

municipality, for society and for development. In the context of my research, I could identify three: for colleagues [similar to teachers], for students [similar to children] and the discipline [nothing similar although one could theorise that it might encompass for society and development depending on what angle one approaches it from]. Perhaps servanthship ultimately has to do with a desire/motivation to give back to the system what you have learned (Johnson, 2002)?

Accentuators

Three respondents describe themselves as Accentuators. All three do, however, also 'fit' into other categories, each in a different category. What Accentuators emphasise are the strengths in individuals. They identify abilities as strengths and highlight them as explained here by R13MWW:

I'm trying to but I don't always succeed ... I'd rather be proactive, try to identify the abilities, the strengths in other people and try to help to bring that out, you know promote that (R13MWW)

Accentuators, however, do more than just highlighting the strengths of the people with whom they are in leadership relationships. They promote those strengths outlined here in a practical way by R24MWM:

the important thing is to identify where each of your staff members' strong points are and to use those where they can focus on their strong points. We are only 2 professors here and my colleague is an excellent researcher and for him to spend his time trying to manage the department is just not good economics ... at this point in time very definitely I will be playing a more important role in this part of it and leave the research work to him (R24MWM)

For Accentuators it is important to focus on the strengths of others. At the same time they are not unaware of the weaknesses of people and their approach is to try and improve these to complement the focus on strengths:

there is not only one way, trying to highlight their strengths and not their weaknesses but trying to highlight their strengths while at the same time identify their weaknesses and try and improve that (R25MBM)

Working on the strengthening and development of others' abilities seem very important to these leaders. It seems that behind their interest in the strengths

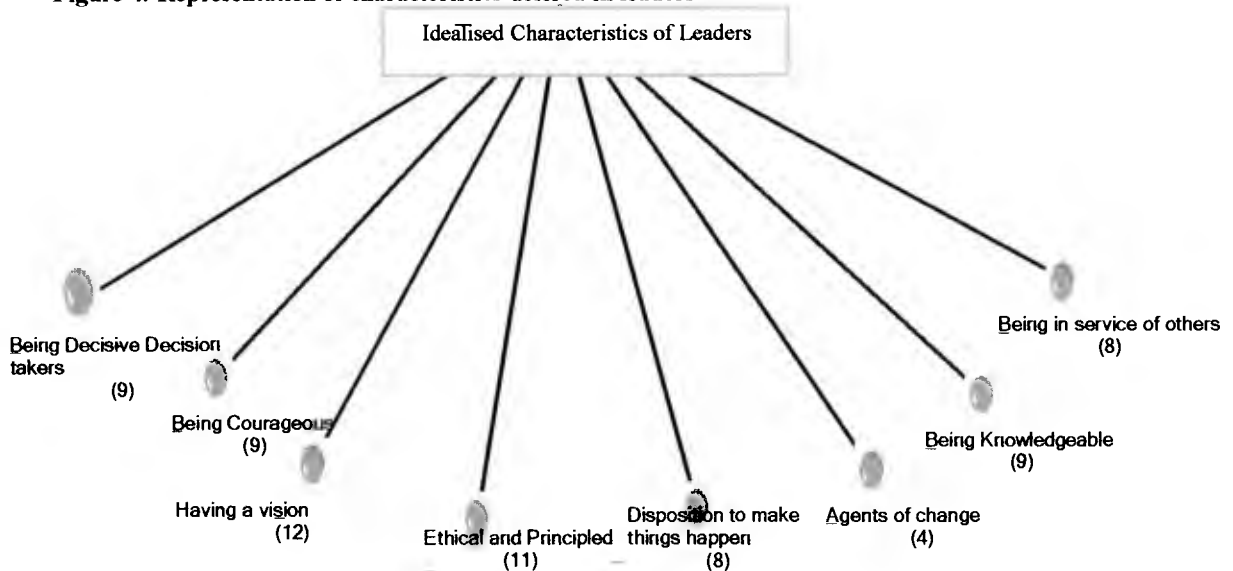
of their colleagues is a belief that they can cultivate environments in which colleagues could approach them to ensure growth.

The portrayals are filled with expressions denoting actions, among others creating secure emotional environments, advancing a social justice agenda and serving others. A close examination of Table 5 shows that only the Servant category comprises of one group exclusively namely men but they are of both groups. The Transformers are an interesting group consisting of both men and women although representative of only two of the four groups, namely Black men and White women. Both the Interactors and Enablers are predominantly women and Black manager-leaders, raising questions about differences between these categories and servants who were all men. I argued that the latter might have used this portrayal to contradict any perception of their leadership as autocratic. Although I could detect these race and gender differences among the categories, I have also pointed out that the 'other' who are the focus of most of the declared actions seem to be 'neutral' bodies with no gender and/or race attached to them. After focusing on how these manager-leaders portrayed themselves as enacting leadership in various ways, I now turn to discuss how they understand leadership in general.

Desirable characteristics for leaders

I extracted desirable characteristics for leadership from those respondents identified in people who they viewed as having played leadership roles in their lives as well as the characteristics they desired in people with whom they are in leadership relationships, i.e. people who are leading them and people who they are leading. This was in response to questions around the qualities they identified in leading figures in their formative years and their expectations of leadership from the people with whom they are in leadership relationships. Figure 4, an NVivo model, shows the range of characteristics that were identified.

Figure 4: Representation of characteristics desired in leaders



Guided by the highest frequencies, I focus on five characteristics here for purposes of discussion. The respondents expected leaders to be:

- Visionary
- Ethical and principled
- Knowledgeable
- Decisive
- Courageous

Visionary

Nearly all respondents at some point said that it was crucial for leaders to have vision. For some the vision had to be groundbreaking such as espoused here:

people with vision people who would be able to say well out of the African soil we can build people I say build not in the sense of taking people apart and rebuilding them but we can harvest people maybe that is a better expression we can harvest people from our African soil who can stand next to the European, American, Japanese giants of industry and bring an African dimension to industry and trade and finance (R25MBM)

For others it was less elaborate:

a visionary leadership with the ideals of the goals out there so that we all know what should we do (R15MWW)

decide on a role and a way forward looking at goals and objectives and where they want to go and how to get it ... need a whole lot of vision (R26MWW)

somebody who can see the bigger picture, somebody who has vision and somebody who can think outside of the box, somebody who will also have not necessarily just the initiative but also the capacity to move the initiative and get it to become reality (R33MBW)

Essentially vision was perceived as a big(ger) picture but in addition, and quite importantly, was the realisation of this picture. In order for the picture to be realised, respondents argued that appropriate planning would have to take place. But first, there had to be a few basic things in place, the vision had to be clear, as to what it was and, equally important, where it was leading to. They also emphasised that leaders needed to share their visions with the people with whom they are in leadership relationships. It was important to the respondents to see passion for their vision in leaders, i.e. to see them believing in it and actively pursuing it.

Ethical and principled

The respondents mentioned various ethical requirements for leaders. The ethical categories that they felt most passionate about were: honesty, fairness and sincerity/integrity. Integrity and honesty were also mentioned in Thomas' (2005) study with African American Presidents of higher education institutions, particularly about their leadership philosophy. To the respondents in my study honesty meant among other things no double agendas and deviousness. Fairness was not expecting from others to do that which you were not prepared to do and by integrity they meant that a leader's 'yes' must be that and the same must apply to a 'no'. In addition, they expected leaders to be principled and the principles which they valued were dignity, human rights and equality, implying a consistency in leaders' approaches to issues.

I would argue that the study indicates at least two reasons why people desire ethical and principled leaders. First, they viewed ethics and principles in leaders as important prerequisites for the development of trust between people in a leadership relationship. The importance of trust in the context of my study needs to be seen against a background where people for a long

time lived in a system that was based on severe mistrust between them. Previous governments in South Africa by virtue of being dishonest in their dealings with their citizens destroyed trust between people so it is not surprising that these respondents insist on the building blocks of trust in leadership relationships.

The second reason behind people's desire for ethical and principled leaders could be their concern with the need for the acceptance of individuals for who they are and for not being stereotyped. This also needs to be seen as being closely related to the issue of historical mistrust between people in South Africa. Many of the respondents who contributed in this category, narrated incidents of being discriminated against, invariably based on stereotyping. R31MBW's comments in the following extract about wanting to be seen as a unique individual illustrates this point:

I expect them to be tolerant of who I am as an individual ... I don't want to be lumped into some preconceived ideal ... I want people when they meet me for the first time they must judge me on what I know and what I do and not have some prejudice that they have against ... I want them to look at it from what I'm showing or what I'm doing at that point not from some preconceived idea ... I expect also honest opinions, ... I also expect to be treated just like anybody else, not to be some sort of window dressing ... I expect them to acknowledge whatever I'm doing I'm actually working hard for that (R31MBW)

No matter how diplomatically she put the above, it was clear that R31MBW has been in situations where she felt the impact of being stereotyped because of the groupings to which she belonged.

Knowledgeable

The study revealed that being knowledgeable was a highly valued characteristic in leaders. Being knowledgeable in this context was defined as having several dimensions: being well informed, having vast experience in various areas and in some instances simply just being wise:

a very balanced man in terms of his world view, very informed he knows what is happening, he reads the international press, so he is somebody I could talk to all the time he understands and he is always interested in what is going on (R19VBM)

need to know what they are talking about and making sense. Academics are difficult people to bribe because they would just simply say no. You really have to sort of lead from behind (R17VWW)

have all this knowledge, this wealth of knowledge, have the experience, talk a certain language (R28MBW)

I expect them to be wise, I expect them to have vast experience (R20VWW)

The respondents identified further dimensions namely that their leaders have to be public figures who would respond publicly to issues. In this regard the expectations were that the leader would impress audiences and convince them of viewpoints with balanced views, especially pertaining to higher education. A further condition was attached to this; leaders were expected to articulate their knowledge in an eloquent way. This condition was also raised in Thomas' (2005) study where ninety percent of his participants believed "that it is extremely important to be a polished, articulate speaker as a leader" (Thomas, 2005: 98).

The majority of the respondents who espoused this expectation came from the minority groupings in higher education. This immediately raises questions about why this would be so. Without doing a thorough investigation one cannot offer conclusive answers but one answer could be that they have been subjected to leaders who by virtue of their positions **had** to be listened to even when they were espousing ideas which were not making sense. My proposition makes sense if one considers "the anti-influence of poor leadership" (Young, 2004). What she means by this is that where people have experienced poor leadership, they will resolve to treat people in the same way they would have liked to be treated.

There were, however, also those within the majority group to whom a well informed leader mattered. For them, too, the knowledge needed to be all encompassing, although they introduced more cautionary tones to this, stressing flexibility and open-mindedness.

Decisive

A number of respondents were adamant that leaders should be decisive, i.e. have the ability to make firm decisions and act upon them. The root of this concern with decisiveness seems to be a historical one. Historically the tendency was for leaders to make autocratic decisions. At this moment in history this practice is being frowned upon as pointed out here by R19VBM:

because of our past I think that we are very sensitive to issues of democracy ... that's the dilemma we have ... long time ago I think that then we got instructions came from the top and that is a leadership style that has disappeared (R19VBM)

It was suggested that decision-taking needs to be based on consultation with everyone who will be affected by such decisions. The respondents viewed this as part of participative leadership or leadership that allows for consultation and participation by all. However, several respondents cautioned against practices where consultation is taken too far, i.e., consulting too widely and for protracted periods of time, verbalised as follows:

in our efforts to correct imbalances I think that we now find ourselves in positions where we hesitate to make decisions and that we always consult (R28MBW)

able to take decisions and to if I can almost use the word to justify it ... can't do everything by democratic decision or by excessive consultation (R13MWW)

I wish sometimes that somebody will just make a decision because I think we spend a lot of time debating things that we all agree are correct and I think in those instances somebody should just come forward and make a decision (R19VBM)

They recommended that consultation needs to take place within specific limits and in such a way that after some time firm decisions could be taken. One respondent pointed out that wavering in the area of decision-taking was a direct consequence of the transitional phase in which the country was at the moment. Within the framework of democracy, people were sensitive not to be seen as being from the old order and they therefore saw wide-spread consultation as embracing democracy. At the same time consultation was also seen as a mark of transparency. Some respondents, however, pointed out that such behaviour, i.e. consultation which was not bounded by time and

limited to target stake-holders, could lead to indecisiveness instead of taking firm decisions, which was what was needed. However, it is important to note that consultation and also team work “take time and energy” (Young, 2004: 102). In another study where the length of time that collaborative/consultative decision-making can take was noted, a participant acknowledged that this type of decision-making was time-consuming (Strachan, 1999).

Several respondents stressed that it was important for decision-taking to be coupled with delivery and follow-through. This desire, in my view, too has a historical undertone. People must have learned from past experience that it was not always possible to deliver in systems that are based on leadership by individuals or leader oriented models of leadership.

Courageous

Courage is a characteristic that was proposed principally by people who belong to minority groupings in South African higher education. They wanted leaders who could “withstand storms” (R18VWW). This comes as no surprise if one takes into consideration that there are several incomplete processes in the country and sector (Chapter Two). Transformation in higher education is far from complete and leaders need to be able to deal effectively with this. One of the respondents was adamant in this regard:

we would like this leadership to take a stand against those elements that don't want transformation because these leaders have constituencies that back them. We are there to back them, they must not be afraid to take when it comes to transformation that is a non-negotiable, that one is a non-negotiable (R30VBM)

What is clear from the quotation is the insistence of R30VBM (and others) that transformation is non-negotiable. From that stance one can deduce that there are people in the sector who hold an opposing view. Leaders, therefore, need to mediate carefully between these opposing (and in-between and outside) views. No wonder one of the respondents held the view that, “we need people with vision, people who aren't fearful” (R25MBM). The respondents who identified courage as a desired characteristic were adamant that it had to be applied in the arena of transformation, something to

be expected in a context where there is still some way to go towards the realization of this. The respondents pointed out that courageous leaders sometimes have to go against the norm, provide trailblazing, withstand challenges and be “prepared to stick out their necks” (R34VBW).

In this section I discussed some of the characteristics which the respondents identified as desirable for leaders: being visionary, ethical and principled, knowledgeable, decisive and courageous. Reviewing these and other characteristics which the respondents identified, I am left with a feeling that these characteristics collectively represent missing elements in the types of leadership that the respondents experienced over time. This is evident in their reasons for characteristics desired in leaders. Taking visionary for example – they include planning as part of vision. They wanted follow-through included in decisiveness and courageous people they mentioned were needed to ensure transformation is kept on track. Two of the characteristics have been identified predominantly by people belonging to the minority groupings: being ethical and principled and being courageous. Again, it seems that these respondents have been subjected to practices where these elements were lacking.

Subscribing to Relational Leadership

The leadership portrayals as well as the identified leadership characteristics discussed in this chapter are all predicated on the respondents' positions vis-à-vis the people with whom they are in leadership relationships. There was a strong focus on relationships because what they said they do, they could only do in the context of relationships. They could not do it to people; they had to do it with them. From their explications it seems then that to them relationships are central to leadership. One of them, indeed, said:

if people are not following then that is not leadership ... if there are no people then you are not a leader (R32MBM)

Another respondent shared this view:

I do know one thing and that is that it [leadership] is about people and so to be exact about what it means in one's relationship with people (R21VWM)

Looking at the responses, I would argue that all the respondents subscribed to aspects of relational leadership (Drath, 1996; Ramsden, 1998; Russell, 2003). One specific dimension of relational leadership emphasized by Drath and Palus (1994) is the role of leaders to structure the activities of the communities of which they are part. When portraying themselves as leaders, the respondents in various degrees highlighted their respective contributions in structuring the leadership relationships they are part of by for example developing enabling environments (Enabler) or promoting the participation of all (Interactor). Drawing on my data I want to suggest that it entails engaging in activities with a heavy focus on people, building relationships and enhancing the mattering of those in the relationship.

In terms of the provision of an enabling environment, this means working towards an environment that provides opportunities for people to grow and develop as verbalised by one of the respondents,

I consider one of my primary functions to enable staff to develop and to be supportive to staff in their development and also the department as a whole (R22VBM)

Interpreting similar statements, I want to argue that to respondents this means making sure that as leaders they facilitate the participation of people by for example negotiating for facilities that are needed. This can be translated into an environment in which dialogue takes place and where differences are accommodated. I think this is important in all environments but particularly so in environments where members come from diverse backgrounds.

The characteristics that the respondents desired in leaders, too, I interpret to be of a relational kind: when they expect consultation and participative leadership, how can that happen if not in a relationship? The same could be said about their expectations of visionary or ethical leaders. Who would the vision be shared with or to whom would the principles of dignity and human rights be applied if not with others in a leadership relationship?

When I examined these collective perspectives against the models discussed in Chapter Two, they tend to fit 'relational leadership'. In Chapter Two I clarified that I subscribe to a concept of leadership that combines elements of the Drath and Palus project, relational leadership and distributive leadership, i.e. an interactive model of leadership where people in a leadership relationship actively participate in the leadership process. In the study although respondents talked about relationships in which they lead I noted that various dimensions of relational leadership were absent; I found no evidence of deep connections and networks. I found that they portray what happens in the relationship as primarily beneficial to others yet they put so much focus on themselves that I actually missed mutuality. Having said this, overall the perspectives exhibit relational elements and if I have to categorize the leadership that respondents reported they enacted or desired it would be relational in nature. It would, however, be relational with a great deal of the characteristics of leader oriented models of leadership.

Summary and Conclusion:

In this chapter position emerged as an important factor in leadership. In the position under investigation it seemed that leadership and management collided. This is an indication that there is a strong relationship between the two. In my study it seemed that there was a contention about which one needs to feature prominently. For my respondents it was management that featured most and in a way it clouded their leadership. It also created tensions and dilemmas for them, so much so that I detected a yearning among them to break free from the management component of their work.

When not focusing on this component of their work, the respondents seemed very positive in their enactment of leadership. I could develop five distinct portrayals of leadership from their reported practice. They also identified characteristics desirable for leaders which can be described as positive. This positive characterization of both the enactment of leadership and the desirable characteristics indicated relationships as central features of the leadership subscribed to in the study. On the basis of these elements I could therefore categorise the leadership as of a relational nature. I want to

conclude that this is an idealised construct of leadership. Apart from the tensions created by the position under investigation, these manager-leaders also seemed to have conflicts about their leadership roles in the wider environment in which they work, namely that of a changing (national) higher education sector. Their leadership seems to be of a different nature when examined within this wider context (Chapter Two and Appendix 1). A discussion about this follows in Chapter Six. It further seems that the leadership identified in this chapter could be enacted by a neutral or universal person, the so called "universal educational leader" (Fitzgerald, 2003), i.e. a leader who can be anybody, who they are in terms of gender, race and class do not matter as observed here:

you can exercise to be a leader, it doesn't depend on the gender of the person; we can relate the same way as long as we have qualities that are needed to be leaders, it depends on the qualities of the person (R32MBM)

A look at the mainstream literature shows that this often happens (Sinclair, 2004). However, this is a feminist study and in the spirit of feminism it has an interest in different positions on leadership. At the same time it is grounded in the context of South Africa where race historically played a significant role and continue to do so. This study therefore seeks to understand whether *'race and/or gender play a role in the construction of the meaning (s) of leadership?'* These dimensions will be addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight. It is important to note that although I treat these dimensions separately, they are actually interconnected (Cock and Bernstein, 2002).

CHAPTER SIX

Environmental Influences on Leadership

In Chapter Five the leadership to which the manager-leaders in my study subscribe, was defined. This was clearly 'relational', implying that, to them, relationships matter. They described themselves as enabling, supporting, consulting and facilitating participation, all activities aimed at making others matter. They therefore have assumptions and expectations about what happens in such relationships. However, when I explore their leadership relationships by shifting the focus to them as the 'led', specifically within the policy context, the leadership seems to be different. In this chapter I do an exploration of this leadership by analysing the perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes of manager-leaders towards different components of the policies that structure the higher education sector in South Africa, i.e. the local (albeit national) context in which these leaders work (Chapter Two and Appendix 1). For me the effect of these policies represents the 'environment' in this thesis. This is a much narrower definition than what environment is generally understood to mean. One definition of environment, for example, refers to social and physical conditions described as, "the conditions that surround people and affect the way they live" (Encarta Dictionary: English (UK)). This environment is important in contemporary South Africa as it represents a context that has changed from an autocratic and undemocratic past to a more democratic present.

The respondents expressed their views on various elements of the policies throughout the interviews but the views were particularly focused around some of the questions such as their vision for higher education, the challenges for leadership in the sector and whether the present higher education system was free from discriminatory practices (Appendix 2). The views showed that the respondents are not totally in agreement with all policy aspects. This is a position not without foundation in research. Clegg (2003) reported on the Learning Teaching and Assessment coordinators (middle manager-academics) in her study that, "they were willing to be critical of both

national and institutional policy” (p. 816). When scrutinising the perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes of the manager-leaders towards the policies I observe a different type of leadership than the one identified in Chapter Five. Because perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes made this leadership visible, I argue that the environment has an impact on leadership. The policy components most frequently mentioned were:

- Equity in the higher education system
- the size and shape of the system,
- academic planning and quality assurance

These components relate directly to those discussed in Chapter Two and Appendix 1, namely issues of change and transformation introduced by policies guiding the higher education sector. These components are directly linked to the goals that were envisaged when a fragmented higher education system was transformed into a more integrated and democratic one: change centred on equity and democracy (Appendix 1). Equity relates to access for students and staff, the size and shape of the system to the broad architecture of the system, and academic planning to curriculum and related issues. Table 6 reflects in how many of the individual interviews each of these elements received in-depth attention.

The focus is on the perspectives of the respondents. I did not ask them how they navigated these challenges, which I acknowledge as one of the weaknesses of this thesis. What is made visible in this chapter are aspects of leadership to which they are subjected with which they are not happy and with which they do not agree. In addition, several discourses (Chapter Three) in the changing higher education context are revealed, including lowered standards when Black students and staff access institutions, a rigid conceptualisation of an academic and a perception of some aspects of higher education policy as impositions from the MoE. I will now discuss respondents' views on each of the identified components.

Table 6: Policy elements receiving in-depth attention in individual interviews

Respondent	Equity	Size and Shape of System	Academic Planning & QA
R11MWW	X	X	X
R12MWM	X	X	X
R13MWW	X		
R14VWM	X	X	X
R15MWW		X	
R16MWM		X	X
R17VWW	X	X	X
R18VWW	X		
R19VBM		X	X
R20VWW	X	X	
R21VWM			
R22VBM			
R23MWM	X		
R24MWM	X	X	X
R25MBM		X	
R26MWW			
R27VBW	X		
R28MBW	X	X	
R29VBM		X	
R30VBM	X		
R31MBW			X
R32MBM	X	X	
R33MBW		X	
R34VBW	X	X	
Total	14	15	7

Equity in the higher education system

The respondents reflected on equity in the higher education system in their deliberations on the changed/changing staff and student profiles and related issues such as access and standards. It might be a surprise that I discuss issues pertaining to students in this section when essentially this thesis is about the meaning of leadership constructed by academic manager-leaders. This has to do with the history of the sector. In Chapter One it was mentioned that historically, distribution and allocation of staff and students of institutions were determined by strict policies. Chapter Two (and Appendix 1) introduced the policy framework that was aimed at changing that situation. Staff and student issues, particularly access, are linked and, for that reason, they are discussed here jointly. Leadership studies where student issues are central are common in situations where inequalities are discussed and are especially common in North American literature (Brown, 2004; Brown, 2005).

The number of respondents (14 out of 24) who paid in-depth attention to equity issues indicates the importance of the concept to the respondents and, I will argue, to the sector. There are of course different interpretations of the meaning of equity which I hope will become clear in this section. In general, a very wide range of interpretations of policy concepts exists in the South African higher education policy literature (Kraak, 2004). Equity is a prominently stated principle in the policy frameworks of the 'new' South Africa. It is seen as one of the defining elements that set the 'new' order apart from the 'old' dispensation, making it unmistakably part of the dominant discourse of the 'new' South Africa. In respect of higher education policies on staff equity, respondents expressed the following summarised views:

- equity was the demand of the times (i.e. it was specified by the authorities and therefore needed to be followed in appointments)
- equity imperatives constitute the mechanism to change the face of institutions
- equity policies were punitive in the sense that penalties were involved where policy targets were not being met

My data show that the respondents equated equity with the expectation that staffing profiles in higher education would change, i.e. that the 'old' (but very much still present) profile of White (and mostly male) academics will change to a more representative one, i.e. including Blacks and women as they are reflected in the demographics of the country. This was also the intention of the policies discussed in Chapter Two and Appendix 1. However, evidence (Table 1, p43) shows that this did not happen and, at present, there is still a mismatch between groups in terms of their representation in the demographics of both South Africa and in higher education, with groups that are minorities in the demographics of the country being numerical majorities in the higher education system and vice versa. I elaborate further on this in Chapter Seven. Now I want to focus on an example of policy implementation, narrated here by one of the respondents:

when I came here we were about the same number as we are now... two women, one was a woman of colour and the other is now my HOD. ... It has been a balance in terms of gender... If we advertise a post, it is a given that we cannot appoint a White male. We can appoint a White female but it is better to look for somebody who is female or who is male and also Black (R28MBW)

Here we have a literal translation of policy – the department is attempting to appoint more women and Black people in keeping with national policy and in a small way succeeding in changing its traditional staff profile. But there is some unhappiness in this environment with some members feeling that they are being discriminated against. Discrimination is not a stated intention of higher education policy; rather the policy is about changing the staffing profiles of institutions. Effects such as potential ‘discrimination’ against some people as perceived by R28MBW’s colleagues were not intended. We have here an example of the “small picture” or “the subjective meaning for individuals” (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991). We can identify some of the negative feelings associated with change (Jackson, 2004a) in these perceptions: insecurity about their positions, sense of loss of privilege and threat to the world of work as they have known it. If one employs a poststructuralist view of power relations (Chapter Three), one gets a different perspective of what is going on here: the power of policy to potentially change a situation of inequality versus the power of resistance to policy. Men academics mentioned by R28MBW possibly could, and most probably are using the power of their positions to resist changes. The situation could, however, also be a result of the change processes lacking clarity. I pointed out that the change process was complex because several historical issues were addressed simultaneously. It was therefore not unusual that the specifics of recommendations and suggestions were not addressed adequately and several areas were left unclear. One could ask what kind of leadership was employed here. Certainly not of a kind that is enabling or interactive.

The next chapter indicates that for various reasons the sector does not have the necessary staff to fulfil equity targets. There are therefore experiments under way to try and deal with the issue. One practice for HAIs is to bring junior rather than experienced staff into institutions. Some respondents reflected on this practice:

we must not put people in positions and jobs that they can't do, because that is really unfair. It is really unfair to take a junior person, put them in there just for token purposes and then they sink because they cannot cope. It is not fair (R20VWW)

Views like the above were expressed with much sensitivity but the perception was that in order to change staff profiles, some puzzling practices were followed. One could, however, again question the characteristics of the change process (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991). How clear were the recommendations and suggestions regarding the equity imperatives, e.g. were they outlined with explicit strategies and time lines? A major criticism of several aspects of the policy machinery is that specifics/details were missing leaving implementers with unclear reference points in the operational sphere. One could therefore also question the role of leadership in this regard. One of the features of the leadership model in Chapter Five was vision but with a proviso, namely, planning for the realisation of such vision as an integral component.

The questioning of practices aimed at trying to address equity issues also seems to contain elements of the view that equity-related processes result in lowering of standards in the academy, a fairly pervasive view in South African higher education today. One of the respondents in Mabokela's (2000b) study expressed this viewpoint although Mabokela does not discuss it. The respondent commented that in their recruitment strategy they:

identify African or Coloured students and employ them at very junior levels ... we want to train our own Blacks. We don't want them to come in from outside and lower our standards (p. 108).

Here a view that 'outsiders' will lower standards of institutions is discernible (Chapter Seven). However, there generally appeared to be two almost opposing views of what leads to lowering of standards. The first is that the risk of lowering standards is greatest when new (outside) groups of people are admitted into institutions. The second is that there is a pool of really good people out there who could be brought in without any risk of loss of standards, as expressed here by R27VBW:

even though I don't believe that you need to employ people just because they are Black or because they are women I think that there are good people who can be

employed. You can actually recruit and head hunt really good people ... so it is not a question of making standards lower (R27VBW)

R27VBW implies that she is aware of the existence of the first view. Hers is therefore by implication a determined correction of an existing one. R19VBM, too, offers a view in similar vein:

I find it offensive that even here at Vermont a lot of my colleagues still confuse equity with standards. When I raise issues of equity people immediately raise issues of standards. I am offended by it because I have repeatedly said that when I speak of equity everybody should assume that my standards and my expectations of standards remain intact (R19VBM)

From these views on equity one detects a sense that equity is equated with 'affirmative action' in certain quarters and, in those same quarters, there is a belief that affirmative action will lower standards. This is something that has been picked up by other writers (Mabokela, 2000a; Edigheji, 2005). Edigheji (2005) is frank about who hold this view when he observes, "it is shameful that the appointment of White academics with lower qualifications is not seen as 'affirmative action' and lowering of standards" (<http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/Articles/TarkArticle.aspx?ID=1498829>).

'Affirmative action' here would be in favour of designated groups (Chapter One). Affirmative action is one of the concepts over which there is a lot of contention in the sector. It is also an emotional issue: in Chapter Three I mentioned the observation of one of my research partners in this regard, namely that Black people would want to believe that their appointments in the sector were based on merit and that any discussion about race might remind them of 'affirmative action', which was uncomfortable because they might begin to doubt the merit in their appointments. Although I do acknowledge that my data brought issues of 'affirmative action' to the fore, it is one of the many issues that this thesis cannot discuss.

Edigheji's viewpoint challenges the pervasive (mostly unspoken) view that the appointment of Blacks lowers standards. Two of the respondents were quite outspoken about what they perceived to be negative views equating Black academics and leaders with lowered standards. Some of their comments were reserved for the people who held these views and who they

regarded as occupying a different world from theirs because of their different understandings of terms like 'standards'. A statement by R29VBM brings this to the fore:

all the terms that they use are terms that we'll agree with. But their definitions of those terms, that's where the differences are. When they talk about standards they talk about themselves. ... We all want a great education but what do we mean by great? They mean by great being able to leave this country and go to America and work, that's what they mean by great. I might say by great I mean something even beyond that. I mean someone that is able to contribute back into the country (R29VBM)

R30VBM supports this view and argues that there is a big divide on how terms like 'standards' are used within the same sector:

oh standards. You see that word comes from the hot place. Once someone talks about standards then I know exactly who they are. That word identifies, gives your identity of who you are, where they come from because this word has been use as some magic word to discriminate against people. It is White people who use this word to discriminate against Black people (R30VBM).

R30VBM's statement indicates not only his view that 'standards' is used as a regulatory device but also as a signifier of identity. He was the only respondent who said this explicitly but White and Black respondents seemed to have different views on 'standards'. This does not mean that Black respondents were against standards in the academy. It was just that they took a different view on its meaning. The uncritical usage of 'standards' in South African higher education has been questioned. Mabokela (2000a) contends that there is a need to critically interrogate the definitions of standards and importantly who the creators of such standards are. She is of the opinion that current conceptions of standards are attached to an "ahistorical universal model of a university".

Equity is an important component of the policy machinery in South African higher education. This is evident from the contents of the policies (Appendix 1) and the acknowledgement of the policy component by the respondents. What equity means and how it needs to be implemented is, however, open to interpretation. This section was intended to show that there are different discourses on equity in the sector. The constituent components of the discourses seem to be divided along racial lines. This must pose challenges for leadership in the sector. I would think that it is essential that leaders agree

on the meaning of such an important term. How else could they work on strategies to bring about genuine change? None of the respondents outright rejected the equity guidelines but it seemed that they found the operationalisation of equity challenging. This again indicates a shortcoming in the leadership provided in the change process: no specifics provided, leaving implementation without guidance. The manager-leaders' responses are therefore not surprising especially when examined against the social practice theory model of change (Chapter Two) which suggests that the reception, understanding and implementation of policy differ from context to context. Importantly in the context of my study "the identities (histories and practices of where they are based)" (<http://rnlab.edfac.usyd.edu.au/CoursesPG/Resources/bandb/trowler-ltsn>) of implementers matter. Chapter Two explained that different groupings in South African higher education had different intellectual preparation and traditions. It is therefore not surprising that they hold such divergent views on a cardinal issue. Equity is a fundamental change mechanism making it imperative that attitudes towards the concept be of an enabling nature in order for "all to take responsibility to redress past inequalities" (Pretorius, 2002: 9). What comes to the fore in this section is that the role of leadership needs to be one of engagement that would advance clarity, guidance, awareness of competing discourses and sensitivity about them but also the courage to speak to them. This issue, once again, highlights the significance of courage as a desirable leadership characteristic in South African higher education.

Size and Shape of the System

The respondents raised concerns in relation to the size and shape of the system as recommended by the Size and Shape Report of 2000 (Appendix 1). I want to argue that this was because activities related to the development of a coordinated system (Appendix 1) were very 'visible' in the public domain. This was specifically geared towards the implementation of 'The National Plan for higher education in South Africa' which recommended a reduction in the number of institutions particularly by creating mergers. This reduction from 36 to 21 institutions is a key component of policy, and at the time of my

study, the first mergers had just taken place and the last took place during the completion of my writing. The same was happening in relation to the restructuring of curricula in and between institutions. Mergers and collaborations across the system were the elements of the size and shape of the system that concerned the respondents most. I discuss these separately.

Mergers

Respondents were mostly concerned about the rationale for the mergers between institutions outlined in the policy, intimating that there was no logic for most of them. Similar concerns were recorded by Luescher and Symes (2003) who surveyed the opinions of informed key policy actors in South African higher education on policy developments. A number of respondents in my study outright questioned the stated rationale for the mergers. Their questions relate to the following areas:

I have reservations about the merging process that's happening at the moment. It strikes me that there's lack of vision in that process because there seems to be a sense of the problem being too many tertiary education centres. But the population is expanding, the need for education is expanding. Presumably the ratio of school leavers going to tertiary education must be rising so it didn't make sense to undertake this kind of dramatic mergers and restructuring that's taking place (R14VWM)

what was required but what was politically not possible was really to close down some of the institutions. There are institutions that the market will tell that their graduates are not valued and to try and keep them open I don't think make sense. From a political view I understand the problems but I think what we needed really was to look at those institutions saying that there are a number that we have to close (R24MWM)
it doesn't actually go to the core of real planning. I mean I don't know how they came to the conclusion that they did about which institutions to merge. What bothers me is that I don't see any sign that any group of people actually sat down and said to themselves, what do we need in this country? Not what do we have, what do we need? I don't think they did that (R17VWW)

Through their questions these respondents identified what they perceived to be specific problem areas in the policy. These were:

- a lack of overall vision for the coordinated system,
- decisions that were politically motivated and therefore not necessarily the correct ones for the system,
- decisions that were narrowly focused and
- lack of planning.

It is interesting to note that Hayward (2002) reported similar sentiments in his study which scanned the South African higher education environment. Mergers are now a distinctive feature of the South African higher education landscape and I think there is a measure of reluctant 'acceptance' of this fact in the sector, even among people who, like the respondents above, have grave misgivings about them. I would argue that such acceptance situates the respondents in a 'we have no choice' discourse. There are the few who, to various degrees, accepted, agreed with, or showed some understanding of the stated rationale for the merging process. I deliberately use the phrase 'to various degrees' because some of these respondents questioned aspects of the rationale for the mergers even though they were, in principle, in agreement with the decisions. The following example illustrates this:

I think the idea or principle of mergers and sharing of resources is a wonderful idea but the problem that I have with it is the "how" aspect of it. The how it will operate, the *modus operandi* is what is actually a problem. For instance it is narrow, the approach or how people see it, it is very narrow, it is not taking into consideration the total perspective (R34VBW).

Here we have someone who, to a certain degree, is in agreement with the policy. She understands the rationale behind the principle, namely that there is a need to economise by 'sharing resources' as she points out. However, she has misgivings about the foundation of the decision, which specifically relates to the regionalisation of health programmes. She explains what to her seems a baffling decision made by the department (Education), namely the rationalization of training programmes for health professionals. This, she maintains, is not understandable in a context where health professionals are leaving the country almost daily. Being in a practical field (health), her concern is that the decision seems devoid of considerations for community needs and therefore not grounded in reality. She is not alone in questioning the way(s) in which mergers will be executed. Here another respondent questions a merger:

Really to merge a university and a technikon (similar institution to former UK polytechnic) doesn't make sense to me. I don't know how that's going to be possible to make a success of it. The ways those institutions operate are so different so I am very worried about that. I don't think we are going to receive the results that were foreseen (R24MWM)

The respondents express concerns about how this policy will unfold. The source of their concerns seems to be their perception that not much thought went into decisions guiding the policy. R24MWM further expressed astonishment that institutions of such different natures could be asked to become one. R17VWW shares in this astonishment. She remarks:

I don't know how they came to the conclusion that they did about which organisations to merge. Thank God we were not involved but it seemed to be incredibly capricious (R17VWW)

These respondents doubted the soundness of a policy, arguing that decisions seem to be based on rather shallow deliberations. The quality of change (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991; Jackson, 2004a) seems to be in question here, a determinant shown to be an influencer of peoples' perceptions concerning change. This concern is expressed here in Luescher and Symes' (2003) observations on this aspect of South African higher education:

institutions were concerned that decisions had been made without due regard to whether the system had sufficient capacity and resources for implementation or to the potential impacts on individual institutions and on the system of sustained uncertainty in the complex merger process (p. 9)

What all of this discussion points to is lack of information – doubts about plans, overall lack of information about implementing well defined concepts. Once again, in this context, the role of leadership could be examined – changes were introduced but the practicalities were not properly addressed according to my respondents. In this context the respondents also mention leadership which seems to be of the traditional type where policymakers (albeit sometimes an anonymous “they”) tend to be seen as leaders who make decisions but without consultation, something which the respondents clearly value.

This subsection also shows that there is much misgiving about an important policy decision, namely the merging of institutions (Transformation and Restructuring in Appendix 1). Respondents consider the policy as lacking in vision, planning and based on a narrow input base. However, no matter how

much they consider the policy with scepticism, something incidentally shared in the broader community (Hayward, 2002; Luescher and Symes, 2003) they have also, in most cases, reluctantly accepted that mergers are part of the higher education landscape. From the analysis of some responses it is clear that there is some doubt that the implementation of the mergers will be a success. This situation cannot augur well for the leaders of implementation processes. I therefore argue that, where people have doubts about policies, it would be difficult for them to effectively implement such policies. How possible would it be for them to lead implementation if they are not totally in agreement with the policies? How will they motivate and inspire others towards the realization of national goals and objectives if they are sceptics rather than champions of these? Their viewpoints are, however, not out of sync with reported ways of dealing with change. According to the 'framework of feelings' (Chapter Two) the quality of any change introduced and other practical issues matter (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991; Jackson, 2004a).

Collaboration

Collaboration across the system was the second aspect of the process towards a 'coordinated system' in South African higher education that received attention from the respondents. What features prominently in their viewpoints was the perception that this policy aspect was very much initiated by the Minister of Education (MoE) at the time. This perception was conveyed in observations such as:

the **minister of education wants us to work together** as tertiary institutions and then as departments. Now there is a good relationship with the department at Vermont, in fact we do projects together, but what we don't do and **that's what the minister wants** is that we actually develop curricula, coursework which we do together (R16MWM, emphasis added)

we have had **the instruction from the minister of education, the minister himself** that certain universities in this region should not train the (specific professionals) (R34VBW, emphasis added)

These respondents suggested that, on the whole, this policy aspect was seen as an 'instruction' coming from the Minister although, in some cases, the Minister, the Ministry or Department (of Education) and higher education were conflated. The Ministry, Department (of Education) or higher education

were interchangeably used and seen as representing the same thing, authority in higher education. The following examples illustrate this point:

we are now sort of from Higher Education we have been instructed to collaborate and we are going to do it (R11MWW)

what is wrong with this university is that they've got a new programme system which was instituted by the Department of Education about how many years, about three or four years now (R17VWW)

A common element in the above and similar views was their perceptions of direct steering by the Minister/Ministry in the activities that they were referring to. In essence what we have here is a discourse of policy as instruction and this section is an elaboration of its constituent parts. In the study one senses a feeling of dejection about this although it was not explicitly verbalised. If one closely examines R16MWM's statement one could argue that, in his view, they (the Mountana department and its Vermont counterpart) have always been collaborating on terms that worked perfectly for them. This collaboration used to be voluntary (Jansen, 2004). Now they were being 'taken to task' by the Minister for not collaborating on his terms ('what the Minister wants'). Also, there is an undercurrent here of 'what the Minister wants, the Minister needs to get', i.e. a reserved acceptance of having to play by the rules in order to secure survival because underpinning this acceptance is a perception that the policy comes with penalties for not meeting targets, in this case the joint offering of curricula between the two institutional departments in question. The role of the Minister at the time has been the focus of research on higher education policy in the country (Sehoole, 2004). Sehoole draws attention to the Minister's directives to specific individuals and institutions in his overview of research on the incorporation/merger of specific colleges of education into specific universities for example. Nieuwenhuis and Mokoena (2005) also provide an example where policy goals and implementation showed a disjuncture. The authors reported a loss of confidence in the provincial Department of Education by the staff and management of their case study institution.

In general, I think that respondents have reluctantly accepted that collaboration is now a feature of the new higher education landscape just like

they had with mergers. But, similarly, there is not a total 'embrace' of the concept. The respondents voiced reservation about this 'imposition,' presenting various reasons for their reservation. First is that, while the dominant policy discourse is one of collaboration or cooperation, limited resources in the sector create a competitive trend. Second, collaboration was introduced in an environment of unequal relationships. Higher education institutions in South Africa developed separately (Chapter One) and some might therefore be disadvantaged in collaborative situations. Thirdly, respondents had reservations specifically about the rationale for collaboration.

Respondents further asked a number of questions about collaborations that they perceived as having been 'edicted'. They posed them as follows:

the administration for collaboration has not been worked out very well. So it is just simply jointly presenting courses. From an administrative side it is not very easy in terms of how do you divide the credits and the things like that (R11MWW)

you know there's lot of talk about collaboration but I'm not sure what it means. It would not be beneficial for us for our students to go to R1U or Mountana unless in very particular cases like for postgraduate courses which we don't offer. And also for staff, I mean Mountana is quite a long way away. We invite them to our seminars and they very seldom come and vice versa (R14VWM)

this university did not really make room for interfaculty group programmes and it is actually extremely difficult to get them set up between faculties for very much logistic reasons, where do students register and so? (R17VWW)

we now have a programme approach in our faculty and that creates problems. For example if you do a [specific degree] which is set for the 3 years that the student is here, in our department we got [specific degree] which is basically a set curriculum. It is a good idea in principle but it creates a lot of problems with work overload for the student, with miscommunication between the departments because basically it should be about departments working together and that doesn't happen (R28MBW)

In the discourse of the policymakers collaboration is seen as being for the common good. Yet respondents expressed concern about the practical implications. If this portrayal is considered alongside attitudes towards merger processes reported earlier, one is left with the impression that the 'coordinated system' envisaged by higher education policy is viewed by implementers as fraught with inconsistencies and they have doubts about its workability. They have questions about the reasons for change, the quality of change, the support it has. We therefore should not be surprised to find the number of negative feelings associated with change (Jackson, 2004a) in the

discussion so far: chaos, change for change's sake, uncertainty, demoralised and, I suspect, resistance if investigated further.

The creation of a coordinated higher education system has been one of the features of efforts at change in higher education policy in South Africa. There is consequently a dominant discourse of a coordinated higher education system which fits the social justice discourse. This is the discourse promoted by policy makers/leaders. A poststructural reading of higher education practice as can be gleaned from manager-leaders in this study, however, reveals that the practitioners are not necessarily captured by this discourse. I want to repeat the question raised earlier, namely how leaders of implementation strategies could possibly lead if they are not in total agreement with the policies? Overall, this is an indication of leadership that neglects the human dimension in the process of change (see section below). This is not the leadership model which the respondents in this study subscribe to. They believe in relational leadership where the human dimension is paramount.

Academic Planning and Quality Assurance.

The respondents' views related to these policy aspects seem to centre on the process, i.e. the specifications that departments and institutions must conform to in terms of regulations specified by an external agency, the Higher Education Quality Council. Evaluations based on these specifications were also part of the process thereby establishing a new accountability 'culture'. Results from this study show that new activities and new roles are part of the process of academic planning and quality assurance. Universities do now, for example, appoint persons specifically for the task of ensuring 'compliance' with these regulations. These are very visible portfolios because the persons have to account for the state of the institutions' academic programmes. Faculties and departments have to work with such persons. Programme evaluation (quality assurance) is now a strong feature in South African higher education as is also the case in other similar systems (Morley, 2005).

R11MWW, who is chairperson of her faculty's academic committee, narrated her experiences in the Mountana process. She explained that the university has a "person appointed for academic planning and quality control", who keeps her informed of "higher education policy issues". According to her this person's role is to give "instructions with regard to programme formation and programme evaluation". Her role is to prepare the faculty for such evaluations. Her view is that the staff perceive the process as bureaucratic and, for that reason, she finds herself having to be "very careful" in handling the process. The staff's reaction is not surprising. R11MWW's language reflects that of managerialism and accountability – the use of words like 'quality control' and 'instructions' leaves one to wonder, what happened to participation and collaboration? I think that the policy implementers find the process cumbersome, which is what R11MWW points to when she remarked:

at this university people have been I don't want to use the word "traumatised" but they've been quite upset sometimes about the amount of bureaucracy coming down on them, forms that they got to fill in (R11MWW)

The evaluation process seems to consume everybody pointing to one of the stressors in the head of department position (Chapter Five). A number of respondents referred to the intensity involved. One respondent stated:

things like the quality assurance process, the whole SAQA thing, we're going through that in May ... We're just sort of trying to gear up for that so I know a little bit about it. I mean that is going to be quite demanding (R14VWM)

One gets a picture of intense preparation for this external evaluation. This is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in higher education systems, globally, which have embraced quality assurance. Newton (2002b), for example, commented on this in his research in the UK. In the South African context Luescher and Symes (2003) picked up concerns about this in their research which they reported as follows:

two institutions and a policy analyst warned of the potential of quality audits becoming a bureaucratic compliance exercise that would eventually overburden academic staff (p. 11)

The process, which respondents describe as 'lots of work' and demanding, also provoked the question, 'to what end?' among the implementers. R17VWW reflects on this as follows:

you go through an enormous amount of work to do the right thing. I'm willing to bet 90% of the volume of stuff that we've submitted 4 or 5 years ago has never, they have never looked beyond the 1st page of any of that, they just don't have the capacity (R17VWW)

What R17VWW seems to imply is that there is doubt about what happens once institutions have gone through the necessary submissions and evaluations. Her question seems to be about what happens to the 'results', i.e., was any purpose served?

I do not think the respondents have problems with quality assurance *per se* because, as academics, they are accustomed to systems and mechanisms that are meant to assure the quality of their work. Quality assurance has after all been a feature of university systems across the globe. In the words of Morley (2004), "universities have possessed various forms of internal and external mechanisms for assuring the quality of their work" (p. 15). Morley cites the external examiners system as an example of quality assurance. In the case of my study I would say that respondents have some resentment towards the quality assurance process. The basis of the resentment seems to be three-fold. First, respondents see it as having been imposed on them. Second, they have issues with the rationales given to them and third, they see it as time-consuming and, one could argue, detracting from the activities (research and scholarly work in particular) for which they actually get rewarded and which according to them represent their identity (Chapter Five). This observation on the distraction from "more valued" activities was also made in Clegg's (2003) study.

Planning, too, received attention from the respondents. R17VWW, for example, verbalises some concern related to academic planning. Coming from one of the Science fields, she is aware that policy makers are increasingly locating the focus for academic growth in that realm. She was, however, concerned that this decision was taken without consideration of the objective reality. For her there was a big gap between the rhetoric coming

from the policy makers and reality. For her something was missing, she was looking for evidence that decisions were based on reality. She expressed her concerns by way of these questions:

there is no information whatsoever in this country as to what numbers of graduates are needed ... we just don't know. There's this vague statement ...but universities need to be getting leadership guidelines as to what we should be doing. Should we be ditching half the people who are doing degrees in humanities? I don't believe that is what we should do. If we produce about a 1000 graduates a year, are we producing an appropriate proportion of different kinds of people? (R17VWW)

There is a possibility that R17VWW's observations may be misguided as academic growth in the sciences appears to have started without the intervention of the State. Jansen (2004) commented on this and argued that shifts in the focus of enrolments had taken place in favour of the Sciences and Commerce fields practically without intervention from the government and that the government's decision to 'plan' enrolments in this regard was therefore 'puzzling' to him. This may be the case but the fact remains that higher education planning is favoured towards Science and Commerce and therefore questions about the basis of decisions, lack of coherent planning, lack of vision, etc. as expressed here remain.

I would like to argue that, no matter how vigorously dominant discourses are promoted in the sector – like central planning in this case – as long as the practitioners have questions such as those mentioned here, the way is not clear for the smooth implementation of the policy. What we have here are different sections of the same system with different views. On the one hand is the government (policy makers/leaders), convinced of the benefit of 'central planning' in order to ensure that the relevant skills for the development of the country, as well as the strengthening of the country's global position, are being developed. On the other hand are the manager-leaders with their doubts about the soundness of the foundations of planning, etc. Again, one needs to examine the leadership described here: decisions made without full consideration of their impact on those affected. There is also something of a conflict discernible in the values behind policy leaders and manager-leaders' views of the purposes of education – the former seems to value the market

while the latter is more biased towards the capacity building abilities of the sector.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter explored the perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes of manager-leaders towards different components of the higher education policy machinery. I interpreted these perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes as barometers of change in the sector.

A variety of perceptions was expressed ranging from views that components of the higher education framework lacked vision, planning or resources, that it was impossible to implement some elements and that some proposed aspects were unrealistic. A common element in the perceptions was scepticism. Using a 'framework of feelings' (Chapter Two) and focusing on the "small picture", or "subjective meaning" (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991), I argue that these perceptions are manifestations of feelings associated with change and these feelings are mostly of the negative type (Jackson 2004): scepticism around reasons and benefits of change, uncertainty and insecurity, chaos and in some instances that it was change just for the sake of change.

I want to argue that we have a conflict in the types of leadership playing out here. In Chapter Five I have presented the idealised leadership construct that my respondents subscribed to. Relationships matter to them: in this chapter the leadership to which they are subjected in the policy arena seems to be different. The leadership they 'receive' is not vaguely the same as their idealised model. What they describe here is a model of leadership devoid of participation and consultation, in fact a neglect of the human dimension. No wonder all the recorded feelings could be identified and that they stressed the facets of leadership they had in their idealised leadership model.

What is, however, important in this context and which is not immediately recognisable in this discussion from the input of the respondents, is the influence of history. Changes were introduced to correct historical problems and because there were so many to be addressed at the same time, it is

possible that some of the issues which the manager-leaders in this study point out did not get the necessary attention. Nobody can claim that the policy makers/leaders were ignorant of the historical backdrop to all of these issues, it might just have been that they did not effectively assess the impact of these processes. Something else that is noticeable and which is of significance is that, in Table 5, a higher number of White manager-leaders contributed to the issues under discussion in this chapter. I can only speculate on the many possible reasons for this because, as I have pointed out at the start of the chapter, I did not probe how (and why) the manager-leaders lead around the identified challenges. One of the reasons could be the tendency in post-apartheid South Africa not to discuss certain issues (Suttner, 2005), especially when it could be interpreted as criticism against the democratic government (policy makers/leaders in this instance).

The feelings reported in this chapter raise questions about the ownership of change, i.e. who owns the process. As Cockburn (2005) points out, successful change happens when there is ownership. Factors that may enhance ownership of change processes include, among others, opportunities for participation and the negotiation of decisions in such processes (Allen, 2003). Where participants are denied these opportunities trust in the managers of change tends to decline and insecurity among participants seems to increase (Allen, 2003). The manager-leaders give the impression that ownership of the changes in higher sector is in question.

What these feelings and attitudes reveal is that the change process needs to be a partnership. For this to happen, the foundations should be right and built around principles of consultation and participation, i.e. recognising the 'human dimension'. These are the principles which these manager-leaders advocate and what they therefore expect in a leadership relationship. By focusing on these perceptions I have made them visible and opened up the possibility for leaders to see the problems in the system. The possibility is further there for these problems to be investigated and solutions to be found, i.e. making possible a shift from a culture of blame to a culture of owning problems and solutions (Ramphela, 2004). I want to suggest that an

examination of Black manager-leaders' perceptions about some of the challenges identified in this chapter gives another perspective about them. I will therefore now proceed to look at the 'race' factor in more depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Race and Leadership

The purpose of this chapter is to explore whether race plays a role in constructing the meaning of leadership in higher education in South Africa. In essence this question is whether race makes any difference in the understanding of leadership. In the previous chapter some challenges in South African higher education were exposed which did not surface when the idealised leadership model that respondents subscribe to was examined. I argue that by focusing on the experiences and views of Black manager-leaders in the study, we could go some way towards addressing these challenges. This argument is informed by writing on educational leadership from North America which foregrounds historical perspectives on the leadership of African-Americans (Rusch, 2004; Brown, 2005) and feminism (Chapter Three) that allows people to “express their experiences of living gendered (and raced, my insertion) lives in conditions of social inequalities (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 4). Several additional leadership roles that the Black manager-leaders play can so be identified. I suggest that these roles indicate problem areas which are not adequately addressed and where leadership should be concentrated in order for objectives and goals of the sector to be achieved.

I presented the racial make-up of academic staff in Chapter Two and pointed out a discrepancy namely that Black academics occupy a minority position in the sector. The figures indicate that instead of Black academics being a numerical majority which would reflect the racial make-up of the country, they constitute a numerical minority while the group that statistically should be a numerical minority (Whites) is the numerical majority (Jansen, 2005). In the first section of this chapter I contextualise minority and majority staff as reflected in the sector. There is agreement that low numbers of manager-leaders are a feature of South African higher education. Sections two and three of this chapter discuss this from two very different perspectives, majority and minority views about the situation. The fourth section deals with

additional tasks that Black manager-leaders perform in the leadership realm, i.e. in addition to their leadership roles outlined in Chapter Five. These roles could not be discerned from the leadership activities reported by the majority groupings respondents. The chapter concludes with implications for leadership.

Academic Staff as Numerical Minorities and Majorities in the Context of South African Higher Education

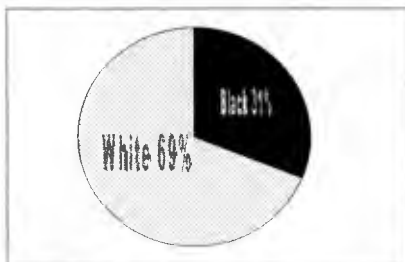
The racial make-up of South Africa's population is represented in Figure 5. Figure 6 represents the racial and gender make-up of the latest academic profile (Table 1, p. 43).

Figure 5: Racial Make-up of South African Population



(Source: Statistics, South Africa. Mid-year population estimates, 2004)

Figure 6: Racial Make-up of Academic Staff



I use the phrases 'numerical minorities' for Blacks and 'numerical majorities' for White men in the context of higher education in South Africa to reflect contrasting statistics. The latter is the group "in which much of the expertise [in the sector] resides at present" (Geber, 2003: 110). In this chapter I deliberately use the term groupings because historically in South Africa White women have been regarded as part of the 'numerical majority' in higher education. This is difficult to understand especially in a sector where at the moment Black men are in 61% of Vice-Chancellor positions while Black women are in 4%, White men in 35% and White women in none. This, again, has to be understood in a historical context. In Chapter Two I explained that White people were beneficiaries (Cock and Bernstein, 2002) of a 'superior' education system. Within that system, women were discriminated against but they were still more privileged than the majority of Black people in the same system. They had social capital in the form of their education and in most cases connections in the academy to husbands who tended to be academics and supervisors who constituted the major (and sometimes only) academic networks. The majority of Black academics did not have this.

There is no hard evidence for White women's academic privilege because work on equity in the sector in general does not segregate figures for Black and White women, giving the impression that both groups are facing the same inequitable situation (Subotzky, 2001; Howell and Subotzky, 2002; Council on Higher Education, 2004). Critical readings of particular studies to a certain extent provide support for a viewpoint that White women have been privileged in the academy. A recent report on equity in the sector actually acknowledges the existence of a view that White women "had always enjoyed benefits" (Cassim and Brun, 2005: 32) and that they continue to do so at present. The authors mention this in passing and as something that they inferred from focus group inputs. Another study (Maürtin-Cairncross, 2005) refers to the fact that White women produce more publications than their Black counterparts when working in similar institutions, from which one can infer that they are academically better prepared.

I want to add that this is an emotive subject. Having been discriminated against through gender, White women rightfully now want to claim space for advancement and they do not take kindly to subtle reminders that they might have been slightly advantaged in an earlier period. I am making this claim after analysing the historical situation (Chapter One) but also from my experience of attending personal development events for women where the situation of women in higher education would be homogenised until a lone voice among the Black women would point out that there was a reality constituted of Black and White women who historically had different experiences in the sector. This would normally change the atmosphere. However, this is one of the subjects that do not get talked about in higher education, perhaps in the interest of nation-building.

Black men's positions in the academy need explanation too. Again looking at the VCs, the "visible parade of the celebrated few" (Mabokela, 2005: 4) it would seem that Black men are the leaders in higher education. This is only true of the VC population. This study, for example, reminded me that the middle level of academic management has not yet changed into a representative picture of the demographics of the country. Readers are reminded that only two of the eleven (barely 20%) Black respondents were heads of departments at the time of the interviews and that constituting a sample was not an easy task (Chapter Three). Therefore in this thesis I do not include Black men as part of the majority groupings but do include White women as such where I consider them to be speaking from their former historical position.

My data show that Black and White manager-leaders interviewed agree that there is a dearth of Black academics in South African higher education and that this has impacted on the number of manager-leaders. However, there are considerable differences in the views about why Blacks are a minority in the system and also the implications of this for the sector. Two members of the majority groupings, one at each institution mentioned the presence of just one Black academic in their respective faculties. Although I was not given any special identifiers for them, both these 'lone' faculty members were

included in the study in the end confirming for me the low number of Black academics in the system. I decided that it was important to include one of them in the study because of her status as the first (and only) Black woman in the faculty and it took only a couple of phone calls to locate her (the person who made reference to her could not remember her name). I did not actively set out to include the second person but he ended up in the study effectively because of the shortage of Black academics in the system. I also want to add that both these respondents were aware of their special status of being the only one in their faculty as can be seen from the interviews with them:

I mean I am the only Black South African for the past 7 years at Vermont. In the faculty board we have about 20 Black Africans. I am the only one from South Africa, I've been the only one forever (R29VBM)

I am the only Black person in the faculty; yeah I am the only Black in the department (R31MBW)

These comments confirmed the minority position of Black academics revealed in this study and which was particularly prominent in constituting the sample.

Black Academics as Minorities in the Academic Sector - Views from the Majority

This subsection interrogates people belonging to the majority groupings' understandings of the issue of Black academics as minorities in the higher education system. The respondents expressed their views in response to my question, 'do you regard the higher education system as free from discriminatory practices?' (Appendix 2). I explained in Chapter Three my intense struggle with the race question and how difficult it was to articulate, hence its coaxing in this way. This was my way of engaging these manager-leaders on issues of transformation in particular the race question. A typical response from the majority groupings was the following quotation:

... if I could wave a magic wand and say I'll have as many posts as I want in this department so that I could employ x number of people [meaning Black] with this level of qualification to do these jobs, I don't think that, there aren't the people on the ground (R20VWW)

The implication amongst respondents was that they or their departments were trying hard to change staff profiles and that they were trying to do this by employing Black academics. What they further implied was that their attempts were impeded by what they perceived as the shortage of these academics in the system. They offered a variety of reasons for this shortage:

- the inequities of the past,
- discipline related undersupply of Black graduates
- the time that it takes to establish an academic career
- competition from other sectors
- 'they-are-not-there' syndrome

Inequities of the past

Given the country's history and the specific history of its higher education system (Chapter One), the low number of Black academics is to be expected but not to be accepted uncritically. However, in my study it was surprising that among the majority groupings only two of the respondents, R20VWW and R24MWM mentioned that the inequities of the past were partly responsible for the low number of Black academics in the system. For R20VWW and R24MWM the major consequence of the inequities of the past is that there are now insufficient Black graduates in the system to take up academic positions. This could be that people thought that it was not important to talk about the past or even that the past is such a given that it does not warrant mentioning but what matters is what is being done at the moment. This attitude ties in with my earlier observation about subjects which do not get discussed in the country, especially related to race. Here it is race simultaneous with history but as I have pointed out in Chapter One the two are closely related. More attention therefore needs to be given to the impact of the past on the present staffing situation. What is needed is a dialogue so that a real understanding of this issue could be developed and hopefully bring about a shift in the way that people view the situation. What came through in the respondents' reference to inequalities of the past was that they/their departments were trying to give attention to the issue but I would argue without real interrogation and understanding of the impact of the past.

Discipline-related undersupply of Black graduates

A further view for the low numbers of Black academics in the system was that it was discipline related. A respondent who espoused this view was R17VWW who thought that the system had too few Black graduates to fill academic positions and her position was that this was so because of specific discipline related reasons. She is a natural scientist and thought that the sciences in particular have difficulty filling positions because of a low number of graduates. She was, however, not alone in espousing this discipline related viewpoint; R24MWM was of the same opinion. He commented:

every now and again we are in that position that we want to appoint people and you go out and you look for one of the designated groups but how many people are there with a PhD in [specific field] in South Africa? If you start from that point and then say take out all the White males from those ... how many are left? It's a small handful (R24MWM)

R24MWM is an academic in one of the fields identified by the government as a priority for academic growth (Appendix 1). One can speculate that the rationale is that postgraduate growth needs to be promoted in those fields because undergraduate qualifications will give the basic skills but intellectual capacity will be built from postgraduate development with some postgraduates going on to become academics, researchers, policy developers or analysts. This will distribute them across various sectors. When there are not many of them to begin with like in the case of the sciences and business, the problem is exacerbated as pointed out here:

for most universities it's not easy to fill positions especially when you consider Black people, they are few. If I become specific in my department there are few people who are doing [specific field] so it is not easy to employ people because there is no one or there are just a few and the ones that you do find are employed, it's not easy (R32MBM).

R32MBM's contribution on the issue of too few Black graduates in the system is interesting because it comes from a member of the minority groupings. It is, however, important to note that this respondent is part of the newer generation of academics (Chapter Three).

The time that it takes to establish an academic career

Respondents from the majority groupings advanced the length of time that it takes to establish an academic career as a further reason for the low

numbers of Black academics in the system. According to them the development of an academic career takes a long time because a number of processes need to take place over a number of years in such development. This is how one of them viewed the process:

you can't just make academics in ten years. You can't, they don't get made in ten years. They get made in more like 20 years you know. You don't take ten years to become a professor you take 20 years because you got to do the BSc and then you must do Honours and then you must do a Masters and you must do a Ph.D and then you must have the experience and then you must run a research group and all of that matters (R20VWW)

A supporting view expressed was that:

it takes a lot of time. I mean we come from a background where the scholars did not have equal opportunities. We have a school system that is not functioning at the moment and we are not getting the material from the schools that we require at universities. We are trying to build up a base of academics from designated groups from those who were not privileged previously and it's going to take time. It's not something that we can change in 10 minutes' time (R24MWM)

What is at issue here are viewpoints of academic careers grounded in traditional Western models (Geber, 2003). Many of the respondents in the majority groupings were beneficiaries of such models. This is clear from their reflections on their career backgrounds (this was particularly true in the Mountana case where a number of them were alumni of the institution). It seems that for these respondents there is only one discourse of an academic career available, in which an individual's career trajectory takes off from the completion of an undergraduate degree followed shortly afterwards by appropriate postgraduate studies preferably supervised by the same 'expert' while at the same time the said individual starts applying their acquired knowledge through a postgraduate assistantship which eventually develops into a lectureship and what follows. This process, as the respondents noted, can take a considerable length of time. If we consider that South African higher education is at the moment a fast changing environment, is it perhaps time that thought be given to ideas of more flexible ways of developing academic careers?

Competition from other sectors

Respondents in this reporting group further pointed out that the low number of Black manager-leaders in the system was caused by financial rewards in the sector. When they compared compensation levels in academia for members of the minority groupings with that of the private sector and upper echelons of the civil service, compensation in academia clearly lags behind. The viewpoint of respondents in this regard is summarised in the following words:

it is very difficult to recruit people from the group of formerly disadvantaged because they are able to demand such high salaries in government and private appointments. We are not able to compete with that. We are not able to compete for those few people who are in a position to be academic leaders. We can't, we can't pay them. They get what the people call, they get jawbreaker salaries elsewhere (R12MWM).

This is a viewpoint that is being reproduced in the sector (Boroughs, 2002; Mabokela, 2002). Boroughs (2002), for example, gives an explanation as to why this is so when he comments on what tends to happen in the engineering field. He points out that private companies sponsor the studies of Black graduates. Upon completion of their studies, the graduates join these companies and immediately start to earn good salaries. They are the people who find it difficult to go (back) into academia where they will have to adjust to less lucrative financial rewards. What we have operating here is the development of a problematic situation where universities cannot compete with attractive salaries offered by the private sector and civil service management (Mabokela, 2000b; Smout and Stephenson, 2002). This 'situation' has become a discourse, there is a measure of 'truth' in it but to what extent has not adequately been investigated and is one of the uncritical reasons being accepted for the low number of Black manager-leaders in the sector.

For some of the respondents the low number of Black manager-leaders in the higher education sector is further closely related to the needs of industry. At this point it is perhaps important to remind ourselves that the transformation of higher education is playing out within the bigger context of transformation in the country as discussed in Chapter Two. This means that on all levels of society the expectation is that Black people as part of the designated groups will play greater leadership roles after they have occupied

less meaningful positions in the past. State policies in various sectors specify that members from designated groups begin and continue to occupy positions of leadership. Consequently well qualified Black academics are sought after in all fields. Some respondents from the majority groupings view the low number of Black manager-leaders as a direct result of this trend. One of them explained:

I think there are a few that could take up academic posts at the institution but industry out there needs them as badly as we do and so the pool from which we can draw staff is just too small at this stage (R21VWM)

Here again, I would say as I did in the previous section that the statement contains a measure of 'truth'. However, it is important to investigate what the reasons are for the situation rather than allowing an uncritical stance to become 'the' truth. The result of such a stance might be that the situation in question is accepted on face value and not examined critically or scrutinised and alternative explanations investigated.

'They- are-not-there' syndrome

When I do a critical reading of the collective viewpoints of members of the majority groupings on the low number of Black manager-leaders in the higher education system, I conclude that a number of them in a sense hold the view that this group is actually to blame for the state of affairs. I have to add that nobody said this explicitly but from what they said one could surmise this. Examples of these implicit 'blame' statements are:

when we tend to get people they very often use Vermont as a springboard. You know one person [in specific post] was here for about two years and he's now [in a top position in a parastatal] and another [similar sort of post] was here for about two years and he's now the VC or whatever it is of one of the Technikons in [a different province] so it is actually extremely difficult to retain really highly qualified Black academics because they are so few you know they can essentially choose where to go, so they will (R17VWW)

they don't stay in academia so we don't have those role-models ... We get graduates, brilliant graduates, we have, our top graduates are now Black, coloured and indian people but they leave because they are so good that they are attracted elsewhere so we don't get the role models coming through (R18VWW)

We can advertise posts; Black South Africans don't apply for the posts at the institution... We've been very fortunate in the sense that we have three [foreign nationals] Black men in our department and they're doing a wonderful job they are great role models ... it's good for the institution but I don't see the South Africans coming forward (R21VWM)

What these respondents tended to imply was, first, that Black manager-leaders use appointments at institutions like Mountana and Vermont as positions from which to launch careers with brighter futures; second, that they do not stay in the system and act as role models for the next generation of Black academics and, last, that they do not even make an effort to apply for advertised positions, which in the end result in what I call a 'they-are-not there' syndrome. This syndrome, too, is an unexamined discourse that has taken hold in the sector. There might be different questions that need to be asked at this point. For example, what is the use of a discourse such as 'they-are-not-there'? I think the components of this discourse identified in this section:

- discipline related undersupply of Black graduates
- the time that it takes to establish an academic career
- competition from other sectors

have become powerful 'instruments' to 'excuse' academic manager-leaders from the majority groupings from investigating some of the 'real' reasons for the low number of Black academics in South African higher education. This is a topic that Mabokela (2000b) also alluded to. In my research alternative reasons emerged for the low numbers of Black manager-leaders in the system from the responses of respondents who are members of the minority groupings. These reasons constitute a counter view to the one discussed in this section and is the focus of the next section.

Black Academic Manager-Leaders on Being Numerical Minorities in the Academic Sector

The minority grouping (Black) respondents expressed viewpoints that were significantly different from those of the majority grouping (White) members on the low numbers of Black manager-leaders. The Black manager-leaders offered two reasons for the situation, namely that the system did not prepare Black academics and appointment related factors.

The system did not prepare Black academics

As a starting point they pointed out that the higher education system did not prepare Black manager-leaders. One of them, in a rather emotional way, acknowledged awareness of the 'they-are-not-there' syndrome but at the same time pointed out a probable cause. He said:

Essentially what it comes to the previously historically White institutions when they talk about the absence of candidates, I say you go to hell. Since when did you train them? I was not trained in this country and so are over 90% of people who are on the staff in these previously White institutions; they were not prepared so this. They must stop saying where are the candidates, they did not prepare them, they did not train them; they were trained elsewhere (R30VBM)

At issue here is the fact that, in general, generations of Blacks were denied access to higher education institutions. Those who were granted access were allowed to do so on stringent conditions (Chapter One). At least four Black respondents made reference to the notorious practice where Black students were allowed into higher education institutions by means of a permit system. They had to apply to the MoE for permission to study at such institutions: permission was granted for them to follow courses not offered by the HDIs. R27VBW and R29VBM, both natural scientists, mentioned that they studied at HAls under the permit system. The rest of the Black manager-leaders all obtained their doctorates overseas as I have pointed out in Table 3 (p83). Not all of them mentioned why. R25MBM was one of the exceptions. He made it clear that he went overseas because he did not want to apply for a permit. Having foreign qualifications has specific implications when applying for a position as will be discussed in the subsection about networks that follows. It is important to acknowledge the impact of specific practices in addition to the more general impact of history on the database of Black academic manager-leaders. Acknowledgement of the impact of the limited preparation of Black academics for leadership which resulted in the system not having the necessary pool of senior academics to supply the manager-leader cadre is a prerequisite for a process of real engagement of the problem and a collective process of finding creative solutions.

Appointment processes matter

The majority of respondents in this reporting group held the view that there was something fundamentally wrong in the way that appointments are being made in the sector. The experiences of three of these respondents are highlighted here because I believe that there are lessons to be learnt from them. This is how these respondents talked about their experiences:

I applied for the head of [section] position. 3 posts in [the section] were advertised, 1 of them for the head of the [specific] section; I applied for that particular position. I was offered the most junior of the 3. Because I think that I am inherently a fair person and I believe and trust that other people make informed decisions I accepted that. Only when I arrived here I found that I was given the junior position, 2 White males got the senior positions. I was the only person with university teaching experience and I was the only person with a doctoral degree yet that committee could not believe that I could do this so they ignored my experience and credentials (R19VBM)

When I came for my interview there must have been about 10 men around the table because I came in at associate professor ... they offered me a position ... I applied for associate professor. They asked me would I accept the position if it was for senior lecturer? I said no I don't move sideways, ... they offered me an associate professorship because they knew that I was shortlisted for a post at Mountana so that's why I got this very large panel of people to make sure that you know nobody must say ... the post wasn't advertised ... (R27VWW).

when you choose a dean you have to look at somebody who has all of these qualifications who has all these schooling backgrounds who has all these connections, who has that? ... I was trying to apply for promotion I didn't get it at Vermont. A White guy who doesn't have a PhD, got promotion to be a professor, he got a promotion without those things this guy he's got the connections, he knows people, he'll bring in a lot of value to this university (R29VBM)

A number of issues transpire from these examples, all related to appointment processes, I identify two here for discussion:

- different criteria seemed to be applied to different categories of applicants in the selection process
- networks and connections in higher education are important in appointments

Different criteria seemed to be applied to different categories of applicants in the selection process

R19VBM's experience poignantly reflects a situation where different criteria seemed to be applied when considering different categories of applicants to fill posts. In his case he applied for an advertised position with more credentials – a completed doctorate and experience of university teaching both in a local context (he taught at a local institution before going abroad to

complete the doctorate) and an international context – than his competitors. In the event he was not appointed to the position. His competitors were majority grouping members and were clearly the preferred candidates. It is difficult to understand the choice made in this case (and I do not have all the facts) but I believe that it might have been an example of where people in 'low' diversity environments tend to consider people similar to themselves as the ideal candidates when making appointments. Elements of the same practices are discernible in the experience that R29VBM related above. According to him he was not considered for promotion whereas a majority grouping member was, even though the latter's qualifications were clearly not as good as his. He cited the latter's connections, something that seems to matter as I will point out in the subsection that follows.

R25MBM did not relate similar personal experiences but he shared experiences from his participation in various selection committees showing the prevalence of such practices. He reflected on this, sharing how he would like to see the situation changing:

I would like to see a situation where you rub out the name of the candidate, you rub out where they've studied, etc. and you put two candidates on the table, A and B in front of a selection panel and then purely on the basis of the CV people are selected and if candidate B happens to be the Black candidate that comes out best you don't tell the people. You then present the same CVs to people but this time with the names and where they studied attached and 9 times out of 10 the same panel will make a different decision. I always say it, that's my sort of tack; don't expect from Black candidates what you would not expect from White candidates (R25MBM)

What emerges from R25MBM's account is a practice where inequitable comparisons are made between candidates with much more being expected from candidates belonging to minority groupings. This practice was also commented on by R29MBM:

They won't create a job around a Black person, they will tell him, you need to have qualifications, you need to have this and that, then we will do something for you. They will compare a Black guy with the top White guys they won't compare them with peers (R29MBM)

The application of different criteria to different categories of candidates in appointment processes could result in candidates from minority groupings having to be much better than those from majority groupings in order to be

appointed. Edigheji (2005) points out, "Whites without this basic (PhD) requirement populate our universities and do not accommodate their Black counterparts, even those with higher qualifications" (<http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/Articles/TarkArticle.aspx?ID=1498829>). I would argue that this might be because most of the minority grouping candidates have qualifications from HDIs and foreign institutions. In general qualifications obtained at HAIs are viewed as superior to those obtained at HDIs while foreign trained academics are not generally part of local networks.

Networks and connections are important in appointments

R29VBM's remarks about who gets selected bring out another dynamic in the sector's appointment procedures. This has to do with the existence of networks and connections in higher education and how membership of particular networks determines who will ultimately be appointed in positions. R29VBM's statement that those who make appointments will not create jobs for Black people as well as his earlier statements about the person who got promoted without the prerequisite qualifications underscore this – people who are connected have better chances of getting appointed or promoted.

Someone who can confirm the power of networks and connections in landing prestigious jobs is R27VBW. She related that she was persuaded to apply for a job that she was not considering at the time:

when they advertised for the post of director, I didn't apply ... there was a new CEO [X] who came from [London] actually he is the director there ... he had come in to sort the [institution] out ... I happened to bump into him one day. ... he was really impressed with me and he said, so where do you see yourself in 5 years? I said I'll most probably make interesting discoveries, find this, he said no you must come and do this, why don't you come and do this... (R27VBW)

She subsequently applied and got the job and negotiated a deal which allowed a secondment from Vermont leaving her anchored in the academic world whilst also leading change in a major national organisation. She would not have done that if it was not for the intervention of X (as well as that of the faculty dean at the time). This shows what sponsors can do for the careers of academics. The significance of networks in higher education, particularly in

the realm of recruitment and career prospects has been explored in numerous studies (Mabokela, 2000b; Daniels, 2001). Sangaria and Rychener (2004) draw attention to two forms of networks, "created" and "inherited", defined respectively as, "those intentionally formed to exchange information and provide support" and "those into which one is born or enters through educational lineage"(p. 108).

I did not investigate whether any of the respondents were members of specific networks but as pointed out in this discussion there were references made that implied the existence of strong networks among the majority groupings. These, I would argue, would be of both types. I am basing my argument on my observations of the backgrounds of the respondents (Table 3). Six Mountana respondents (46%) obtained their highest degrees from the institution with four of them (31%) having done both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees there. In addition, one of them has an intermediate degree from the institution, resulting in 54% of them holding one or more degrees from the institution. In the case of Vermont, only two respondents obtained their highest qualifications from the institution both having done their first degrees there too. Two others also have first degrees from the institution, which means that 36% of them have at least one degree from the institution. To me these figures represent some degree of networking and sponsoring in the filling of positions in these institutions although I would like to add that there might also be a certain degree of this being done in order to meet the demands of demographic employment targets in some of these appointments, most notably in the cases of the newer generation of academics (R28MBW, R31MBW and R32MBM).

The significance of connections and networks is that they give people the sense that they 'know' others. It would be easier for someone, a supervisor, who had guided somebody's (Person A) academic development to choose Person A rather than somebody else (Person B) who comes from a different institution when having to make a choice in filling a vacant position. The person who appoints can say that they 'know' Person A because of their involvement in the latter's development. In this way individuals with 'foreign'

qualifications could for example easily be excluded from selection for appointment because they are not automatically included in existing networks (Grogan, 1999).

That there is a low number of Black academics and especially manager-leaders in the South African higher education system cannot be denied; the figures speak for themselves. Data from this study show that there are two very different viewpoints on the reasons for the situation. The first – majority grouping viewpoint - situates the 'problem' outside the sector while the second viewpoint – minority grouping viewpoint locates it in the centre of the sector. It is important for leaders to be aware of both viewpoints. This could assist them to have a proper understanding of the situation, engage with it, seek creative solutions and work out how to deal with the issue sensitively. That the viewpoints emanate from the two different groupings leads one to consider whether race influences leadership, which is the subject that I will address now.

Does Race Influences Leadership?

To answer this question I turn to the experiences of minority groupings members, specifically Black academic manager-leaders in my study. The focus is on the roles that they see themselves playing in addition to the ones identified in Chapter Five. These include role models, motivators, change agents and cultural knowledge distributors.

Black academic manager-leaders as role models

The racial make-up of the student population in the South African higher education system can be represented as per Figure 7.

Figure 7: Racial make-up of Student Population



There is clearly a mismatch between the student population and the academic staff in the system (Figure 6). Four of the respondents viewed this as a problem, namely that students and especially Black students do not have appropriate role models. It is remarkable that there are two distinctive views in such a small group. R18VWW and R20VWW expressed the view that there was a lack of role models with R18VWW noting her 'concern' about this and that was where it stopped for them. On the other hand R19VBM and R28MBW point out ways in which manager-leaders from the minority groupings see themselves as role models:

leadership and role modelling go together. I find it hard to understand. I find it unacceptable that the majority students on our campus are Black and that they come here and the only Black people that they see on campus are the people who work in gardens and who are in lower paid positions and that there are limited academic staff members that they have close encounters with (R19VBM)

being a young coloured woman who is a lecturer and hopefully the positive encouragement that I can give to other young women to come into academia to other coloured people if you understand the context of Mountana, you'll know what I'm talking about (R28MBW)

Both these respondents see their roles as providing students, particularly Black students with role models. R19VBM in particular feels strongly about the lack of role models for students at HAIs. He is against a situation where students do not see the groupings to which they belong fairly represented in the institution where they are studying. He sees close interactions between students and academic personnel who in a sense have similar backgrounds to them as vitally important. My contention is that people like him have had experiences of systems and processes that failed them. They therefore would want to work to make sure that history does not repeat itself.

R28MBW explains what being a role model to students means to her. She is very specific in that she sees herself in the position of showing students

belonging to groupings similar to hers that there is space in the academy for them. Her view is similar to that of the interviewees in Subotzky's (2001) study who maintained that being role models to Black students meant providing them with accomplishable dreams. In another study, an interviewee, although not a manager-leader, is reported to have remarked, "we have Black kids here; who will be their role models if we all run to the private sector?" (Mabokela, 2000b: 105-6). In the long term one would like to see a situation where **all** manager-leaders would be role models for **all** students. Right now we have a situation where there is an imbalance in the sector and that needs attention to ensure that all students have role models and this can only happen if all students are in a position to identify with people who are similar to them. This also has an effect on the newer generation of Black academics. They do not have appropriate mentors and role models. Here I want to reflect on a recent conversation with one such academic. She related her experiences in a staff development programme for women which she assessed as a good programme but she felt that there was a vital element missing. She was one of two Black women belonging to the newer generation of academics in a 12-woman-strong group. Her feeling was that nobody in the group could effectively mentor her. There were specific issues, specifically of a racial nature that she felt mentors (senior White academic women) did not understand and that she was reluctant to discuss with them. If an academic feels this way, how must it be for students? In such cases there is a need for people who have an understanding of what higher education is like for people who come from particular backgrounds and for now they need to come from similar backgrounds. Although writing in a different context, Essed (2000) argues along similar lines when she argues for women of colour to be mentors and role models for students of colour because:

drawing from their own experiences as minorities in graduate school, most women of colour are likely to have an understanding of the situation of students of colour (p. 893).

In South Africa we had a situation where generations of young Black people were denied not only educational opportunities but this arguably limited their opportunities to access leadership positions.

Black academic manager-leaders as motivators.

Parallel with being role models to students, Black manager-leaders also saw themselves as motivators of students. This could take various forms. Here I reflect on two examples. Drawing on a background where she spent the first few years of her life as a student at an institution where nobody went out of their way to support her, R27VBW was determined to fulfil a specific role in the lives of the students attending her classes. There was a lot of determination in her voice when she informed me that:

when I advise my students I would always say you aim at the highest. If it is not accepted, you try lower down but you don't start at the bottom, you must be able to aim really high (R27VBW)

One can understand her determination when you consider what educational experiences she had when she first went to the institution where she did her first and later also doctoral degrees under the then permit system. Not only did she find it a 'lonely' experience but she had to deal with discriminatory behaviour as reflected here:

when I went to university there was just nobody, just a handful of people that came through. In class I was the only Black person. There was one woman who was doing [another major] and now and again we overlapped but it was really awful. Besides being a minority on the campus, in the class you had to deal with these racist lecturers and I always say it is so difficult to explain to people but there were times when you had absolutely racist lecturers and there was nobody you could complain to. ... You were completely harassed by these people. They could say what they want to, they could do what they want to (R27VBW)

Present day Black students seem to still share her experiences to a certain degree according to Mabokela (2000a). She reports that Black students in her study found the absence of Black academic staff disturbing. They also felt unsupported by White academics. Black academics and manager-leaders therefore have a role to play as motivators of these students. For me there are parallels between this specific role of theirs and that of Acker's (2005) 'transitional generation', which she defines as:

a group (of women) who themselves may have been marginalized in their careers and often have strong commitments to change now appearing in increasing numbers in important university roles (p. 115)

The 'transitional generation's' focus is more on careers whereas the focus of my respondents is on the student experience.

I now want to focus on the experience of one of the newer generation academics, somebody who only really knows HAIs, having studied at three of them over her 'education career'. Yet we can read in her comment too that her decision to be a motivator of students is deeply rooted in her own experiences at HAIs, which must have been alienating otherwise she would never have said:

it's a cultural thing almost as well. You have to learn how to function in a White environment and if I can convince by standing in front of a class if I can convince 2 or 3 other coloured students that you can do it (R28MBW)

R28MBW tried really hard to give the impression that she was content and all set for a brilliant academic career. This came through in her statement on her career aspirations:

I do want to be a professor, I do want to reach the top level in my field with my publications and research, other show positions it's not something that I'm striving for (R28MBW)

However, a critical analysis of the interview with her at different stages reveal that she is engaged in a struggle to be just an academic in a HEI as opposed to a Black academic. Some of that struggle comes through in the following remark:

showing to colleagues of mine, colleagues in other departments, in other faculties in the university that somebody of this somebody of this colour ... can attain certain things, they should learn that there is capacity in people and it should not be a matter what colour they are (R28MBW)

This quotation belies her façade of contentment. It tells of the tension in someone who has ambition to reach the highest level in her chosen field but who is aware that everything is not as smooth as she wants to make it appear.

These Black manager-leaders use their own experiences to motivate the present generation of students. The purpose is not only to spur them on for academic success but to do so in an environment which is still full of obstacles.

Black academic manager-leaders as change agents

Nearly every one of the Black respondents in one form or another related how they have to or have act(ed) as change agents, another confirmation that looking at the "small picture" (Fullan and Spieglerbaum, 1991) is helpful when investigating change. Their examples were so varied that I decided to highlight a few here from which I will draw out some of the most pertinent ways in which this specific role is executed:

I am determined to change the racial profile of the department. I think that in terms of equity issues it's complex still at the university, a lot of people don't understand that this is necessary. I believe it is necessary not because of flippant reasons or flimsy reasons (R19VBM)

you know they have a tradition and I come from a very different tradition. Everything that's done sort of conforms to a certain tradition or way of doing things and I tend not to, I don't want to conform. There are certain things that I'll conform to like moral issues or things like that but everything else I want to do differently (R31MBW)

I believe by giving a different perspective from the Mountana norm. I believe by doing that I'm sensitising people certainly to a different way of thinking which is not always the order of the day (R25MBM)

there is a need for Blacks in this institution, I think they also need people to come and show they know about many things (R32MBM)

One of my students was saying the other day in class, Miss it seems like there are many more Black folk if you look around you. I said to him maybe because we stand out because you are so used to an environment that is White that if you see this odd Black face, you see them and they multiply in your mind because you have in the back of your mind that we are taking up your jobs and because of that the one person becomes a bigger threat because in your mind you see although you can count only one, your mind counts many more (R33MBW)

What these examples highlight is that change agents are in effect teachers. First, they have to impress on others the necessity of changing the staff profiles. It cannot be easy for people, who have never been excluded from any environment, to understand the real impact of a situation where a major part of the population is absent from an integral part of society as is the case in the South African higher education sector. It cannot be denied that they have some understanding but that can only be partial understanding, a type

of “intellectual appreciation” (Merchant, 2005) rather than full understanding of the situation.

Second, R25MBM’s experiences draw attention to the fact that change agents teach about different perspectives, making clear to others that there are different ways of looking at issues and different approaches than their own to practices and that these could be considered. The role of change agents is to guide those who are in learning relationships with them towards the consideration of different ways of looking at issues or the application of different approaches to analyse situations. R32MBM’s comment of Blacks having to share their knowledge with the traditional Mountana community hints at this aspect of the change agent role.

A third element of this teaching role is illustrated by R33MBW’s experience. It is that of helping people come to terms with a changed reality, i.e. ‘interpreting’ changes to them. This aspect is demonstrated in R33MBW’s very composed explanation of what was happening to a student who has difficulty in understanding the dynamics of a changed environment. She thoughtfully reminds him that one needs to consider facts or statistics to make informed judgments about situations. I would like to add that it is not helpful to allow one’s impressions to lead one to make incorrect assumptions, which seemed to be the case with the student in the above situation.

In this section I have attempted to show that acting as change agents is an important role that Black manager-leaders are playing at this stage in South African higher education. It cannot be an easy role but it is a necessary one nonetheless. Although coming out of a study on mentoring Geber (2003), for me, draws together all the different elements of this role when she observes:

it may be that new Black academics in those situations (first Black member of staff in an exclusively White department) may have to call attention to their race and color (sic) as a way of emphasizing the ongoing transformation taking place in the department and to break the prevailing mindset of traditionally White departmental culture and to point up the emergence of a different set of values and opinions (pp. 119-20)

Lastly I want to point out that from my data it emerges that Black manager-leaders as change agents know the value of being realistic. They want to change the equation but they are aware that fundamental change is not something that happens overnight. They therefore verbalise their vision for change but with the necessary reservation as expressed by one of them, “there may well be certain areas where we may have to be more patient to train and to grow our own academics” (R19VBM).

Black academic manager-leaders as ‘cultural knowledge distributors’

I use the term ‘cultural knowledge distributor’ to describe a role that combines that of role model and change agent. Different examples of these are evident in the data indicating different tasks. Once again I will focus on people’s experiences and use them to highlight issues:

I do believe there is racism at this institution. I know that, I have certainly been a victim of racial practices. Maybe I should not call it racial practices but rather there is a different way of expressing it. One should not hang everything on the racial tag but I mean if people treat you different because you look different then it is racism. I believe if people talk to you differently because you are different then it is racism. If people value your contribution differently because you are different then it is racism etc, etc. and certainly I have experienced all those things as have many of my students (R25MBM)

we’re being showcased all the time, I mean you do see A [at the time newly appointed, highly visible woman at the institution] at all the functions so you do notice her and because we have [n] vice-rectors who are Black and they are in the structures you see them all the time and so you’re counting many more. I don’t know whether we are that many (R33MBW)

showing to colleagues of mine, colleagues in other departments, in other faculties in the university that somebody of this colour ... can attain certain things, they should learn that there is capacity in people and it should not be a matter what colour they are (R28MBW)

When cultural knowledge distributors contextualise their negative experiences to those around them as is the case with R25MBM above, they ‘inform’ (i.e. teach) others that unjust situations are not only theoretical issues but occur in their immediate environments. This could help not only the development of an understanding of the dimensions of such injustices but also aid them to recognise such instances of injustice. This activity resonates with the experience of one of the storytellers in Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1994) work. He relates how he perpetually has to gently guide his White colleagues

through processes of discovery and insight to an understanding of the 'Black' experience.

Cultural knowledge distributors play basically similar roles, i.e. 'inform' or teach in cases where environments are subjected to rapid change such as in cases where diversity is being introduced at a rate that makes it difficult for people to make sense of what is happening. Earlier I drew the reader's attention to R33MBW's 'interpretation' of a changed reality. In the extract highlighted here she is informing and explaining (teaching) through interpretation, what appears to be the heightened visibility of numerical minorities. She advises people that noticing more Black people in an environment which was previously almost exclusively populated by members of other groupings does not necessarily mean that there are many more Black people around. She explains that what is really happening is that the most prominent of these people (i.e. those who are in the top or near top levels of the institutional hierarchy) tend to be included in most structures in order to fulfil requirements of all sorts: representivity, equity and diversity. By virtue of them being 'on show' in this way, the impression might be created that there are more of the numerical minorities around than there in actual fact are. Puwar (2004) labels this phenomenon of high visibility, "amplification of numbers" (p. 72)

In R28MBW's declaration one can read her sense of obligation to set the record straight in an environment where representation of her grouping is low. That is why she felt compelled to point out that she wants to be seen as a 'record' of what people of her grouping can achieve. My further interpretation is that the cultural knowledge distributor in this case wants to make other people aware (i.e. teach them about) the presence of the 'other' but also the potential and/or contribution of the other and at the same time bring different perspectives into the environments into which they enter. This is much needed in institutions that lack diversity.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter investigated the influence of race on leadership. Focusing on the experiences of Black manager-leaders, it identified roles that they played in addition to those of Interactor, Enabler, Servant, Transformer and Accentuator that they share with members of the majority groupings in this study (Chapter Five). The conclusion is therefore that race expands the dimensions of leadership activities. I want to suggest that these roles are context specific. They have been identified in a changing South African higher education system and I therefore argue that in a situation of change leadership that is broader than the relational model identified earlier is needed. In this regard it resonates with Brown's (2005) observation in the context of America that "a variety of leadership models are needed to be successful" (p. 588). For him this was imperative given the country's social, political and racial context. In the South African context my study proposes some aspects for consideration in a 'broader' leadership model: role modelling to expose leadership relationship members to diverse models, motivators who through their own experiences are aware of the effects of low diversity environments, change agents to champion and interpret change and 'cultural knowledge distributors' to contextualise unjust situations, demystify myths with facts and figures and encourage the benefits of diversity.

Merchant (2005) developed the term "bridge people" for people who "had either experienced or witnessed deeply hurtful acts of discrimination and other forms of social injustice" and who then "persisted in their efforts to eradicate inequities". She further notes that they:

communicate effectively between and among groups, for the purposes of improving the lives of the people for whom they advocate (Merchant, 2005: 158).

The respondents in my study were not selected for having characteristics related to social justice issues as was the case in Merchant's (2005) study, but it is remarkable how many of the characteristics that she identifies among

the participants of her study I could detect among the respondents in my study who belong to the numerical minorities groupings. She lists the characteristics as:

- Strong orientation to social justice and equity issues instilled early in their lives
- Strong sense of purpose and belief in their ability to succeed
- Powerful experiences of marginalization shaping their determination to succeed and improve things for others
- Lifelong commitment to social justice and equity issues
- Awareness of the influence of the social/political movements of the 1950s and 1960s (could be replaced with 1970s and 1980s in my study) and the ways in which their involvement in these movements strengthened their commitment to social justice and equity issues (Merchant, 2005: 157-8)

These characteristics resonate strongly with some of the reasons Black manager-leaders advanced for the roles that they are playing in higher education in South Africa. They know the issues that need addressing inside out and are therefore the appropriate persons to enact these particular leadership roles. I do not claim that they are the only manager-leaders able to enact these leadership roles. It just happened that in my study I did not detect the same dimensions of leadership in the descriptions of the concept by members of the majority group. By making these dimensions visible in this particular context one could suggest that they be considered as important aspects of leadership practice in that context. Race was, however, not the only influence on the respondents' views of leadership; gender played a role too and it is to that that I now turn.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Gender and Leadership

Much of the general literature on leadership treats the concept as gender neutral (Chapter Two). The purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether gender influences leadership and, if it does, in what ways and with what implications for leadership. This investigation takes place in four parts based upon points brought forward by the data about gender and leadership. First, I examine who the respondents considered as role models and leading figures in their early lives. Second, I explore the leadership aspirations of the respondents to see whether they are gendered. Third, I look at the responses of the respondents to the question, 'do men and women lead differently?' This section reflects the respondents' answers to the question and their deliberations on what those differences could be in cases where they answered yes. Lastly, I look at issues that seem to matter to respondents in gendered ways, i.e. issues that seem to matter to either women or men exclusively. Using the construct of discourse (Chapter Three), different kinds of discourses are identified for men and women leaders, leaving one with the sense that discourses of leadership are shaped by men's experiences. What the chapter also reveals are 'invisibilities' associated with gender and leadership such as family life and stereotypes.

Role Models and Leading Figures in Early Lives

I looked at the respondents' early leadership experiences as part of gathering their biographical details (Appendix 2). This included an exploration of whom they viewed as role models and leading figures in their early lives. My motivation was to get an idea of the formative leadership influences in their lives, surmising that they would have learnt from these influences and that they might have modelled their leadership behaviours and practices on the examples so provided. The role models and leading figures seem to constitute two major categories, 'parents' and 'others' with the latter comprising educators and non-educators such as neighbours, community and political figures. Table 7 is a summary of the role models and leading

figures whom respondents acknowledged as having been important in their early lives. Totals reflected in the table do not correspond with the number of respondents because, in a number of cases, respondents acknowledged the importance of more than one leading figure.

Table 7: Role Models and Leading Figures in Respondents' Early Lives

Respondent	Parents			Father only	Mother only	Other Educators		'Non' Educators	
	Both	Dominant Father	Mother			Men	Women	Men	Women
R11MWW						X			
R12MWM						X			
R13MWW	X		X				X		
R14VWM						X	X		
R15MWW	X					X			
R16MWM	X	X							
R17VWW									
R18VWW							X		
R19VBM						X		X	X
R20VWW	X					X			
R21VWM								X	
R22VBM								X	
R23MWM								X	
R24MWM	X	X							
R25MBM	X	X							
R26MWW	X								
R27VBW				X		X	X		
R28MBW	X	X				X		X	
R29VBM						X		X	
R30VBM								X	
R31MBW									X
R32MBM						X		X	
R33MBW				X					
R34VBW				X			X	X	X
TOTAL	8	4	1	3		10	5	9	3

Eleven respondents said that their parents served as role models in their early lives; in seven cases (64%) the father was named as either the 'dominant' (in cases where both parents were acknowledged as having played leading roles) or 'only' leading figure. The mother was mentioned in only one case. Seven of the respondents in this reporting group were women. Fifteen educators were mentioned as leading figures and role models in the respondents' early lives; of these five (33%) were women. Four of the latter 'nominations' were by women. Twelve cases of 'non' educators as role models were acknowledged of whom only three (25%) were women. If one therefore considers the 'other' category, only eight of the twenty-seven (30%) attributions were attributed to women.

A picture of gendered representation of early life role models and leading figures emerges from the above. It seems that men were the leading figures in the early lives of almost all the respondents. Table 7 shows that only 9 of the 43 attributions (21%) were acknowledgements of women, seven of whom were by women. These findings are consistent with research that says that in general leaders tend to be men (Polnick et al., 2004). If people have been exposed to this 'truth' during their formative years, it must be difficult to break the mould. Exposure predominantly to men leaders could lead to an association between leadership and men (Sinclair, 1998). The findings also seem to be in line with findings suggesting that women who lead are the ones who viewed their fathers as leading figures in their early lives (Hennig and Jardim 1977 quoted in Billing and Alvesson 2000; Sinclair 1998).

My study suggests that where women influenced the early lives of women respondents the results seem to be remarkable. My respondents described women leaders in different ways from how they described leaders in general. Here are two examples of descriptions of women:

I went to this conference ... where I came across dynamic women, women who you could really look up to and there was a woman [S] I had read about this woman for ages she was ... this person who would do things get on a truck and go that kind of woman and ... it was so good to meet her ... woman who would not stop at anything and do it, she was just so wonderful ... I like what I saw in her (R27VBW)

she was a woman who despite because I mean she must have got her PhD in the years where it was very difficult for women to get there so it was an inspiration for me to see her and to see her quite so powerful and so strong in a faculty which had mostly men (R18VWW)

This is in contrast to how men leaders and role models were described:

I admired X because he was A-rated researcher. I admired him for his research strengths .. was (more) authoritative less democratic if I could use the word that he was very tough and he told you like it is and he did not care whether your feelings were hurt or whether you were upset you do this because this is what is required to be done and you could discuss you could question him and he wouldn't mind that but at end of the day you do it (R21VWM)

a very strong leader himself and he was one of those charismatic people who could talk very well, very eloquent and he would make these wonderful speeches wherever he went ... also I was never afraid of the authority that he kind of emanated; most other people were terrified of him I couldn't believe, in the department, I eventually did my PhD with him in the department people would be absolutely scared to go and ask him about things even now (R27VBW)

The men were admired for very specific skills, such as research, in the first example. In addition they were 'tough' and 'authoritative' while their relationships with others are described as lacking empathy. The descriptions of women had a different quality to them, an acknowledgement that they were instrumental in the direction which the careers of women respondents took. This position was taken further in the only two instances recorded in the study of role models/leading figures being in the women-only category. Both were in the 'other' category, an educator and a 'non' educator. In both cases the respondents remarked about inspirational women performing against the expected and accepted norm. This is how the two respondents related the influences in their early lives:

you know my PhD supervisor was a huge mentor and she was a very strong woman and I think that's why I chose to go in the direction and research direction I did ...
(R18VWW)

when we were growing up women were just supposed to end up at a certain grade and then they got married but then you saw women who have broken that barrier and were independent and who are successful and doing things for themselves and you aspire to be that kind of person (R31MBW)

A certain measure of admiration for these women is discernible and is consistent with the admiration for female leaders reported in other research (Young and McLeod, 2001). The respondents in Young and McLeod's (2001) study reported that women really impacted on the shape of their careers. Young and McLeod thus found that the impact of women as role models for other women was "particularly powerful" and illustrated their assertion with a quotation from one of their respondents who remarked that, "watching women with ideas be successful is powerful" (p. 483). Their views are in line with Sinclair (1998)'s observation on the importance of female role models, who, she says, "show it can be done, that women can have an influence on the world" (p. 85). The message here seems to be that where women lead other women might follow, which is also for example why Polnick et al. (2004) did their study on "groundbreakers", women who they define as being recognised:

as being the first to achieve or accomplish a particular honor, position, or skill in their various roles"
(<http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/winter2004/Polnick.html>)

In my study attention was drawn to the importance of the need for women leaders to act as role models for other women. One of the respondents reflected on this as follows:

in [department] we are pretty much even [gender balance of staff] interestingly enough in the [specific] unit we have been mostly female for a very long time I don't know the extent to which that is because of role models because of the three of us who essentially started the unit, two are women (R17VWW).

R17VWW speculates here on whether or not an environment in which women are leading is conducive to inspire and attract other women to enter. Although R17VWW considers the possibility that women leaders acting as role models may be responsible for the number of women in her research unit, she almost immediately dismisses the thought. Here we have the Natural Scientist who needs to have 'proper' statistics before she believes something. One can, however not discard the fact that she knew that there must be an explanation for the numbers (of women in the unit) because at another point she remarks about the low number of women in the Science Faculty of which she is a member. In this instance, however, she goes on to consider the thought that the explanation might lie in the nature of the discipline:

because it is practical and because it allows being out and about – being out there and also actually being able to feed results immediately into management and there is also the business of nurturing the earth which I think does matter (R17VWW).

At least one of the men respondents subscribed to the view of women leaders needing to be role models for other women. He was specifically referring to role models for women students. The expectation for women leaders to act as role models for (other) (younger) women is not without foundation in the literature (White, 2003). White draws on a number of studies predominantly done in the private sector to support her finding that the masculine nature of institutions (Madden, 2002) results in women leaders and managers leaving institutions to set up on their own. One result of this exodus is the loss of "a generation of potential mentors and role models for young women in the core organization" (Spearritt, 1999: 45 quoted in White 2003, p51). Nobody comments on what happens to young men. Similarly nobody in my study mentioned that there was any expectation for men to be

role models because of their gender. This, I believe, indicates that there is an implicit assumption that they will automatically do that by virtue of their position.

The above is one of the many assumptions in the traditional view of leadership. I think that if one examines the discourse of “traditional leadership” (Chapter Two) in a poststructuralist way, one would discover an assumption that ‘he’ (acknowledging the majority of leaders) will do everything – leading, guiding, role modelling. A salient feature of post-structuralism is to pose questions about the taken-for-granted and it is in that spirit that I think one must critically unpack what the assumptions about the traditional leader are: do we understand what ‘he’ does? Further, what does it mean when there is no discussion about the mentoring and sponsoring of (young) men? That because of the gendered nature of organisations where the leader ultimately is presumed to be a man, it is a given that the so gendered body will automatically receive the necessary attention and support for career advancement? In this context it is taken for granted that the (man) leader will provide the attention/support, an assumed but not examined role.

From my study it also appears that absent women role models matter. One of the women respondents commented on the absence of women leaders in her life:

when we were growing up they [women leaders] were scarce, I mean they were really scarce, which South African woman besides Helen Suzman can you think of and Winnie Mandela but it was more political and it was a different kind of thing. But which woman in terms of education, can you think of anybody? (R27VBW)

R27VBW's remarks resonate with Young and McLeod's (2001) findings in a study looking at administrators in the school context where the majority of their respondents noted very few women in leadership positions at the start of their teaching careers. I would argue that women leading interrupts the discourse that says that men are the leaders. Women could introduce different leadership; this might happen in the form of a broader view of leadership.

Most of the respondents talked about men as leading figures and role models in their early lives indicating a gendered pattern consistent with research that most leaders tend to be men (Polnick et al., 2004). Women leading figures and role models seem to have special impact on the lives of women in their formative years. This has implications for leadership in the sense that it calls for the consideration of exposing people in their early lives to more diverse forms of leadership. Attention was also drawn to the expectation for women to act as role models for other women while no such emphasis is placed on men. My suggestion is that this situation needs to be examined for its leadership implications; whose interests and what purposes are served by avoidance of the topic? Giving some (men) leaders the opportunity to just get on with the work while other (women) leaders are automatically given additional responsibilities? It is necessary to interrogate this situation to make visible the gendered nature of leadership expectations. By focusing attention on this situation much can be done to promote the idea of everyone being able to be leaders regardless of who they are.

Leadership Aspirations

I asked the respondents whether they aspired to positions that would allow them greater leadership opportunities in higher education. This question was asked in the context of a hierarchical structure (Madden, 2002) where positions higher up in organisations generally have more influence. I was therefore effectively asking whether respondents were considering positions which would give them theoretically more opportunities to exercise influence in the sector. A resounding 'no' came from fifteen respondents in response to my question. However, eight of the respondents said 'yes' as reflected in Table 8.

Table 8: Respondents' leadership aspirations

Respondent	Yes	No
R11MWW		X
R12MWM		X
R13MWW		X
R14VWM		X
R15MWW	X	
R16MWM		X
R17VWW	X	
R18VWW		X
R19VBM	X	
R20VWW		X
R21VWM		X
R22VBM		X
R23MWM		X
R24MWM		X
R25MBM	X	
R26MWW		X
R27VBW		X
R28MBW		X
R29VBM	X	
R30VBM	X	
R31MBW	X	
R32MBM	X	
R33MBW		X
Total	8	15

Table 8 shows that men and women were saying 'no' in roughly the same proportions, fifty per cent in this reporting group. The respondents' position ties in with their views of reluctance among academics to move into management positions (Chapter Five). A first reason for respondents' reluctance to enter a different position seemed to be their concern that they would have to move from 'pure' academia. The following reflection is illustrative of this:

next step would be the dean of the faculty or the VC of the university. In my case I try and find the balance between being a leader and being an administrator. I love to give classes, I get a lot of inspiration from that. ... information that students don't encounter at school a whole new world opening up for them.. that's wonderful... creative work.. the higher you go up in the hierarchy ... becomes institution oriented (R16MWM)

As was the case with other respondents, R16MWM articulated the fear that moving into a position with a different leadership capacity would make it difficult for him to continue with academic work, which is clearly a matter of importance and motivation for him. Someone who shared these sentiments was R12MWM. He had a definite goal and therefore already had a plan of

action ready for when his term in his present office ended, back to curriculum development where his 'real' interest lies. He articulated his thinking as follows:

what I would like to do is to go back into the [specific unit of department] and do work there what I really want to do and what I have started to do is that I will take over as soon as I'm no longer HOD I will take over the responsibility for the undergraduate curriculum (R12MWM)

A second reason respondents advanced for not wanting to move into positions with different leadership capacity was that they viewed these positions as purely 'administrative' and this characteristic seemed to put them off. The importance of their identity as scholars has been pointed out in Chapter Five. R16MWM's argument above emphasized this dimension. In his view, being in a 'purely' administrative position leaves no space for creativity (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994), something a 'purely' academic position would afford its occupant.

The respondents who said that they were not interested in positions with different leadership capacities were not indicating that they did not have leadership aspirations. Rather, they were saying that they wanted to lead in a position or a way which they considered important and valuable. That position, according to them, was not something higher up the administrative hierarchy. They all proclaimed their preference for remaining as 'academics.' The way in which they expressed leadership aspiration seems to concur with Young and McLeod's (2001) understanding of aspiration where position is only one aspect of the concept.

Within a poststructuralist framework (Chapter Three) it is possible to recognise within these expressed ambitions and preferences a discourse which says that it is possible to be either an academic or manager-leader, implying that manager-leaders could exercise choice in this regard. However, the respondents' experiences as depicted in Chapter Five do not reflect such options. This is one of the many issues which this thesis cannot take up but which it acknowledges and recommends for further investigation.

Listening critically to the respondents I think that they subscribe to a particular discourse of what it means to be an academic. Within this discourse an academic seems to be someone who can dedicate their time exclusively to the academic project. In the views of these respondents the academic project seems to mean teaching, learning and research. For them there is a definite divide between the 'academic' and 'administrative' components of what they are doing because all of them are, at the moment, involved in both and most of them are reporting enormous tension in trying to balance the two. The respondents' preference is towards the academic component, i.e. they prefer to make a difference in their disciplines, making the academic project the area that matters in higher education.

What this discussion illuminates is a need for the investigation of discourses of an 'academic' and 'academic career'. Questions such as what does an 'academic' do and, quite importantly, what does leading as an academic mean, need addressing. With these respondents, having been in the academy for quite some time (their average experience in the academy is 16.71 years), it might be that they are captured by the discourses (Chapter Two) of these concepts which they encountered when they started their careers. In the previous chapter we encountered the views of some of them on how long it takes to develop an academic career and that turned out to be one of the issues that slowed down change in staffing profiles. What is most probably needed is the development of different discourses of an academic and academic leader, a case of developing a discourse for the present context especially of a transforming South Africa and its higher education system. I think it is something that leaders need to engage with and is supported by my suggestion in the previous chapter that thought should be given to the consideration of more flexible ways of developing academic careers.

At this point I want to shift the focus to the smaller group of respondents in the 'yes' category. As Table 7 indicates eight respondents comprise this reporting group, three of whom are women. Examining their comments and responses only one respondent, R31MBW, seems to be definite that she

sees herself in a specific position with different leadership capacity namely as a head of department. R31MBW's response could be read in the context of her being part of the newer academic generation. She was still busy establishing herself in both her field and the institution. Another member of this group, R32MBM, also said he saw himself in a head of department position in the future, but has done so, I think, more as an 'appropriate' answer to a question asked than as conviction of real aspiration to move into such a position.

The remaining responses in this reporting group can be divided into two strands, both interesting in their own right. On the one hand, R17VWW explained that she would consider a position with a different leadership capacity if an 'administrative' position would increase her chances for 'leading'. Her stance was that she enjoyed 'leading' and, in her view, her present position did not present her with enough opportunities to do so. I have to add that she was able to make this comparison because she was in the exceptional position that she was the only respondent who had served as dean of a faculty, albeit in an acting position. R15MWW, having come from industry, was in the same category as R17VWW because she, too, was in search of opportunities to optimally exercise leadership. On the other hand, R25MBM, R29VBM and R30VBM were not specifically keen to be in positions with different leadership capacities but, I would argue, were compelled by their convictions to consider the possibility:

the types of things which I think has to happen in HE in SA, I think can only take place if people play a proactive role and if I am drawn into activities where I feel I can play a proactive role in making a difference and it naturally draws me into an administrative or a different leadership role I am going to accept (R25MBM)

I am playing a role now and I am definitely going to play it wider... contribute towards you know that critical mass [which he said earlier on in the interview was necessary for numerical minorities to make a difference in SAHE] (R29VBM)

I would like to see myself in a high profiled institutional context where we are visible but I would also like to still operate in those spaces where leadership isn't visible (R30VBM)

What comes through in these quotations is ambivalence in these respondents. They did not necessarily want to be in 'show positions' as

R28MBW referred to them but true to their convictions as 'Transformers' (Chapter Five) they felt that it was their 'duty' to help transformation along. They implied that, if that would ask of them to move into positions with different leadership capacities, they would do so. The fact that the 'yes' category is comprised exclusively of Black and women manager-leaders raises questions about whether groups that are under-represented in leadership are more prone to using leadership to address broad issues.

This section shows similar patterns of leadership aspiration among men and women, which is not totally in line with gender and leadership literature. The majority said that they were not interested in positions with different leadership capacity, interpreted by them to mean moving to a different (higher) level in the management hierarchy. My reading of their 'disinterest' in administration/management is that they see a dichotomy between teaching/learning and research on the one hand and administration/management on the other. This issue is also featured in Chapter Five leading me to make an argument for the examination of the meaning of an 'academic' and an academic career. Further, what meaning does this have for leadership? Does it mean that academics can only lead or are only willing to lead in their disciplines and not the academic project? I am not going to interrogate any of these questions further at this point but raise them in Chapter Nine as issues for further research. I will now turn to examine the only explicit 'gender' question which I asked during the interviews.

Do Men and Women Lead Differently?

When I asked respondents, 'do men and women lead differently?' the responses could be divided into 'yes' and 'no' but there was also a significant proportion of respondents who indicated that it was difficult for them to answer the question. Table 9 reflects these responses, which I will discuss before turning to the reasons respondents in the 'yes' category advanced for their perceived differences in leadership by women and men.

Table 9: Responses to question on whether men and women lead differently

Respondent	Yes	No	Difficult to take position
R11MWW			X
R12MWM			X
R13MWW	X		
R14VWM			X
R15MWW	X		
R16MWM			X
R17VWW			
R18VWW			
R19VBM			
R20VWW	X		
R21VWM		X	
R22VBM			X
R23MWM			X
R24MWM			
R25MBM	X		
R26MWW			X
R27VBW	X		
R28MBW			X
R29VBM	X		
R30VBM	X		
R31MBW	X		
R32MBM		X	
R33MBW	X		
R34VBW			
Total	9	2	8

Although the number of respondents who responded 'yes' to the question is considerably higher (nine) than those who said 'no' (two), others did not do so convincingly and they are recorded in the 'difficult to take position' column. If one considers them with the respondents who said 'no' numbers between the two groups do not differ much. More women than men are in the 'yes' category while more men than women are in the no/not sure category. The latter group advanced a variety of reasons for finding the question challenging. Here is a selection:

Different individuals make different contributions and would have different leadership styles. I think of it more on the basis of who the individual person is (R22VBM)

I think the fact that there are certain personality differences amongst men and women. Whether it actually manifest in concrete leadership differences ... I don't think I can take a firm position on that (R11MWW)

I don't know... I mean we all know that the two genders have different attitudes, different roles that they play, different ways of doing things but that could be very

individual. I wouldn't make a blank statement that women are doing it different from men (R23MWM)

there is a socialised basis for it which is gender but also there is a different culture between men and women. Although at one level they do lead differently at another level they do it the same. I think if you have had the experience of having worked under (sic) man leader and a woman leader, they could be just as democratic or just as autocratic as the other (R28MBW)

It emerges from the quotations that the respondents' reasons for not being able to take definite positions on whether men and women lead differently fluctuated from views that leadership is totally dependent on who the individual is to not being sure that different personalities manifest into concrete leadership differences to personal experience which does not bear out a difference.

This is the one area in the study where there was a strong emphasis on the fact that the respondents were speaking from very individual points of view. What they had to say about leaders and leadership was based solely on their individual experiences. They had come across different types of leaders at different points in their lives and they decided on the basis of that, that it was not an easy task to talk about 'a' leader or leadership as if there was a universal truth attached to either. They were keen to point out that they have experienced leaders and leadership very differently. One can conclude from their responses that these respondents thought that there was no real difference in the way that men and women lead and that therefore anybody can lead. They seem to imply that it was up to the individual how they do it and that individual, in their view is not necessarily gendered, a view which is not out of sync with the dominant one that leadership is gender neutral (Chapter Two). No wonder one of them said, "there is a job to be done, they do it" (R23MWM). Here again we have the 'universal' person without any identity markers, encountered in Chapter Five.

When examining closely the viewpoints of the respondents who were in the 'no/not sure' category, I found that they had one element in common, namely a reluctance to generalise. I found this interesting because some of the respondents in these groupings drew attention to the existence of what I will term a 'common body of knowledge' about gendered leadership. I use the

bracket around the phrase to indicate that this 'body of knowledge' has not really been tested and reflects, in my opinion, gender stereotyping, the topic which is the focus of the next section.

Stereotyping

References to this 'common body of knowledge' abounded amongst the respondents and included comments such as that men and women have '*different attitudes*', '*played different roles*' and displayed '*different ways of doing*'. These are all familiar stereotypes as are the viewpoints that men are '*better*' and '*stronger*' leaders or that women are '*emotional*' but also '*facilitative*' while men are more '*authoritative*'. This was a remarkable range of stereotypes coming from respondents who in most cases have said that it was difficult for them to describe differences in leadership between men and women. Collectively the respondents came up with various differences in leadership between men and women reflected here in Table 10.

Table 10: Respondents' views on leadership by men and women

Respondent	Views on Women	Views on Men
R13MWW	Emotional	
R14VWM	More facilitative style	More autocratic style
R15MWW	Concerned about the well-being of people, people skilled leadership More retiring	Stronger leader
R18VWW	Not forceful Operate in flat structures Get people working together – might be goal driven/ want things done in particular way (people working together / networking)	Expect to be listened to [socialisation] State points more forceful State points emphatically (emphatic statements = knowing a lot) Do not do networking
R20VWW		Clear on what they want, will allow and what not Get decisions made quickly Do not multi task
R24MWM	More sensitive More aware of things that can go wrong More aware of how to handle people differently Not prepared to take firm stand Worried that they will hurt feelings Good communicators – listen, read between the lines	
R25MBM	Too sensitive Good women leaders –tougher More uncompromising	Want to get things done immediately Do not have rapport – not taking people's feelings into account Result: stressful environment – lack of understanding Emotional detachment Arrogant (think they are gods)
R26MWW	Have to be a lot better, work harder to achieve – have to be two equal people Have to prove themselves	
R27VBW	More nurturing, caring People take chances – testing and trying Can be taken advantage of	
R33MBW	More collaborative Consult people more More democratic approach	Deal differently with people – people react differently to them Make decisions first and then take it to the rest

More comments from women than men are reflected in Table 10, consistent with the higher number of women than men who thought that there were differences in the ways in which the two groups exercise leadership. In the study women were overall more prepared to venture into discussing differences in leadership between women and men. This could possibly be because they perceive their experiences more in a gendered way (as explained in the section on gender specific issues in talking about leadership that follows).

In broad terms then, according to Table 9 respondents seem to believe that men are strong, forceful, goal oriented, decisive, have low emotional intelligence and are sometimes even arrogant in leadership positions. On the other hand they believe that women are more people-centred and have emotional intelligence. These stereotypes are remarkably similar to those tabulated by Marshall (1984) as the management characteristics which men and women were respectively expected to display. The stereotypes in Table 9 represent two very different images of leadership, namely as that of someone with a 'head' versus someone with a 'heart.'

My interpretation is that the image painted of women's leadership in Table 9 seems to have more 'relational' characteristics whereas the image of men's leadership seems to be much more of a 'traditional' type (Chapter Two). These differences did not come to the fore when they portrayed themselves as leaders. In Chapter Five they portrayed themselves in very similar ways and if I must categorise the self-portrayals, I would place them in the 'heart' category. The respondents identified some 'drawbacks' in both images. The 'problems' they have with women in leadership include being '**too sensitive**', '**worried about hurting feelings**', '**not prepared to take a firm stand**' and '**easily being taken advantage of**'. These seem all to be in the realm of emotions which is in sharp contrast with the problems the respondents seemed to have with men in leadership, namely '**emotional detachment**', i.e. not concerned with people but focused on goals.

Gender stereotyping is not without foundation in research on gender and leadership (Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Bagilhole, 2002; Townsley, 2003). Billing and Alvesson (2000) for example inform us of 'stereotypical ideas' in the literature. Bagilhole (2002) on the other hand reflects on the account of a senior male academic who espoused gendered stereotyped descriptions of women staff. This leads Bagilhole to question the wisdom of reliance on senior men academics to bring about change for women in higher education. I would argue if manager-leaders have such distinct views of leadership by men and women and if more men than women are still leading would leadership as exercised by men not be regarded as **the** model of leadership? It is important that leaders are aware of this possibility and consider the impact that such views could have on practice. It is important to add that in spite of all the stereotypes listed here a number of respondents showed awareness of individual differences and thereby indicated that they were not saying that **all** men and **all** women leaders are the same. Their perceptions of individual differences were based on their individual experiences.

No definitive conclusions could be reached on whether men and women lead differently solely on the basis of respondents' viewpoints. Where differences were discussed, they were characterised by gender stereotyping. This was because the respondents' viewpoints were heavily influenced by individual experiences. It can, however, be concluded that in general women were more willing to enter into discussions about this than men. The women also more readily mentioned issues that pertain exclusively to them as a group whereas the men hardly mentioned any.

Gender Specific Issues in Talking About Leadership

Ten (83%) of the women interviewed brought up one or more issues that appear to have had an effect only on women. They talked about family life, mentioned that their careers were bound to those of their partners, acknowledged their partners' contributions to their careers and related gendered experiences in the workplace. None of these issues featured in the interviews with men. I found it difficult to identify issues that matter to men as a group as will become clear in the discussion which follows.

Family life

Five of the women respondents mentioned family life, something that none of the men brought up. I define family life as having to do with family responsibilities and the wider realm of private lives. The fact that women talked so freely about family life while men did not is important when considered that this happened in a context where I did not ask any questions about it (Appendix 2). The five respondents introduced private life issues in the realm of their early leadership activity either as postgraduate students or at the start of their careers. Three of them shared how at the start of their careers they could not participate in leadership activities. One respondent said this was because she was pregnant and subsequently had a child to look after while the other two found themselves in situations where they had to combine family life with completing degrees. They reported that being in full-time occupations and managing family responsibilities left them with virtually no time for anything else including preparation for and taking up leadership opportunities.

These examples point to the division of labour in households along gendered lines; 'family work' still tends to be 'women's work'. Deem (2003) points out that the career narratives of participants in her research show the division of household labour as one area where gender factors emerge. Comments from two of the men respondents also serve as a reminder that 'family work' and 'women's work' is still widely equated. Their comments were centred on how people make choices about childcare, which in reality were views about the interrelatedness of women and children. The first respondent commented on how challenging the balance between leadership and childcare is for women:

if you are a single mother with two or three kids who are all of school going age and you are a very strong leader you are normally torn between wanting to make a contribution to other endeavours and looking after the needs of your kids and when you are faced with that choice you are going to choose your kids, well I'll say most people will choose their kids (R25MBM)

The second respondent, theorising about women's choices based on his own experience, commented:

how individuals decide to balance the demands on their time I don't think that's gender related at all. It just so happen that in my particular case my wife has got more degrees than I have. If she decided that she would be the breadwinner she could have been a breadwinner as good as I am but it just happened that she preferred to put her work on hold and say, no I'm happy to stay at home and be a mother and enjoy that role and give it the time that it deserves (R21VWM)

What transpires from this input is that a specific discourse of parenting operates here, namely that mothers are the ones who are responsible for childcare, a practice that seems to be universal (Probert, 2005). In R25MBM's case we recognise the 'story' of children coming first for women/mothers as being natural and when it comes to making a choice between work (in this case specifically leadership) and children, there is no doubt about the decision, in favour of the children. R21VWM's discussion about the 'choice' his wife made, too, shows bias towards the 'natural' role of parent who is responsible for caring. This parent is the same as Smithson and Stokoe's (2005: 156) "generic female parent". R21VWM's statement contains a rider, namely that children do not stay young forever, thereby implying that his wife's sacrifice was only temporary. However, one can ask what the full implications are of this 'temporary' retreat from the academy. What does this mean for leadership? If a specific discourse of an academic career operates within the system as seems to be the case here, would it not mean that women are not around for long enough to develop and gain the 'currency' necessary to be considered for leadership? Would this not result in fewer of them being able to take up leadership positions? For me this feeds into Bailyn's (2003) assertion of the "ideal academic" whom she defines as "someone who gives total priority to work and has no outside interests and responsibilities" (p.139). I want to substitute academic with leader here and argue that if we look at the discussion in this section, it seems as if men respondents fit this description. They did not indicate that they have to manage family responsibilities or that they were parents.

According to respondents who commented on it, family life is full. In general most respondents also seemed to be in agreement that the head of department position takes its toll; in fact they describe it as 'greedy' (Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000). One has to wonder about the full impact of the

combination of these two 'heavy' roles on women in these positions. R18VWW hints about this:

.... there are conflicting factors. They are mothers, they are a wife and taking on a leadership role demands a lot more of them. It can be very draining and they do not [always] recognise this (R18VWW)

I want to argue that family life is not only important but matters greatly to women. I found that women respondents measured important happenings in their careers in terms of significant events in their lives. I have already mentioned examples above of respondents finding themselves less able to fully participate in leadership activities in their early careers because of either being pregnant or having young children, significant events in their lives. A further example which brings this aspect in a unique way to the fore was the way R27VBW commented about her leadership role in a specific body. She described the length of her membership in the body as:

it has been seven years – since my baby was 4 months old or even 3 months because I was still at home with him on maternity leave and they asked me if I would join and be on the committee so since then I have been involved in various capacities (R27VBW).

R27VBW remembered her membership of an important committee in terms of a significant life event, namely the early days of her child because it coincided with her maternity leave when having him. Although I did not encounter any research that draws specific attention to this phenomenon, I noticed that women respondents in other studies marked responses with references to life experiences. In the following example the researcher discusses the gendered pattern of Ph.D. completions in a study on academic employment. She quotes two women who both make references to specific life events:

“as I gave birth to my fourth child I started my Ph.D.”

“enrolled (for a Ph.D.) six weeks before I had my first child” (Probert, 2005: 65).

I first encountered the phenomenon of women measuring important happenings in their careers with parallel significant happenings in their personal lives at the start of a women-in-higher education leadership

programme in which I participated in 2002. As part of preparation for an exchange visit to the US, the participants attended a one-day workshop aimed at getting to know each other, which included the customary introductions. One of the only two women with PhDs in the group reflected on her educational career and what struck me was her punctuation of each stage with "and then I had a child". At the time this was greeted with laughter but thinking about it now I can see how much of that forms part of women leaders' repertoire. None of the men respondents made any reference to their children or something similar in reflecting on their leadership, giving the impression of unencumbered individuals, 'free' to invest all their time and energy to the task at hand. This attitude results in family life being ignored in leadership because if the majority of leaders do not acknowledge involvement in family life, why should it be considered at all? In this way family life becomes an invisible entity in leadership

'Connected' careers and partners as career support

Women respondents acknowledged the involvement of their partners in their careers in two ways. First, they mentioned that their careers were in some way linked to those of their partners. This again was not something that was mentioned in interviews with men. Two respondents, R26MWW and R15MWW, made specific references to how their partners' geographical bases impacted on their choices in terms of where they could base their own careers:

I was the top [discipline] student when I did [discipline] and got a scholarship to do [further degree] which I turned down because I was getting married and moving to [city] so I was not prepared to spend another year at REU1 (R26VWW)

women are not chained to a geographical area but their husbands dictate where they live their lives more or less so I'm bound to [city] and environment. I could not go to California or wherever (R15MWW)

The cases show that women often find themselves in situations where they are unable to consider relocation to other areas for purposes of career advancement through which they might increase their chances of becoming leaders. This is because of the close link between their careers and those of their partners. Yet when men move for career reasons in most cases their

partners will relocate too as was the case with R26MWW. This phenomenon was also pointed out by others (Grogan, 1999; Young and McLeod, 2001) although Grogan (1999) conceded that the situation is slowly changing in the context which she studied, namely North America. The implications of such 'skewed' gendered investment in women's careers must be considerable.

Second, three of the women but none of the men respondents mentioned that support from partners was essential for them to do and continue doing what they are doing at present. R15MWW was one of the former. She pointed out that long hours were part of her practice. She was adamant that she enjoyed the long hours but insistent that she would not have been able to do them if she did not have the full support of her partner. This is how she described her situation:

work is my life, I get a kick from work. I love working 16 hours a day, weekends included. That's the way you work if you are [specific specialist], that's how I work and luckily I have a husband who works the same hours (R15MWW)

In the case of another respondent, R27VBW, I witnessed her partner's support and their partnership in action. At the time of conducting the interview, she had an important meeting scheduled for immediately afterwards. Penalties were involved if she missed it or turned up late. We had an extensive interview and went well over the allocated time creating a delicate situation for her. She was supposed to pick up something from home to take to the meeting. If she went home at that stage she would have run the risk of being late for the meeting. She called her partner who was at home at the time to ask him to meet her at the venue with the object. We then concluded the interview and she left for the appointment. This respondent emailed me afterwards to emphasise that she has a very supportive partner and that his support was crucial in her career.

What these examples suggest is that support in careers is important, something that has been pointed out in other research (Grogan, 1999). Grogan, looking at educational administration, points out that the field's discourse "almost assumes a support system for top-level administrators... both emotional and practical assistance to be able to fulfil the demands of

work” (p. 527). Yet leadership is not being portrayed as influenced by family life. There is not the sense of the whole person, only “the single agent without family or responsibilities” (Sinclair, 2004: 16). One could argue that this is because a male model dominates leadership. This model would assume that men have support at work (usually personal assistants and others) and at home (albeit unacknowledged as pointed out here). What this study shows is that generally men do not talk about their support systems rendering them invisible and therefore of no importance in leadership.

Gendered experiences in the workplace

I will now focus on the work place experiences of two women respondents to try and show how they operate in masculine environments, i.e. where male norms and values are prevalent. In the first account R13MWW relates her experiences in committees. She said:

we've got a lot of committees. Often I feel like in these committees there always have to be a woman. I sit in the law faculty I sit in economics and sometimes I feel they are using me just because I am a woman. In one of these committees I almost had the feeling these men didn't even want to hear what I wanted to say but I had to be there because I am a woman (R13MWW)

I think sometimes you are there because you are a woman and you can play a role. You may feel well I'm the only one here so I better speak up. Like someone the other day said women sometimes even say things that are not so relevant because they almost feel I want to say something, otherwise these men are just going to run with the show (R13MWW)

What comes through in her story is that all committees are now being structured to comply with equity requirements, an effect of new higher education policies. This is a relatively new phenomenon at Mountana. What tends to happen is that the women who are on these committees end up feeling that they are there just to fulfil equity requirements. R13MWW describes feeling ‘used’ because of her gender. Her remark about women feeling compelled to contribute just about anything in such committees in order to make their presence felt, is an indication of women’s conviction that their presence in such environments must make a difference. From her remarks one can conclude that the men, after ensuring that they have a woman on the committee, carry on as usual, i.e. to all intents and purposes

ignore the woman (Moultrie and de la Rey, 2003) and it is such practices that women must interrupt.

The second account is R15MWW's, a head of department who joined academia fairly recently (she had 3 years service at time of interview) after a lengthy career in industry where she reached the top. Her account is of ill-treatment in her department by her (mostly) men colleagues who she described as "old men in grey suits". Among the things she 'accused' them of was that they did not respect her as head of department, they viewed her as an outsider, someone who obtained her professorship without the requisite 'hard work' that supposedly characterises theirs. Here, again, the discourse of a particular academic career as identified earlier in this chapter, is discernible. The colleagues subscribe to a discourse of long preparation (coming through the appropriate ranks) for an academic career to be acceptable and credible. By making use of this rigid discourse, R15MWW's colleagues were making her feel as if she could not contribute anything, a case of undermining her confidence. She was also adamant that there was still institutional discrimination against women, something that 'shocked' her upon her arrival at the institution:

when I came here I was shocked because in that sense we were still in the middle ages. I thought I was going to be at a place of innovative thinking, new thinking but women's places here ... you have to be seen and not heard and so on, you know a lot of institutional discrimination (R15MWW)

The experiences of these respondents give a glimpse of how women leaders might experience their workplace in these universities. Their descriptions of their experiences depict their workplace as quite masculine in nature (Moultrie and de la Rey, 2003). We also have a sense of women leaders as outsiders, only allowed to the centre by invitation (for example through committee membership). By looking critically at their experiences we can also recognise a discourse of visibility, i.e. who is allowed to be visible and to have a voice. This has specific implications for women as leaders – if they have to operate on terms stipulated by others, if they can be seen but not heard, when, what and where can they speak and act?

The experiences of R13MWW and R15MWW resonate with research that suggests that leaders experience their institutions rather than their roles in gender specific ways (Wajcman, 1998). As I have pointed out in Chapter Five respondents portrayed their leadership in rather similar ways but they experienced their workplaces more differently as explicated in this section.

Men and the 'Gender' Question

One cannot draw conclusions on the basis of having only investigated the viewpoint of one group. I therefore also looked at what men respondents said. This was in accordance with my decision to study both women and men. It was hard to find issues that pertained to men exclusively as a group. I did, however, find that at least two of them made it clear that they found the 'gender' question challenging. This was because both of them perceived their working environments as quite homogenous, i.e. comprised mainly of men. These respondents were based in Business and Natural Sciences respectively, both fields where women are still in the minority. The low representation of women, especially at senior levels in the Sciences has been pointed out elsewhere (Laybourn-Parry, 1997; Currie, Harris and Thiele, 2000). The two respondents found it hard to think about gender in their contexts. It is therefore wonder that they responded to the gender question in the following ways:

I'm not sure because I have got no experience with women leadership in the academic environment, especially in [discipline]. There is no such thing at the moment. We've got a few females, a Professor in [discipline] and so on. The structure of the highest leadership in the university up to fairly recently was male, there were no women ... The only question that I couldn't answer was the one on female leadership because I have no experience of it (R12MWM)

... interesting I've never yet been in a situation that I had to report to a woman right from the start except being part of a group like for instance the 1st year group and one of the ladies taking responsibility for that (R24MWM)

These two respondents were saying that they could not relate to gender as an issue because women were not around in the right ratio to relate to. They also continuously referred to their women colleagues as 'ladies' in spite of the fact that I pertinently referred to women when I ventured into gender terrain.

Similar responses to theirs have been recorded (Deem 2003). Deem (2003) notes that when respondents in the research which she was reporting on were asked for the effects of gender on their careers:

some male respondents could not answer the gender questions at all ...by contrast, most women respondents raised gender issues, ranging from inequitable household and motherhood responsibilities [etc.] without prompting (pp. pp. 245-6) (pp. 245-6)

What emerges from this section is that gender is still equated with woman or women (Sinclair, 1998; Deem, 2003; Townsley, 2003). The issues raised by the women respondents: family life (and related matters) and gendered workplace experiences are exactly the issues that tend to be ignored in higher education (Morley, 2000). It was therefore not surprising that the men did not consider them important enough to mention. It seems to be a case of certain issues that cannot be seen as part of the knowledge base of the sector. These are the issues that do not particularly matter to men leaders. What matters to them are therefore practices that count. As long as this viewpoint hold sway in higher education practices and cultures would be male defined and dominated and as Morley (2000) points out, "this domination is reproduced and sustained via everyday practices and processes" (Morley, 2000: 233).

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter considered the significance of gender on leadership. It revealed a number of invisibilities associated with leadership. The first was a gendered representation of early life role models and leading figures in the lives of respondents, indicating the predominance of men as leaders. I conclude that as long as this tendency continues, we will have the association of men with leadership. Second, gendered role model expectations were revealed with women leaders expected to act as role models for other women. Men leaders are not expected to do the same for other men raising the question of what purposes this practice serves. Additional responsibilities for women leaders while men leaders are allowed to lead with fewer 'burdens?' Third, a great number of stereotypes about the ways in which women and men lead were

revealed giving rise to two very distinct images of leadership. I conclude that because men leaders are still in the majority the leadership image associated with men therefore persists as *the* model of leadership. This could present problems with leadership associated with women not being recognised as leadership. Lastly the chapter showed specific areas related to leadership, namely family life and career support as unacknowledged by men leaders and therefore not valued and recognised as of significance in leadership. In this way aspects valued by men continue to dominate the field.

I will now move on to consider the meanings of this study.

CHAPTER NINE

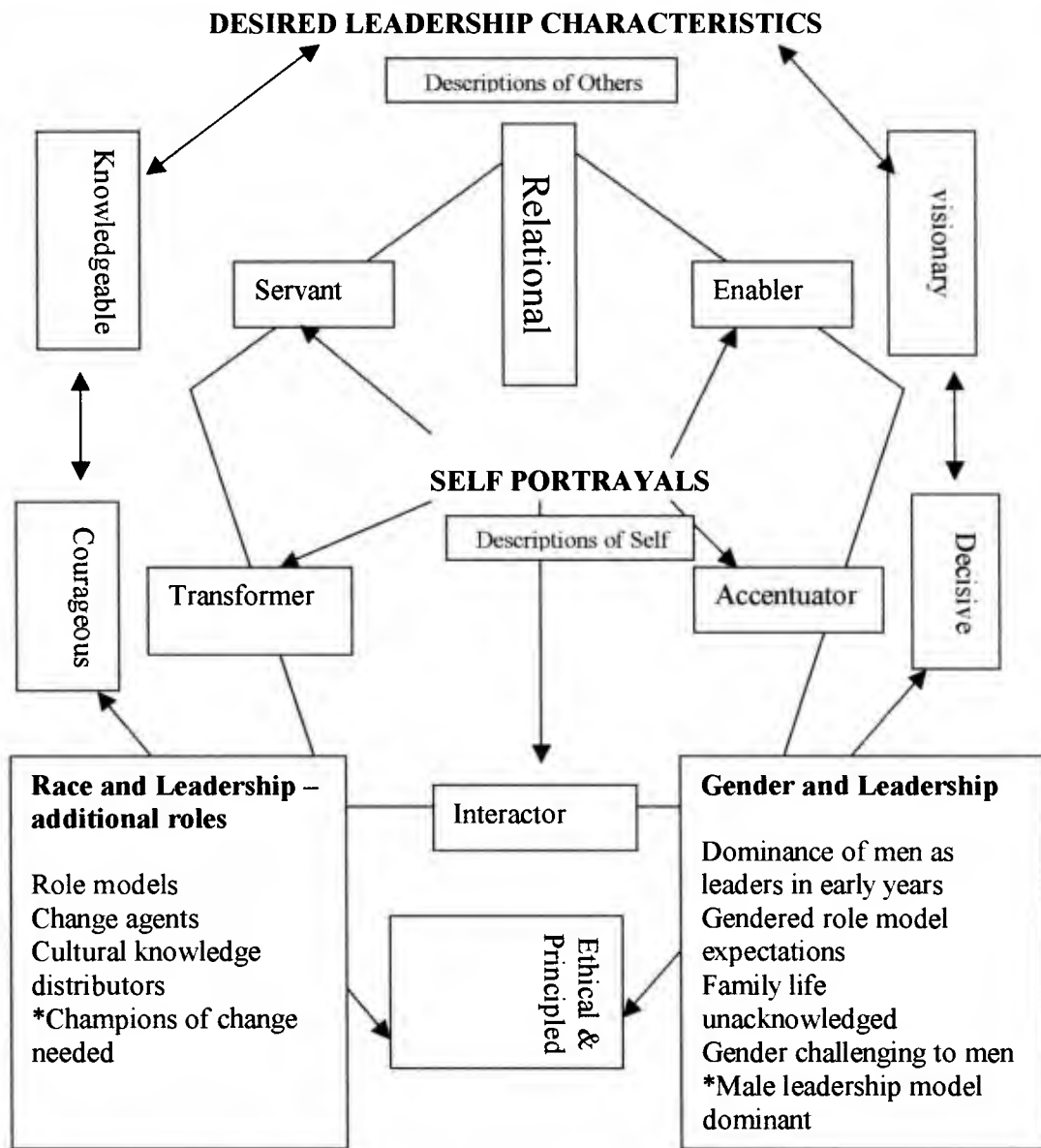
Concluding Thoughts

This study explored leadership in higher education based on my interpretation of the perspectives of a specific group of participants and my interrogation of leadership literature. In this last chapter I first present a leadership model which emerged from my engagement with this material and which I regard as my contribution to the field of leadership studies. I reiterate a statement made earlier, that I am aware that this is only one story among a number of stories that could be told (Fletcher, 1999) about leadership in higher education in South Africa. The study was based on semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants, which is a method quite frequently used in qualitative research, but beyond that, I have conceptualised the study to take into account various sensitivities around some of the key issues around which the study took place. I believe this approach to conceptualisation could be considered in other studies dealing with sensitive issues and I submit it as my small contribution to research methodology. Consequently, I reflect on my methodology in the second part of the chapter. I have been conscious of some limitations in my work, issues incidental to the main ones forming the basis of the study, mostly stumbled upon during the interviews. Some of those issues merit detailed exploration in their own right and would therefore have required time and resources well beyond the scope of this study. I reflect on that in the third part of the chapter. At various points in the thesis, I indicated that there were questions which I considered as beyond my immediate concern but I thought they were important in the context in which I was working so, in the next section of the chapter, I offer them for consideration. Next, follows a short deliberation on the benefits I derived from doing this study. A brief section on the dissemination of knowledge concludes the chapter.

Conceptualisation of Leadership

It is my assertion that while the results of this study elucidate the possible answers to the question which guided it, namely, "*What does leadership mean in higher education in South Africa?*" it does not, nor can it reasonably be expected to, provide a definite answer to the question. There is a multiplicity of possible answers and factors which overlay several possible interpretations to the answers. In as far as elucidating the general issues, it concurs with general leadership literature about ambiguity and uncertainty around leadership concepts as pointed out in Chapter Two. There are, of course, some authors who would want to claim differently and offer concise definitions. What I am offering is a conceptualisation of leadership as constructed from my interpretation of the respondents' views, my reflections on the literature and intersections of these with my observations and my own personal experiences in leadership and leadership relationships (Figure 8). Leadership is conceptualised as being located at the intersection of practice ('activity') as manifested in the respondents' self-portrayals of leadership (inner ring) and the characteristics that they have identified as desirable for leaders (outer ring) and impacted upon by race and gender (intersect both rings). It therefore shows leadership as a multifaceted concept. This concept was developed in a particular context which resonates with my theoretical position outlined in Chapter Two, that context is important in studies of leadership, because it is within defined contexts where leadership has meaning and purpose (McCall and Lawlor, 2000). This conceptualisation is work-in-progress, not a final product. To present it as a final product would be to go against the grain of the framework, poststructuralist and feminist that I chose for my investigation of this elusive topic.

Figure 8: Leadership Model



Elements in the inner ring (self-portrayals) represent respondents' views of what they do as leaders: they portrayed themselves as 'interactors' who facilitate participation, consultation, engagement, two-way information flow, dialogue, sharing of ideas and communication; 'enablers' who facilitate achievement of goals by creating environments that are supportive, connecting potential, abilities, ideals with resources; 'transformers' who mediate between old and new systems and acting as change agents working for change; 'servants' who see themselves in the service of their discipline, students and colleagues, giving back what has been given to them by the sector; and 'accentuators' who emphasize the strengths in others in order to develop them and facilitate growth enhancing environments. The elements in the outer ring (desirable leadership characteristics) represent respondents' views of what they regard as desirable in leaders: – vision, ethics and principles, knowledge, decisiveness and courage. These were regarded as both essential and interrelated.

I argue that the identified desirable leadership characteristics and self-portrayals of leadership presented by the respondents constitute an *ideal* leadership model. Chapter Five revealed that the respondents perceived a tension between the 'management' and 'leadership' facets of their current position. Their leadership self-portrayals represented the positive aspects of the position. It seems that these aspects symbolize ways in which they envisage that they can make a difference and that is what they would like to do in their leadership positions. The desirable leadership characteristics identified also point to elements that they deemed necessary for their current context. Again, the ideal is to make a difference. That is why they called for leaders to have vision, i.e. a broad picture of a higher education sector different from the current one, be decisive, i.e. being able to make moves on assessments that would ensure changes for example, be knowledgeable, i.e. have the understanding about the how of making the changes for example and be courageous, i.e. being able to do what needs to be done.

This ideal model of leadership exhibits notions of a relational nature. It incorporates relationships where interaction, participation, consultation and

dialogue are key features. Members of leadership relationships are valued and respected in this model and seen as partners. However, the ideal model of leadership seems to be in conflict with the leadership model in the context in which the respondents work. Chapter Six explored their attitudes and perceptions about their working environment and showed that they are subjected to a leadership model in the policy environment that does not match their ideal model. This model is one devoid of participation and consultation.

In Figure 8 gender and race influences are presented as touching both the external and internal rings as an indication that they impact on both the practice and characteristics of leaders. What looking through the lens of gender revealed was that the notion of leadership as masculine persists. This is due partly to the majority of early life role models and leading figures being men. Another reason seems to be about family life, which the study showed features strongly in the life worlds of the women leaders. They acknowledged it as a source of vital support in their careers. The men did not recognise their family life, giving the impression that they operate without any support. I want to contend that as long as men do not recognise and acknowledge family life as important in the life worlds of leaders, it will be invisible and unimportant where leadership is concerned

By using a lens of race another facet was added to the model. Drawing primarily on the experiences of the respondents, two themes emerged. First was that different perspectives on a particular issue can be related back to diverse insights about the issue. In the thesis the low number of Black academics and manager-leaders came under the spotlight and we found two very different views about the reasons for that. What seemed to be the distinguishing factor here was experience against an intellectual appreciation of the issue. Second, a focus on the specific experiences of the Black manager-leaders in the study reveals a number of roles in addition to those identified for all the respondents. The roles so identified are 'role models' who can expose leadership relationship members to a diversity of leadership models, 'motivators' who have experienced low diversity environments and

know the effects thereof, 'change agents' whose function it is to champion and interpret change and 'cultural knowledge distributors' who could contextualise unjust situations, demystify myths and promote the benefits of diversity. All these roles suggest that in an environment of transition and change it is necessary for leaders to be social activists.

I would like to argue further that by combining the lenses of race and gender into a race-gender lens my model answered the challenge for broader and richer descriptions of leadership pointed out in Chapter Two. I want to remind the reader that in my discussion of newer models of leadership, I observed that those models emphasise interactive elements such as relationships, collaborations and experiences, in essence the social dimensions of leadership. However, very seldom are those dimensions examined through a race-gender lens. The result is that we have 'universal' concepts as illustrated by the elements of the idealised model constructed in the study. Taken at face value identifiers such as Servant, Enabler and Interactor could be interpreted as having 'universal' meanings which leaders in a variety of contexts could use. A race-gender lens would, however, show a different picture. The lens will reveal justifications for each of these portrayals. I will illustrate this point by briefly referring to two of the portrayals, Enabler and Interactor.

I have pointed out that an Enabler focuses on the accomplishments of institutional and individual goals by means of capacity building. It seems that the motivation for capacity building comes from a desire to assist institutions to realise their visions of being leaders in the field and individuals to realise their potential. Institutions could be of any type and individuals anybody but when applying a race-gender lens, questions such as what kind of institution and for whom and what types of environment and why might impede the chances of different individuals to realise their potential.

An Interactor was said to value the full participation of all members in a leadership relationship. This they do by engaging leadership members, sharing ideas and consulting the members about the concerns of the

leadership relationship. The members could be anybody but when the category Interactor is examined through a race-gender lens, similar questions as above could be asked, namely who do are being consulted and is it done, whose participation are being facilitated and in which ways?

A race-gender lens can further offer explanations for the identified characteristics desired in leaders. Again I will illustrate the point by brief references to two characteristics. The desire for ethical and principled leaders comes from a context characterised by relationships of mistrust. In addition it is driven by a concern that people need to be accepted for who they are and not be discriminated against on the basis of race and gender, which in effect amounts to stereotyping. The call for courageous leaders on the other hand seems to be inspired by a desire to deal with uncompleted transformational issues. These need attention, which they would not receive if a 'universal' leadership model were adopted.

A race-gender lens also reveals discriminatory practices such as the invisibilities associated with leadership and that which were exposed in the appointment processes of Black manager-leaders. All these examples suggest that race and gender are integral to the construction of leadership and on the basis of that I would argue that a race-gender lens promotes a more inclusive concept of leadership. It seems to suggest that in a situation of change especially around inequalities, leadership needs to take on a social justice nature. This means the acknowledgement of inequalities and their impact or effects. From this position possible actions for change could then be identified and proposed, followed by active work on these.

Methodological Issues

The study was presented as a 'conversation', a concept developed from reflection on the research process. It involved a process of using existing networks in which I found a group of conversation partners with whom I could share, elaborate and develop ideas. I want to argue that 'conversation' is

as race as was the case in my study. It could, however, also serve as a model of how to lead in a context of change: members reflecting together, considering issues around which there is conflict, considering various ways to deal with it, etc.

Having lived with this study for a number of years I became acutely aware how much of qualitative research is 'emotional' work as explained in Chapter Four. This thesis would not have seen the light of day without the amount of 'emotional' energy invested in it. It took long hours of determination, dedication, isolation and plain frustration to complete this work. Yet when one looks at accounts of completed research, the focus seems to be about the theoretical framework, the underpinnings, the rationale, the new knowledge, etc, all to do with the intellect. I want to state unequivocally that my experience was that the new knowledge needed emotional investment. For that reason I would like to make a case for dedicated emotional preparation in any doctoral research training, making the emotional component as visible and important as the intellectual one.

Limitations of the Study

I have already pointed out that this study has some limitations. The empirical work is largely based on interviews which were only conducted with one section of the leadership relationships which were the focus of this work. I concede that, by having only interviewed manager-leaders and not the people with whom they are in leadership relationships, this thesis could be interpreted as a biased study. If I were to do this study again, I would not only interview other members who make up part of the leadership relationships in question, but I would also consider observing the everyday practices of the manager-leaders. In that way I would corroborate the congruency between what they say they do, what they do, and what others perceive them to do.

At the point of interviewing, I was interested in how the policy framework shaped the respondents' environment and therefore only enquired about their perceptions of the environment. With hindsight, I realise that knowing how

they operated in the new environment would have been useful. I offer readers a picture of how manager-leaders perceive leadership in their environment, identifying particular challenges and would suggest that further research should be done to investigate how they lead around these challenges.

The study originated from a structuralist knowledge base, which influenced the questions asked. If I were to start another study, it would be from a more poststructuralist framework. I would be paying more attention to discourses for example and more questioning of assumptions. Overall, this change in 'theoretical' direction impacted on the course of my research journey. When I started the research I expected to arrive at a point where I would be able to formulate a meaningful theory about the meaning of leadership. However, I had to deal with highly structuralist aspects, such as position, race, gender and historical influences from a poststructuralist framework. This made for some difficult moments as I have related in Chapter Four. I can now say that, whereas I started off with the expectation of a neat, but I suspect, much narrower definition of leadership I managed to develop a more nuanced concept resulting from all the twists and turns on my research journey.

Questions could also be asked about the place of power in the study because of the relationship of power to all of the issues which the thesis discussed. I deliberately chose not to investigate power relations in this thesis because many studies on leadership have done so. However, I acknowledged in Chapter Three the strong presence of power in the study and think that a short observation about this is necessary here. I would actually argue that power is a pervasive issue and that it is because of the context and nature of the study. First, the backdrop of the study is a country and its changing higher education sector. The study is a snapshot of the present juxtaposed against the past showing dominant traditions and practices jostling for position with new and alternative ones. This was particular so in the arena of the transforming higher education sector and it was seen being played out in the respondents' views on the issue of Black manager-leaders as minorities in the academic sector. Second, race and

gender, social constructs imbued with differential power in the South African context, are such integral strands in my study that power relations could not be anything but central. Here I want to take as an example the invisible issues in leadership, brought into sharp focus through a lens of gender. These issues are unacknowledged and therefore rendered insignificant. Yet the study suggests that these unacknowledged issues are powerful forces in the lives and especially leadership worlds of women. The same is true about the dominant views that were exposed by a lens of race, issues such as the lowering of standards which were said to accompany the increase in 'new entrants' into the academy and the different discourses on equity. These are some of the issues of power that in the end collectively seems to impede change. If I had paid in-depth attention to these my study would have taken on a different direction and several of the nuances in my thesis would have been lost and I was not prepared to do that.

The scale and scope of the study limit the claims that I can make. It was a small scale study with manager-leaders attached to two of South Africa's twenty-one HEIs. No in-depth study was done of either of these institutions as places of work for the manager-leaders. I can therefore not theorise for all institutions and all middle manager-leaders in South Africa. I could, however, claim to have laid a foundation, based on some empirical evidence, for what I see as clearly needed research to fully understand these leadership issues in the greater landscape of South African higher education. Also, because all institutions and therefore manager-leaders have been influenced and are influenced by the changes taking place in the country and the sector, I could offer for consideration the ways in which they experience the head of department position as possibilities of how other manager-leaders might experience their roles in these or similar positions. The same can be said of the way in which leadership is being enacted. There are reasons why the respondents have to be Transformers and 'Cultural Knowledge Distributors' for example and, in a changing South Africa and South African higher education, there is need for people like them, beyond Mountana and Vermont.

Areas for Further Research

This study explored leadership but there were secondary issues that featured strongly in the outcomes of the research. I regard them as significant enough to suggest that they form the basis for further research.

A key outcome of the investigation is the tension it revealed between how these academic middle managers perceive their management roles against their perceptions of their roles as academics. I therefore argue that, in these managerialist times, this represents conflict between the positions they would like to occupy, namely that of scholars and that which is determined by a managerialist reality, namely being managers at that level in institutions. This study made visible that the head of department position makes extensive demands on people in the position. There is thus reason for deconstructing the position. A larger, more comprehensive study than the current one would be useful. I think, in most cases, the position is not yet regarded as a key management one. It seems to be more a case of adding on more responsibilities to an existing portfolio. All of the respondents mentioned have a teaching load and, in several cases, they arrived late from class for our appointments. I think that most of them would want to hold onto their teaching loads but maybe the size of such loads should be limited.

From the above a second issue for investigation emerges, namely, the concept of an academic in the changing South African higher education environment. In essence this was about the nature of the concept of 'an academic'. At various points in this study, different views about the concept became apparent. Maybe it is time that the concept is questioned. How do people see it? Why do they see it that way? Is it perhaps time to develop different definitions? One issue was clear in this study – a managerialist context has an influence on the understandings of the concept. However, in Chapter Seven it was evident that particular views, such as that an academic can only develop over a lengthy period, can hinder change in staffing profiles. In Chapter Eight another dimension was added, namely that an 'academic' needs to be able to devote all their time and energy to the academy and

family life would therefore not be allowed to have any influence on them. This view of an academic albeit at manager-leader level, make the position problematic for women, who almost inevitably acknowledge the support that family life provides.

Coupled with the above, another question arises, who qualifies as a manager-leader in the academy? Someone who does not have any external distractions, who can devote all 'his' time to this kind of work, with adequate support at home and in the workplace? The manager-leaders were adamant about being scholars first and many of their responses emphasised this identity. The way they positioned themselves in relation to their colleagues and students bears this out, particularly their portrayal of themselves as Servants and Enablers. But then there is the tension, so the question is, can one be a scholar and lead the academic project at the same time?

The study emphasised unhappiness with the slow pace of change in staffing profiles. This is not a new finding but it needs thorough investigation and urgent action. I argue that it has partly to do with the views of an academic as explained above. There are attempts to rectify the slow changing profiles and that should be applauded. However, the processes underway are predominantly aimed at younger academics who now generally tend to have trained at HAs. The question of academics who have been in the system for a protracted period and who have been disadvantaged by dominant discourses of a 'traditional' academic and the quality of qualifications obtained at HDIs, needs interrogation. This study showed how not being part of the established networks by virtue of their *alma maters* (HDIs and foreign institutions) often led to the exclusion of these academics from promotions and appointments to senior positions from where they then could make the leap to manager-leader levels.

The study also calls for further exploration of gender in leadership, especially for making visible gendered assumptions of roles and expectations. Given that it seems that early life role models and leading figures influence perceptions of leadership, the study also suggests that exposure to diverse

leadership figures may be needed in early life. At the same time, there is also space for investigation into how some aspects of leadership come to be rendered invisible. Particular components identified for further investigation are family life and career support.

Personal Benefits

I would like to end this thesis by looking at the benefits I derived from living with it for the past three years of my life on a full-time basis. First, I think, in a small way, I have accomplished what I set out to do, making a contribution to the knowledge-base of leadership. I may not have uncovered great wisdom, but I think this study, once again, shows how contextual factors influence the nature of leadership and I feel happy about constructing a model of leadership based in the reality of a world of which I am part.

The thesis contains narrative reflecting my personal experience of the core issues of the research. It was good to be able to make a statement about the effects of apartheid on people similar to me but to do so in a scholarly way, i.e. not putting the spotlight on me. I was struck by the similarities in the life stories, particularly as they pertained to education, of R19VBM, R33MBW, R29VBM, R27VBW and R25MBM for example. Part of any of their life stories could have been my story. There was a difference though, they have all completed postgraduate degrees and made a career in higher education, which I have not. By doing this thesis, I was in a position to highlight the effects of the past in an impersonal way. I could in a small way make a contribution towards a collective understanding of why one transformational issue, changing staff profiles, would never be achieved unless some drastic action is taken. In some way, I also contributed towards a collective memory of a past higher education system and its impact on South Africans. On a personal level, writing this thesis was my truth and reconciliation moment about past academic failures and related self-doubt.

Lastly, the study gave me the opportunity to watch people similar to me working for change in higher education. I was impressed by their sense of commitment to making sure that the system is genuinely transformed. For me,

there was a sense of activism discernible here, something similar to “giving back to (their) community” (Anonymous (2005). Since there are still problems in South Africa in general and the country’s higher education sector in particular, it is only reasonable to work for change in order that those excluded from opportunities that would prepare them to access leadership, could do so. I was touched by the courage and commitment of these manager-leaders and think the interaction with them served as an inspiration for me to complete this study and prepare to go back into the real world of South African higher education and work alongside the people who described themselves as Enablers, Transformers, Accentuators, Servants and/or Interactors while valuing knowledge, vision, decisiveness, ethics/principles and courage in leadership relationships.

The End or a New Beginning?

I stated at the start of the thesis that I was doing it as a contribution towards knowledge formation. Now, having completed it, I think the next step is to share the knowledge. I am therefore planning to rework parts of the thesis into papers for publication. Over the last year I have presented overviews of the thesis, i.e. what does leadership mean at two important conferences in the field, namely the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education (South Africa) and The Society for Research into Higher Education (UK). I recently presented seminars on ‘gender and leadership’ and ‘race and leadership’ to a group of doctoral students from Pakistan and members of the Sociology of Education section of my school respectively. I see such presentations as preparation for clarifying issues and organising my thoughts in order to get the writing process going.

A second way forward would be to use the findings to explore other issues in higher education, that is to develop proposals for future research. In that way, I could start to address some of the issues I have identified for further research. I could also get involved in existing networks and work towards

creating new ones to do work collaboratively on these issues. For this I could use my conversation partners.

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Appendix 1: Summaries of Selected Policy Documents

The New Dispensation and Higher Education

1994 was a watershed year for South Africa. Sweeping new laws heralded in the start of a new dispensation for the country, taking it from an apartheid past to a more democratic present. The new political dispensation brought with it opportunities for change and transformation in all spheres of society. However, any critical observer of the society would most probably recognise that the transformation process has not yet run its course and that there are still inequalities in the country. This situation is difficult for people committed to social justice to ignore.

One observer on the current state of the country is Mabokela (2003) who informs us that we have “a social structure that is still plagued by racial and gender disparities” (p. 134). The advent of the new dispensation provided the higher education sector with the chance to reconfigure the system “in a principled and imaginative way, so that it is more suited to the needs of a democracy and of all its citizens” (Badat, 2002). Democratisation in higher education was driven by specific pieces of legislation and various policies. The intention was to change a fragmented system to a democratic system. The main functions of the policies were to facilitate and advance transformation of the system and individual institutions. It was envisaged that in this way meaningful change centred on equity and democracy would be brought about. I will now focus on various policy documents developed in HE between 1994 and 2002 to guide transformation in the sector:

- The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) report – 1996
- Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (White Paper) – 1997
- Higher Education Act – 1997
- Size and Shape report – 2000
- National plan for higher education in South Africa (NPHE) – 2001
- The National Working Group (NWG) Report – December 2001
- Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education – June 2002

The founding document or “roots of the policy framework for the restructuring of South African higher education” (Hall, Symes and Luescher, 2004; Jansen, 2004) is the National Commission on Higher Education report. The report provided the foundation for the development of the White Paper on higher education transformation (White Paper) which was subsequently enacted as the Higher Education Act. The latter “provides the legislative basis and framework for South African higher education” (Badat, 2004: 5). It has clear-cut objectives for the new system, namely the redress of past discrimination, representivity and equal access, the provision of optimal opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge and the promotion of the values which underlie an open and democratic society, based on human dignity, equality and freedom (Act 101, 1997, preamble). Through these objectives, higher education declared its role in relation to the national change agenda. Higher education, therefore, continues to act as an agency of the state but, this time, “to shape the social transformation process toward democracy” (Bell, 2001: 2).

For a period of time there was some inactivity (Jansen, 2004) whereafter the Size and Shape document and the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) followed. The Minister of Education then appointed a National Working Group which produced a report with recommendations on how to implement the NPHE. The Minister’s response to the recommendations was a document, ‘Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education’ which marked the end of the active policy making process and the start of active policy implementation. The policy documents were developed over a period which, most commentators on HE policy making in SA agree, can be divided into three phases (Cloete, 2002), namely policy formulation, putting the framework in place and an implementation phase.

I want to suggest that higher education policy formulation in South Africa was a deliberate and contrived process designed to guide the formation of a new

system that is geared towards improving the lives of the majority of the country's people and based on a social justice agenda, hence the focus of the various documents on equity, democracy, participation, partnerships and the advancement of people. One can argue that these are the discourses available in the 'new' South Africa. These are in stark contrast with the discourses of authoritarianism, discrimination, subjugation, 'separate development', etc. of the 'old' order. I would argue that the whole process could be seen as an exercise of the new government using its new found power to shape the higher education sector in a way that it deemed relevant, i.e., fitting its discourses of democracy and participation.

In this highly legislated higher education environment there is one omission relevant to this thesis, namely no clarity about the concept 'leadership' in the sector. Section 30 of the Higher Education Act mentions that "the principal of a public higher education institution is responsible for the management and administration of the public higher education institution"(Republic of South Africa, 1997). There is no further discussion or explanation of the concept. Kulati and Moja (2002) picked up the silence around the concept; they implied that they expected that the higher education governance policies would articulate the role of leadership. Cloete, Bunting and Kulati (2000) articulated the same idea in their observation that, "whilst the government has done a good job of articulating the agenda for the transformation of higher education in South Africa, it has been silent on the role of leadership in institutional transformation" (p. 12).

The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) report - 1996.

The report was compiled by the National Commission on Higher Education, appointed in 1995 by the new government to advise them on how to transform what at that point was a fragmented system. The fragmented system implied institutional inequalities as well as inequalities of access for both students and staff. The report gives a detailed 'state of the nation' account of higher education at the time. This includes both strengths and weaknesses – the report described

the system as having, “considerable capacity in research, teaching and physical and human resources as well as inequities, imbalances and distortions” (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). This account was used to argue that the system was in urgent need of transformation. Transformation in this context was seen as “reorientation and innovation” (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

The report identified a specific role for the government in the transformation process – to regulate the system. This, one can argue, was as a direct reaction to the perception that previous governments did not ‘manage’ a national system, which can be read from the comment in the report that there was a “history of organisational and administrative fragmentation and weak accountability” (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The report conveyed the message that regulation was necessary to ensure specifically the achievement of equality (seen against the drawbacks of a fragmented system).

The report is explicit about what was expected of the new system; these expectations were to underpin the principles on which the new system would be based. The report names the expectations as:

- access to a full spectrum of educational and learning opportunities to as wide a range as possible of the population, irrespective of race, colour, gender or age.
- responsive programmes (to meet) the vocational and employment needs of a developing economy aspiring to become and to remain internationally competitive.
- (Support) a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes conducive to a critically constructive civil society, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order.
- the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with internationally observed standards of academic quality, and with sensitivity to the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

The above expectations reflect the Commission's assessment that two needs had to be met simultaneously: democratic South Africa's entry into the world economy and the building of the infrastructure of the country. It also suggests that the State should play a greater role in determining relevant skills for the country to obtain a place in global economy. What the Commission recommended was a "doubled" gaze (Davies, 2005) – attending to the country's internal needs but at the same time putting the country in a favourable global economic position. This is understandable given the country's internal fragmentation and previous international isolation. Such diverse factors obviously have different 'pulling' effects and it could be argued that they present various challenges as can be seen from my respondents' responses to the policies. In a sense the two needs can also be seen as contradictory, something commented on in the literature (see for example Ensor, 2004). The expectations were translated into suggestions for principles to underpin the new higher education system of South Africa – equity, democratisation, development, quality, academic freedom/institutional autonomy, effectiveness and efficiency.

The production of the NCHE report has been praised as one of the most democratic processes in SAHE to date (Jansen, 2001; Kraak, 2001; Moja and Hayward, 2001; Badat, 2004). Jansen (2001) comments on what went into the process and what followed:

in every single process leading to policy papers, and throughout the 1990s, there was an exceptional preoccupation with inclusivity and representivity in the make-up of working groups (p. 206)

However, juxtaposed against the much praised principle of extensive participation in the production of the report is the limitation that it did not really go into details for the realisation of the goals set for the system. One could, therefore, argue that it did not contain plans for implementation. Maybe this contradiction was contained in the brief to the Commission – to advise the government on how to transform the system. We can argue about the meaning of 'advise' in this context. Depending on the discourses available to them, 'advise' could mean different things to different people. In the case under discussion 'advise' seems to mean 'making suggestions' without any strategies to turn the suggestions into workable activities. In the final

analysis the NCHE report can be seen as a document that benefited from the input of a variety of stake-holders and which, on the basis of a thorough assessment of the existing system, made recommendations for the structure of the new system, funding of the system and its governance.

Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (White Paper) - 1997

The White Paper was the government's consideration of the NCHE's suggestions and recommendations. In the words of the then Minister of Education (MoE), it outlined "the framework for change" meaning the planning, governing and funding of the higher education system "as a single national co-ordinated system" (Minister Bengu,, 1997, foreword to White Paper). What comes to the fore is that the government in principle 'accepted' the NCHE report but framed it in its own language. Looking for example at the White Paper's summary of the principles that would underpin the new system, namely "increased and broadened participation, responsiveness to societal/ interests and needs and cooperation and partnerships in governance" (Department of Education, 1997), the expectations spelled out in the NCHE report (above) can be recognised. The White Paper also highlights the same weaknesses of the system which the NCHE report pointed out but frames them as needs and challenges.

The White Paper does, however, suggest a number of strategies for the attainment of the reconfiguration of the institutional landscape (Hall, Symes and Luescher, 2004). These include:

- * collaboration between different institutions at the level of academic programmes.

- * development of regional consortia and partnerships to co-ordinate and rationalise the provision of higher education programme assessment of the institutional landscape, with a possible view to higher education restructuring including mergers, closures, and the development of new institutional forms" (Hall, Symes and Luescher, 2004).

The White Paper moved the policy process some way. There were now strategies proposed for the earlier suggestions and recommendations of the NCHE report. By

virtue of it having governmental 'approval', the policy document had official status and was centrally located in the discourse of the government of the day. The form and structure of the White Paper, although based on the contents of the NCHE report, established the government as author of the policy; a definite sign of where power is located.

Higher Education Act - 1997

The Higher Education Act was passed at the end of 1997. The Act provides the legislative basis and framework for South African higher education and its specifics were to:

- Regulate higher education;
- Provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on Higher Education;
- Provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions;
- Provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor;
- Provide for the registration of private higher education institutions;
- Provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education;
- Provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; and
- provide for matters connected therewith (Republic of South Africa, 1997).

With the passing of the HE Act, South Africa at last had the framework to create a higher education system that was decidedly different from the one that was legally in place till then although as soon as the first democratic government took office, processes were set in motion to change the higher education landscape. Importantly the basis was laid "for the creation of a single, national co-ordinated system of education" (Pretorius, 2002: 5) which would replace the multiple structures that characterised higher education at that point.

Size and Shape report - 2000

In 1999 the second democratic government was elected into office. Once again, a 'state of the nation' report on HE was commissioned. As was the case with the NCHE report, a (Size and Shape) team was established to produce, in this case, the Size and Shape report. The new Minister of Education tasked the team with "the review and reform of the institutional landscape of HE" (Kraak, 2001: 26). As the

Centre on Higher Education (CHET) would later observe it seemed that there was a perception at the time, that there had been “enough good policy, consultation had been overdone and now it was time to implement” (Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), 2004). Consultation with various role players took place but not on the scale that characterised the production of the NCHE report. The task team made extensive use of commissioned studies. The outcome of the task team’s work was a report in July 2000 that “articulated a distinct set of recommendations to the Minister regarding the reconfiguration of the HE institutional landscape” (Kraak, 2001: 26). This report, too, highlighted the strengths of the system but pointed out that the weaknesses in the system:

severely compromise its ability to effectively and efficiently achieve important national goals and serve various social and educational purposes (Council on Higher Education, 2000)

The weaknesses in the system, the report argued, were not only resulting from the country’s and system’s history but also from developments taking place in the new dispensation. The report therefore distinguishes between ‘structural’ (fundamental, long-standing, contextual) and ‘conjunctural’ (immediate, contextual) weaknesses. (Council on Higher Education, 2000). The ‘conjunctural’ weaknesses included problems with governance, which was related to management and administrative capacity or lack thereof at several institutions. I would like to remind the reader that part of my rationale for doing this study has to do with the fact that weak leadership was cited as an important reason for several institutions experiencing crises during the early years of transformation. I argue that although leadership was singled out as one of the causes of these crises there was no consensus on what leadership in these contexts meant; lack of leadership was ‘named’ as a cause of these crises without an explanation of what that leadership meant.

The report reframes the problems as ‘critical’ challenges in the system and grouped them into three – effectiveness, efficiency and equity. On the basis of these challenges the report then recommended that the higher education system be reconfigured, “in a principled and imaginative way, more suited to the needs of a democracy and all its citizens in contrast to the irrational and exclusionary

imperatives that shaped large parts of the current system” (Council on Higher Education, 2000: 8). The recommendations were towards a “differentiated and diverse system” and this was in order for institutions to respond to “the varied social needs of the country” with:

a range of mandates (principal orientations and core foci) and (that) pursue coherent and more explicitly defined educational and social purposes with respect to the production of knowledge and successful graduates (Council on Higher Education, 2000).

The essence of the report was to point out that the system was not meeting the goals envisaged for a democratic South Africa, namely the building up of internal resources and ensuring the country’s place in the global economy. The report asserted that the reasons were part historical but also partly contemporaneous and specifically because the system had not really moved in the direction set out in the White Paper. The report was therefore quite clear in its recommendation – the system needed to be overhauled and the process needed to be driven by the state because institutions would not do this by themselves.

National plan for higher education in South Africa (NPHE) - 2001

The Minister of Education formulated his response to the Size and Shape report (CHE’s advice) in the form of a National Plan for higher education. He argued that the Plan:

outlines the framework and mechanisms for implementing and realising the policy goals of the White Paper. It is far-reaching and visionary in its attempt to deal with the transformation of the higher education system as a whole. It is not aimed solely at addressing the crises in some parts of the system, although these must be overcome. It will impact on every institution (Ministry of Education, 2001: foreword)

The Plan also addresses the question of whether the higher education system was ready to meet the challenges brought about by globalisation that the country was facing. It provides an answer:

the foundations in terms of the enabling policies and legislation are in place. However, much remains to be done in terms of implementing the policies

(Ministry of Education, 2001).

This answer indicates what the Plan was perceived as the implementation mechanism of the White Paper. The Plan is based on the White Paper's goals, values and principles and this comes through in the reproduction of the relevant section of White Paper as a reference point. The goals set in the Plan towards the realisation of the objective are:

- Producing the graduates needed for social and economic development in South Africa
- Achieving equity in the South African higher education system
- Achieving diversity in the South African higher education system
- Sustaining and promoting research
- Restructuring the institutional landscape of the higher education system (Ministry of Education, 2001)

However, one gets the impression that at the time there was unhappiness with the state of affairs, hence The Plan's insistence on the restructuring of the institutional landscape. Its suggestions/recommendations was that this should be done primarily by reducing the number of institutions in the sector with the primary means of reduction being the combining of institutions (Pretorius, 2002).

The NPHE afforded the Ministry of Education a leadership role. Hall et al., (2004) comments on this:

despite an acute awareness of the delicacy of the relationship between institutional autonomy and public accountability, it (NPHE) expresses in tone and content the insistence of the Ministry to provide a leadership role in the dragging process of transformation and restructuring (p. 37)

One could argue that the MoE decided to exercise his leadership at this point in a particular way. He used the power of his position to be directive. His assessment of the situation when he took office as part of the second democratic government, must have been that policies were in place but that not much implementation has taken place. He most probably considered it wise to use the power of his position to give direction to the sector and the Plan was that direction. The Plan was not well received in the sector. There were objections against what seemed to be the main

strategy for the restructuring of the institutional landscape, the reduction of the number of HEIs. People were not happy with the suggestion/recommendation that the reduction had to take place mainly through the mergers of institutions. Despite the objections and widespread unhappiness the Plan eventually became a policy document, 'Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education', which will be discussed in detail below.

The language of the Plan needs some consideration. Each section in the document mentions goals, strategic objectives, various outcomes, etc., which I would like to argue is typical of the language employed by the major (global) players in the development field. My reference in this regard is from my experience as (TELP) Project Coordinator/Manager. Every project that was funded had to be framed in this language. Each phase of each project comprised of this language – proposal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This was in order to meet the requirements of the principal donor of these projects. This has to do with the fact that the South African government was assisted in its reconstruction and development processes by foreign governments. Several donors (EU, AUSAID, DFID, USAID, etc.) assisted the new government in policy making in the various sectors, including HE and it is therefore not surprising that policy language took on the form of its sponsors.

The National Working Group (NWG) Report – February 2002

The Minister of Education once again appointed a team, known as the National Working Group (NWG) to advise him and make recommendations for the implementation of the NPHE proposals. This the NWG did well earning the praise of the minister who said, "I am pleased to indicate that the NWG has discharged its mandate admirably and has produced an excellent report" (Asmal, 2002: 1). The NWG was, however, given a very specific brief. It was to focus on a particular aspect of the NPHE proposals, namely the reduction of the number of HEIs. This meant that it had to concentrate on the recommendations related to the collaboration between institutions and the possible mergers of institutions. Considering the brief it is clear that the Minister had taken a decision that there was only one way to deal with the system and that was to reduce the number of

institutions. Kraak (2004) comments on the terms of reference for the NWG. His view is that these were:

very specific and rather narrow, instructing the NWG to focus on the establishment of a more consolidated system of HE provision attained primarily through a reduction in the number of institutions (p. 272)

Hall, et al. (2004) agree with him that the NWG had its brief tightly defined; it had to come up with suggestions of how, and no longer if, a reduction of HEIs should take place. The NWG recommended what they termed “appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of HE on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms” (National Working Group, 2001: 1). They then made specific recommendations with respect to mergers. They also advocated stronger regional cooperation. This was a formal step and added valuable detail to the policy (Hall, Symes and Luescher, 2004).

Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education – June 2002

The Minister’s response to the report of the National Working Group was in the form of a document, ‘Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education’. This document was approved by Cabinet and released by the Minister to the public in June 2002. The content focused on the ministry’s proposals for restructuring the institutional landscape of the HE system and an implementation process. This included a reduction in the number of institutions from 36 to 21. Institutions were also informed that regional cooperation was now an imperative. Failure to comply with this by for e.g. submitting joint proposals the ministry would step in and intervene. To effect this a merger office was established in terms of the document to drive the merger processes. The proposals caused unhappiness in the sector (Pityana, 2004); the minister was aware of this and used the report to also talk to his/ministry’s critics. This document was effectively an action plan, the blue-print for the mergers that started to take place in the sector in 2004 and, which, at the time of writing are ongoing.

I have provided this overview of policy formulation because I consider this as important information about the context of the study, a way of putting into perspective the environment in which the respondents work and exercise leadership. I consider this environment as important and am interested in whether it has an impact on their leadership. This interest forms the basis of one of my sub questions. I equate environment with the policy context because of my understanding that policies have effects on policy implementers. Malen (2005) writing from a very different context, the public school system in North America, observes that education policy can be seen as:

“a force that is affecting, for better or worse, the priorities and practices of public schools’ (and that therefore) educational leaders (find) themselves surrounded (and at) times, bombarded (with) by intense policy demands, consequential policy choices and disconcerting policy effects” (p. 192)

This rings true in the context of my study. In Chapter Six more is said about the effects of policies on the manager-leaders and how they deal with them.

Appendix 2: The Schedule

Preface

Good day to you. Thank you for granting me this opportunity to interview you. I just want to emphasise some of the information that I gave you when setting up the interview.

The data I collect during this meeting is intended to produce material that will be used for research purposes and specifically to complete my thesis. As indicated I am a doctoral student at the Institute of Education, one of the institutions attached to the University of London.

The objective is to understand what leadership means to people working in higher education. In order to do this, I will ask you a number of questions related to your background (educational and career); your personal belief about leadership, South African Higher Education (vision, challenges and leadership), relations in HE and ending with a question related to your perspective on the status quo in the system at the moment. You are welcome to share your views in as frank a manner, as you feel comfortable.

I want to assure you that I will take all necessary precautions to ensure that what you tell me will be treated confidentially. I will not use your name at any stage; I will anonymise your input. Of course I cannot guarantee total anonymity given the scale of the South African HE system and the regional system in particular.

At any stage you are welcome to ask me for clarification.

I would like to tape record the interview. This is to aid me with capturing the interview better. It will also give me the space to be more attentive during the session. Is this in order? Thank you.

Let us start then:

Content

Please tell me about your educational background post-secondary [Where and What? Any experiences that prepared you for the role that you are currently playing? Did you play leadership roles during that time? People who inspired and assisted you in leadership roles What qualities did they have?]

Now could you tell me about your career background [at what point in your life did you begin a career in higher education?]

At what stage did you start to take on leadership activities in HE [begin to take on leadership roles]?

I would be interested to hear from you what your understanding of leadership is.

Please talk to me about your leadership role at the institution [and other levels in HE]

What are your expectations of people leading you?

What expectations do you have of people who you lead?

What do you think higher education in South Africa should be for? Do you think the current structure of HE serve that purpose?

What do you see as important challenges that HE leadership in SA is faced with today.

Please talk to me about the kind of leadership that you think SA HE need today.

Do you see yourself in a different leadership capacity in HE in the future?

Would you say there is a sense of collaboration in HE in and among institutions? [how does it happen?] [with whom do you collaborate?]

Would you say men and women lead differently? [In what ways?]

Do you believe you have a role to play in developing leadership in this institution? [wider HE community?]

Talking as a leader in HE in SA, would you say the system and institutions are free from discriminatory practices?

Do you have anything to add to this conversation?

End interview

As part of my methodology I invite feedback on the interview process. How do you feel about the interview? Were there any questions that you made you feel uncomfortable? What questions worked well? What questions do you think were missing? What questions do you think worked well?

After interview

Thank you once again for the interview. This was extremely useful. I will transcribe the interview shortly. If there are any issues that are not clear at that stage, I would most probably want to clear it up with you. Is it in order for me to

come back to you? I might be back in the UK at that stage so it would most probably be via email; would this be in order? If I am still in the country, what would suit you better – email, telephone conversation or a face-to-face situation?

Appendix 3: VC Request

Dear Professor

I am writing to you as a South African Doctoral Commonwealth Scholar, studying at London University who am interested in leadership issues in Higher Education in South Africa. I would like to conduct research at two institutions in the country, XXX University being one of them.

I have worked in Higher Education and a related organization in South Africa for nearly ten years. From 1998 to 2002 I worked in the Tertiary Education Linkages Project.

I am studying at the Institute of Education, University of London and will shortly be returning to South Africa to do the fieldwork part of my research project. I will be in the country from December 2003 to June 2004.

My project involves:

- * Looking at national documents on transformation and leadership
- * Looking at institutional documents on transformation and leadership
- * Conversations with the persons working on transformation in institutions
- * Conversations with the persons dealing with institutional structures
- * Interviews with academic middle managers/leaders

In preparation for my fieldwork, I will be in the country from 1 December 2003. I realise that that is a very busy period but I would like to pay the Office of the Vice Chancellor a courtesy visit to introduce the project and myself and to establish relationships. Could I request a short, 20 minute meeting with you on 1 December or soonest thereafter for this purpose?

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks,

Patricia Smit

Appendix 4: Request For Interview

Dear

I am a Doctoral Student at London University. My research focuses on leadership issues in Higher Education in South Africa.

My research project is guided by the question, "What does leadership mean in higher education in a transformed South Africa?" and involves:

- Looking at national documents on transformation and leadership
- Looking at institutional documents on transformation and leadership
- Interviews with academic middle managers/leaders, specifically heads of academic departments

Based on an extensive survey of institutional managers and leaders in this category, I have identified you as one of the people I would like to interview over the next couple of weeks. The interview will last about 45 minutes and will be conducted at a time and place that would be convenient to you. The interview will be treated as confidential.

My questions will include the participants' background, their personal beliefs about leadership, their views on South African Higher Education and relations in HE and their perspective on the current state of the system.

I have rather limited timeframes in which to complete my fieldwork and would therefore greatly appreciate it if the interview with you could be scheduled over the next few weeks. I shall therefore be following up with a phone call to try and find dates and times that would suit you best, unless I receive these from you by return e-mail in the next few days. I can be contacted via this email address for confirmation of an interview and/or clarification of any matter.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Patricia Smit

Appendix 5: Example of a coded Transcript

[Faint, illegible text representing a transcript, possibly containing multiple paragraphs of handwritten or typed notes.]



want to say even so low it's not easy because the contest is alive and well. You take the institutions of higher learning say well in the historically white eh universities the contest is very real how is the leader, who is going to lead the institution I think that is an unuttered question, it is there, it lurks and yet it is not always to answer it overtly it is a covert question, it's covert and I'm telling you that is the bottom line if there is any conflict in institutions of higher learning, it's because of this, who is the leader. Well ehm on the one hand the state is busy promoting blacks and women to take leadership now in institutions of higher learning, on the other hand you still have xxx where white males were the authoritative the authentic leaders of HE now you have this conflict that is always simmering and a new brand of leadership is called for now after 1994 you know that up to 1994 leadership in HE was uncontested, it was white and male amen but then thereafter came this new tier new level of leadership and up to now I must admit it is it has not yet occupied its rightful place in the institutions of higher learning because of the contest I'm not referring here to people who are leaders or rectors of various institutions but I am talking about collective leadership this collective leadership people who who who are giving vision, new vision to the HE to HEIs in this country xxx who are giving no who are leading the way or show the way in post-1994 in HEIs who are they who are the visionaries who are these people do we have these people who are creating the new future who are showing the way for you know the future of education in this country, who are they can we name them and so forth.

P can you talk about your leadership role in this institution?

R30 I will say my leadership is not direct, it is indirect and it is representative I represent a generation that eh is determined to be present in the engine room of leadership, we are going to be there in fact we are there where the future is discussed of education in this country we are collectively there not only in the chambers of power but also in the margins among students among black staff among workers yes and today it is not leadership in HE in this country after 1994 is clear-cut because it's not always overt, it is also covert, it is it is and it is representative for example among students. Students are also forming a layer, tier of leadership and there is also eh I'll say a direction that is emerging which wants to bring together that is in institutions of in previously historically white institutions to bring students together with black staff and black workers to create a voice, a voice which this wilderness in this wilderness of voicelessness and eh they are very slow xxx that where leadership is discussed the views and visions of this marginal constituency must be taken into consideration, must be heard the hearing of voices in institutions which previously ehm did not give space you know to voices that came from the margin so there even I'll say even stronger leadership is called for.

P would you see yourself in a different leadership capacity in HE? You've said you're there, you're representing but where you're sitting now do you see yourself in a different capacity at some point?

R30 [long silence] I would like eh ehm to see myself in both a high profiled institutions or contexts where we are visible but also I would also like to still operate in those spaces where leadership isn't visible. People who are leading you, what are your expectations of them? I've heard a bit about visionaries.

R30 [laugh] our leaders we have leaders?

P yeah people who are leading you what do you expect?

R30 you know we know that today in HE take Wits for example, Wits has a black rector, Vermont has a black rector, historically white institutions [yeah] ehm Natal has a black rector [that's all] yeah I mean we know that it is not easy, I think it is the most challenging position for black people to be rectors or VCs of HWIs because their space of operation is limited I mean they lead the institutions that tradition and culture and ethos has been historically you know European and now to come in and to steer this ship you know to be captain of this ship that was forever geared to fill a xxx to steer it away from those waters it is not easy because we know that eh eh eh appointing black VCs is the demand of the times on the other hand we know that history is still the dominant factor given the you know that certainly some white people feel that eh this must not change drastically this transformation business you know must be controlled and our expectations must also be merciful for example we cannot expect our black VCs to do miracles, we will be expecting the impossible to say to them we want these institutions to have changed completely within a certain period of time, that would be really you know expecting the impossible. On the other hand we would like you know this leadership to take a stand against those elements that don't want transformation because they have you know these leaders have constituencies that back them we are there to back them so at times they must not be afraid to take when it comes to transformation that is a non-negotiable, that one is a non negotiable if anyone wants to negotiate that, no that one is non negotiable.

P and the people who you are leading what do you expect from them?

R30 [silence] to be understanding and merciful [laughing]

P merciful, I like that [laugh]. Okay, HE in SA, what should that be?

R30 HE in SA must serve this country and not other countries you know to England if you go to Oxford if you go to Amsterdam if you go to anywhere those institutions are local, they serve local needs, local agendas and HE in this country must serve the needs of this country, the needs of the region, the needs of Africa and that is a primary you know concern, it is nice to say a world class university it must serve this country so Vermont or wherever must serve this country must be local or must be glocal both local and global but certainly local first and the questions and needs of this country must be served it must be addressed by these institutions I support the minister of health who said before these boys and girls go overseas they must serve here that's a prerogative because they were educated by our taxes, it's our tax money, they must serve here first, so non negotiable.

P so that is one of the challenges for you that we are sitting with a non-African, non SA education system

R30 yes which is really foreign to our conditions here eh before declaring education international it must be local it must be national

P do you think there is a sense of collaboration in HE?

R30 yes and no I mean it is in the nature of institutions of higher learning to be self centred self-seeking each and every institution wants to keep and reserve a certain identity and yet that is not good for this country because we need collaboration on all levels for eg, these 3 institutions, universities in this region must be forced to co-operate, must forced to collaborate as I've said on levels various levels there are things that they can do jointly without losing their character in the process but it is important that collaboration must be the bottom line because we don't have such funds endless funds to promote eh xxx favoritism? (three world-class institutions) we don't have that kind of money

P and at institutional level do you see collaboration happening?

R30 yes I in various sectors there is collaboration xxx but that must increase

P would you say there is a leadership role for everyone in HE?

R30 oh yes, of course yes because you know we need more leaders rather than less and we need eh in fact our problem is the absence of leadership, leaders you know of quality of character, we are in need of such leaders

P would you say there are factors that prevent people from taking up leadership or exercising leadership responsibilities?

R30 yes and no [FAVOURITE SAYING WHAT DOES IT MEAN, EASY WAY OUT?] you know sometimes it is eh our self interest we you know sometimes we go on our ego trips and eh forget about the rest, we are self-seeking and that, that prevents you know such leadership from eh being at the centre of service because ehm education is there for service whoever is educated has had the privilege to be exposed to HE to HEIs must know that their primary task is to serve they're educated to serve if if education does not prepare you for service then our future is dark

P and would you say that these factors are different for men and for women?

R30 yes and now you know on the positive side institutions are very conscious today about the role of women and it is up to women you know to take up the challenge they must not just be howlers but they must take up the challenge; they must be the subject and not the object you know of these things, it's only when women who are subjects and they transcend actually they transcend themselves you are only a leader when you transcend yourself you know at that point when you do that then you become a leader and I think women are challenged to do just that there are individual women who have responded to the challenge but I will say probably the greater majority for historical through our historical dynamics are still upholding to slogans to sloganeering and such things rather than answering the challenge to transcend themselves xxx to be equal to men, who said men are the yardstick are the canon the measuring rod, they aren't so women must never you know look at men and want to fashion themselves you know according to men's standards and so forth women must give a different kind of leadership because women are different in many ways to men so naturally their leadership would subsume would include some elements that are absent in men and it is that kind of leadership that we want male leadership I would say you know comparatively speaking has done a lot also in the past but not enough because the there was this element missing [knocking on door] because leadership is gendered is gendered is gendered

P and how would you play a role in developing leadership around you, at the institution?

R30 it is to create space where there is no space you know for creating leaders I mean I have leaders you know when I go to each class then I have a class of leaders potential leaders in front of me and I always I'm always conscious of the fact that these young people will one day be leaders in various fields so I'm always conscious of that fact and I' always stress the importance of morality in leadership because it is important, norms and values are important in any leadership programme so I make sure I always emphasise I make sure that we will have a generation of moral leaders in the future and I think it is very important

P would you say that our system from where you are sitting that our HE system your institution you can come back to that if you want to that they are free from discriminatory practices?

R30 yes and no you see we must never ever forget where we've come from, discrimination is part and parcel of our culture in this country we had discrimination for over 300 years and it will take quite a while to eradicate discrimination in the very fabric of our soul so even in higher in institutions of higher learning of in HE discrimination runs through our institutions like scarlet through black velvet like that (HERE HE ANIMATES WITH HAND MOVEMENTS A THIN THREAD ON A CLOTH) runs through like that it is there it is useless to deny it is not there, it is there what we should do is what do we do when we encounter it we must be mature to admit it and I think it is that is the problem, it is so difficult to admit that you know we still have discrimination here wherever there is no transformation and wherever it is problematic to talk about transformation we know that the opposite pole is discrimination it is because of that it is because of the presence of that element it is that element that makes people to refuse to transform it is there and it is one of the major issues against transformation discrimination discrimination on various grounds we know we have racism we cannot run away from it we still have racism in these institutions, we have sexism and we also have discrimination on performance [WHAT WOULD THIS MEAN, SHOULD I ASK HIM?]

P so discrimination exists with race. I'm glad that you've talked about transformation, I'm actually interested in transformation but I didn't want to put it on the table like that that's why I used the phrase 'discriminatory practices' I know it is not the best description of it

Challenges

Culture of individualism

Being in service of others

women must do it for themselves

Single Text Lockup, YES, Differences between

History, Context

Being Courageous, Agents of change,

only in the public sector when, when we challenge you know these in corporate companies why are there so few Black people in management they tell you about standards xxx it is so difficult to find suitable candidates and all that rubbish [where are the people because that's the one thing that I hear] and especially what it come to institutions the previously the HWIs when they talk about the absence of candidates I say you go to hell you when did you train them? Since when did you train them? I was not trained in this country and so is over 90% of people who are on the staff on these previously white institutions, they were not trained in this country, they were not prepared so this they must stop saying where are the candidates, they did not prepare them, they did not train them they were trained elsewhere this is why we are here but these institutions did not in fact they were busy beneficiaries of apartheid this is what they were doing they were enjoying apartheid today they boast about you know our we have so many A class scholars researchers I say you go to hell to whom are you boasting we would have been that have we received the same privileges we were not beneficiaries of apartheid you were now you come to tell us about standards you've been using stolen money to equip yourself now I'm using I'm very angry I become very angry when people come with that kind of talk cheap talk because I know because I know what they've been doing up to this day in these previously white institutions it's still white people enjoying all the privileges are still the beneficiaries of apartheid the legacy apartheid lives on (look what I can also not understand the story about I mean even if we just think about ten or just before the end of apartheid people know that we were moving into a new direction, so where are their students?) because I always ask them you knew very well that one day things will change there'll be a new order what did you do to prepare you know black students for that change because they should even if they started in the 80s if they had followed you know say some brilliant students and encourage them after their junior degrees and encouraged them and employ them as research assistants and follow them up to PhD we would have had a different picture now they didn't do that up to now it is still a struggle (yeah and then they use that as an excuse for all of them have been saying)

P I just want to ask the last question, no more specific questions on leadership per se but the way the interview went, the sort of questions that I asked do you think that some of them worked for you and some of them didn't, if you talk about leadership you would have asked one or two different questions so just your

R30 look I think you asked all the right and relevant questions for me because you've prepared it before so you really know what is it that you want so I am satisfied with it because I did not prepare myself emotionally for that but the way you ask them I will say in most cases I would have asked the same questions because they all should fit in with what you want to do.