

**Gender, race and the social construction of leadership in
organisations: A South African case study**

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Declaration of authorship

I, Clifford Pierre Lewis, declare that the thesis entitled ‘Gender, race and the social construction of leadership in organisations: A South African case study’ and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

This work was done mainly while in candidature for a research degree at Queen Mary University of London; where any part of this thesis has been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated; where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.

I have acknowledged all main sources of help; where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself; no parts of this work have been published, however I did author and co-author the following conference papers during my doctoral candidature with Queen Mary University of London:

Lewis, C.P., 2016. A case for an extension of the Leadership Labyrinth framework using intersectional data from the South African private sector. Nairobi: Africa Academy of Management Biennial Conference.

Lewis, C.P., 2014. Leadership development, gender and race: Insights from intersectionality in a South African context. Munich: Conference on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Lewis, C.P., 2014. A race and gender group analysis of participant experiences in a leadership development programme in a South African retail environment. Valencia: European Academy of Management Conference.

Lewis, C.P., Aldossari, M. & Bourne, D., 2014. Would a rose by any other name still smell as sweet? The importance of authentic leadership in leadership development. Valencia: European Academy of Management Conference.

Furthermore, I co-authored the following book chapter with my supervisor Prof. Ahu Tatli during my doctoral candidature with Queen Mary University of London:

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a subjectivist account of women and people of colour's leadership experiences within a specific social context, in order to offer a contribution to the largely acontextual leadership literature. A multi-level, intersectional analytical framework was used to explore the experiences of people who are marginalised in their attempt to access and practice leadership. The study used the South African private sector as a social context with unique and interesting gender and race dynamics to conduct this case study.

The experiences of significantly underrepresented groups in organisational leadership were explored by means of 60 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions, aspiring leaders in leadership development programmes and key informants, all from the South African private sector. Interviewees were grouped according to their intersectional identities and responses were analysed considering individual-level challenges and enablers, organisational-level challenges and enablers and also by considering responses within the socio-historic and socio-legal context.

Key findings include evidence of the problematic nature of theorising leadership as an element of the leader; support for theoretical frameworks of occupational segregation and embodied social identities; evidence of the internalisation and rationalisation of institutionalised discrimination; evidence of social identities being mutually constituting, reinforcing and naturalising; evidence of the conflation of gender, race and merit in the equality debate; as well as a strong aversion among research participants towards positive discrimination initiatives. The findings also suggest several areas of possible further research.

This study addressed the limitations of leadership research, which is characterised by leader-centricism, romanticism, objectivism, gendered and racialised norms and additive theorising. Findings make theoretical and policy contributions by problematising merit, exposing leadership in the South African private sector organisations as a site of intersectional identity salience, disrupting key assumptions underpinning leader-follower relations, highlighting the potential for leveraging adversity and also by demonstrating the importance of leadership language in either disrupting or reinforcing inequality.

Table of contents

Declaration of authorship	3
Abstract	4
Table of contents	5
List of Appendices	10
List of abbreviations	11
List of figures and tables	12
Chapter 1: Introduction	13
1.1 Introduction	13
1.2 Research rationale	13
1.3 Research objectives	16
1.4 Outline of the thesis	17
Chapter 2: A critical review of organisational leadership theory	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Studying leadership as an element of the leader	19
2.2.1 Psychological approaches to studying leadership.....	19
2.2.2 Behavioural approaches to studying leadership.....	24
2.3 Studying leadership as a product of relationships	30
2.4 Context-based approaches to studying leadership	32
2.4.1 The organisation as context	33
2.4.2 Society as context	35
2.5 Critical Leadership Studies	38
2.6 A working definition of leadership	41
2.6 Conclusion	48
Chapter 3: A critical review of the literature on gender, race and organisational leadership	51
3.1 Introduction	51
3.2 Gender and leadership	52
3.3 Race and leadership	63
3.4 Gender, race and leadership	66
3.5 Conclusion	69

Chapter 4: The South African context.....	71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 The socio-historic context	71
4.2.1 Before Apartheid: A brief history of Southern Africa leading up to the four decades of National Party rule	71
4.2.2 The Republic of South Africa: Apartheid and the birth of the ‘new South Africa’	74
4.3 The socio-legal context	81
4.3.1 A case for interventionist policy: Race and gender in contemporary South African workplaces	81
4.3.2 Equality- and employment legislation in South Africa.....	88
4.4 Conclusion	96
Chapter 5: Research philosophy, strategy and methodology	99
5.1. Introduction	99
5.2. Research philosophy	99
5.2.1 A subjectivist ontology of leadership theorising	99
5.2.2 A qualitative, multi-level research approach	102
5.2.3 Gender, race and intersectionality in leadership research.....	104
5.3. The research strategy	109
5.3.1 The research design.....	110
5.3.2 The analytical framework	111
5.3.2.1 Micro-level analysis: The individual	112
5.3.2.2 Meso-level analysis: The organisation.....	113
5.3.2.3 Engagement with macro-level structures: The context.....	114
5.3.3 The fieldwork process.....	116
5.3.3.1 Preparing for data collection	116
5.3.3.2 The data collection process	120
5.3.4 The data analysis process.....	126
5.4 Reflecting on the research process.....	132
5.4.1 Reflecting on my research interests, personal values and potential biases.....	132
5.4.2 Reflecting on my interaction with the participants	135
5.4.3 Reflecting on my interaction with the data	137
5.5 Conclusion	139

Chapter 6: Individual challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector	140
6.1 Introduction	140
6.2 Individual challenges and constraints	140
6.2.1 Personal challenges	140
6.2.2 Control and the role of the leader in South African organisations	149
6.2.3 Power, leadership and individual challenges and constraints	153
6.2.4 Leadership role models and individual challenges and constraints	156
6.2.5 Leader-follower relationships and individual challenges and constraints	162
6.3 Individual enablers.....	166
6.3.1 Personal enablers in accessing and practising strategic leadership in a South African context.....	167
6.3.2 Leadership role models and individual enablers and opportunities.....	170
6.3.3 Leader-follower relationships and individual enablers and opportunities	172
6.4 Conclusion: Individual challenges, constrains and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector	173
Chapter 7: Organisational challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector	175
7.1 Introduction	175
7.2 Organisational challenges and constraints	175
7.2.1 The challenge of explicit discrimination.....	175
7.2.2 Institutionalised discrimination.....	183
7.2.2.1 Rationalising institutional discrimination	183
7.2.2.2 Work-life balance challenges.....	188
7.2.2.3 Challenges within leadership development	190
7.2.2.4 Challenges within mentoring relationships.....	193
7.3 Organisational enablers.....	195
7.3.1 Work-life balance as an enabler.....	196
7.3.2 Formal leadership development as an enabler	198

7.3.3 Informal leadership development as an enabler.....	201
7.3.4 Leadership development in context	202
7.4 Equity legislation- and policy implementation	205
7.4.1 Surface-level transformation.....	205
7.4.2 The legacy of Apartheid within private sector organisations	208
7.4.3 An aversion to and a desire for interventionist policy implementation	213
7.5 Conclusion: Organisational challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector	217
Chapter 8: Perspectives and experiences of the socio-historical and socio-legal context of organisational leadership in South Africa.....	218
8.1 Introduction	218
8.2 The socio-historical context.....	218
8.2.1 Historically disadvantaged societal roles.....	219
8.2.1.1 The societal role of women in South African society.....	219
8.2.1.2 The societal role of people of colour in South African society	229
8.2.2 The legacy of Apartheid in South African society.....	234
8.3 The socio-legal context.....	238
8.3.1 Attitudes towards equality legislation.....	239
8.3.2 The perceived impact of equality legislation.....	247
8.3.2.1 Positive versus negative impact	247
8.3.2.2 Emerging societal trends.....	250
8.4 Conclusion: Perspectives and experiences of the socio-historical and socio-legal context for organisational leadership in South Africa.....	255
Chapter 9: Concluding discussion.....	257
9.1 Introduction	257
9.2 Research questions and key findings.....	258
9.2.1 Individual-level challenges and constraints in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations.....	258
9.2.1.1 Individual-level challenges and constraints	258
9.2.1.2 Individual-level enablers.....	261

9.2.2 Organisational challenges and constraints in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations	263
9.2.2.1 Organisational challenges	263
9.2.2.2 Organisational enablers.....	266
9.2.2.3 Organisational implementation of interventionist policy	267
9.2.3 Perceptions and experiences of the social context of leadership in South African private sector organisations.....	268
9.2.3.1 Perceptions and experiences of the socio-historical context.....	268
9.2.3.2 Perceptions and experiences of the socio-legal context.....	270
9.3 Original contribution of this study and its implications.....	273
9.3.1 Theoretical contribution.....	273
9.3.2 Implications for policy and practise.....	276
9.4 Limitations and areas for further study.....	278
9.5 Concluding remarks.....	280
References.....	282

List of Appendices

Appendix One	Interview guide
Appendix Two	Participant biographical information
Appendix Three	Ethical approval
Appendix Four	Informed consent form
Appendix Five	Analytical frameworks

List of abbreviations

AA	Affirmative Action
BBBEE	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
BCE	Basic Conditions of Employment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
EE	Employment Equity
SDA	Skills Development Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority

List of figures and tables

List of figures

- Figure 4.1: Participation in higher education by race
- Figure 4.2: Participation in higher education by gender
- Figure 4.3: Mean hourly earnings according to gender and race
- Figure 5.1: Excerpt from research diary
- Figure 5.2: Total sample composition according to industry
- Figure 5.3: Presentation of participant information
- Figure 5.4: Screenshot of axial codes in NVivo
- Figure 5.5: Screenshot of axial codes expanded to thematic codes in NVivo
- Figure 6.1: Comparative education and experience averages for gender and race
- Figure 6.2: Comparative education and experience averages for intersectional groups
- Figure 6.3: Comparison of appointment patterns
- Figure 8.1: Percentage rejection rate of gendered leadership concepts (excerpt)

List of tables

- Table 2.1: Difference between managers and leaders
- Table 4.1: BBBEE scoring matrix
- Table 4.2: BBBEE level matrix
- Table 5.1: Debates, theories and sources in the micro-level analysis
- Table 5.2: Debates, theories and sources in the meso-level analysis
- Table 5.3: Debates, theories and sources for an engagement with macro-social structures
- Table 5.4: Summary of sample characteristics
- Table 5.5a: Key for Table 5.5b
- Table 5.5b: Participant biographical information
- Table 5.6: 'Challenges and constraints' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.7: 'Conceptualisation' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.8: 'Enablers' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.9: 'Enactment' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.10: 'Leadership development' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.11: 'Legislation and public policy' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data
- Table 5.12: 'Networks' axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

According to Yukl (2010), the concept of leadership only progressed into scientific study near the beginning of the 20th century. Since the acceptance of leadership as a legitimate field of study, an extensive body of knowledge has emerged as to what may be considered leadership, who are leaders, as well as how we develop leaders.

Arguably, the abundance of diverging approaches to studying leadership results from the absence of a concise, global definition of the phenomenon. Many have tried to pin down the exact meaning of leadership in the hope that the resulting conceptualisation may be used universally, but because of the close association with terms such as power, authority, management and control, a universally recognised definition of leadership seems impossible and improbable (Yukl 2010). This study adopts the following definition of leadership, as distilled from the existing literature:

Leadership is a social process which occurs through the facilitation of power – availed through organisational practises or societal norms – within a network of purposeful relationships with organisational members, to create meaning and influence member activity.

The divergent and expansive nature of leadership theory has led to several knowledge gaps (Gardner et al. 2010; Dinh et al. 2014; Junker & van Dick 2014; Parry et al. 2014). This research focuses specifically on the knowledge gap pertaining to gender, race and social context. This chapter offers an overview of the rationale underpinning this research, the aims of the study and an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Research rationale

The majority of mainstream leadership theory originates from the United States and represents research conducted by predominantly White men about the leadership experiences of predominantly White men (House & Aditya 1997). This is problematic considering that the extant leadership theory is presented as being gender- and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Sanchez et al. 2007; Chin et al. 2007). Resultantly, in-depth insight into gender (Korabik & Ayman 2007) and race (Ospina & Su 2009) and how these influence experience has not yet penetrated mainstream leadership theory.

Furthermore, since gender and race are socially constructed concepts, this state of leadership research necessitates studies which incorporate knowledge of societal structures into more contextualised leadership theorising. Resultantly, a knowledge gap manifests in two ways in the leadership literature. Firstly, in the manner in which mainstream leadership theorising is gender- and race neutral, while according to gender and race scholars, leadership is both gendered and racialised. Secondly, a knowledge gap manifests as a discrepancy between the voluminous ‘gender- and race neutral leadership theory’ and the relatively smaller body of leadership theory which acknowledges gender and race dynamics.

The acontextual nature of a majority of leadership theorising (Dinh et al. 2014; Junker & van Dick 2014) has resulted in classical conceptualisations being essentially a Western concept, centered around masculine concepts of the ‘ideal worker’ (Acker 1990; Rapoport et al. 2002; Gambles et al. 2006). Women and people of colour are thus largely excluded from the leadership conversation. Furthermore, in instances where the leadership experiences of women and people of colour are considered in leadership theorising, there seems to be an unbalanced preoccupation with gender and race as an ‘obstacle’, which must be overcome. The Western and highly masculine conceptualisation of leadership is represented in close proximity with constructs such as performance (Khan et al. 2012; Sam et al. 2012; Weiner & Mahoney 1981), power (Sinha 1995; Ospina & Foldy 2009; Nye 2010; Gordon 2011), control (Mumby 1998; Riad 2011) and hierarchy (Huey & Sookdeo 1994; Adler 2007). Thus, leadership studies which explore the experiences of performance measures, control and hierarchy should and must consider the societal contexts which produce these constructs.

In addition to the ‘obstacle’ perspective of gender and race, there seems to exist a trend within the leadership literature which addresses gender and race in a manner which builds leadership theory that is ‘additive’ in nature (Brewer 1993; Simmons 2007). Leadership theorising which has been criticized as being ‘additive’ tends to view gender and race – among others – as independent factors which can be separated from one’s understanding of leadership. Additive theorising assumes an external and objective norm to which special considerations for gender or race may be ‘added’. Therefore, an additive approach to leadership theorising which implies a ‘divergence’ from a norm was avoided

during this research. Rather, an approach which eagerly considers the complex, multi-levelled and co-constructed nature of gender and race (Collinson & Hearn 2014; Mavin & Grandy 2016a) was used to design this study.

Representation statistics suggest that this acontextual nature of leadership theorising has a material impact on how women and people of colour experience accessing and practising leadership in organisations. National statistics from various countries suggest the underrepresentation of women and people of colour among strategic leadership in organisations to be an international trend (Scott et al. 1998; Bush 2007; Sing 2011; Kalra et al. 2009; Pichler et al. 2008; Toegel 2011; Office for National Statistics 2013; Statistics South Africa 2012b; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Given the seemingly global nature of this trend in organisational leadership, a distinct and unique social context had to be identified to effectively examine leadership experienced within a social context. The socio-historical and socio-legal context in South Africa presented a unique environment for this identity-based leadership research. South Africa's recent history of segregation and rapidly evolving equality landscape makes this social context truly unique from the perspective of race and gender equality within leadership research. Of particular concern here is that the smaller proportion of the economically active population, namely White people at less than 10%, represent over 70% of top leadership roles in private sector organisations (Statistics South Africa 2012a; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Secondly, when compared to developed countries such as Australia and the United States, women in South Africa seem to be far better represented, albeit still statistically underrepresented (Statistics South Africa 2012b; BWA SA 2012; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Given this unique social context, this study was designed in a manner which enabled the researcher to illuminate how the social context impacts on the experience of accessing and practising leadership in organisations.

Finally, South African private sector organisations offer a unique social context for leadership research in that racial- and gendered transformation is seemingly occurring at a much slower rate than in the public sector. Slow transformation despite large-scale initiatives and formal policy promoting equality offers a unique context layer which might be informing social identities and in turn the leadership experience.

1.3 Research objectives

The main aim of this study was to make a significant contribution to the leadership literature through the examination of experiences of women and people of colour within a specific socio-historical and socio-legal context. In particular, the case study aimed to understand how leadership theorising, which is generally presented as being gender and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009), has ignored the lived experiences of women and people of colour and how knowledge of these experiences may contribute to leadership theorising. Additionally, the study aimed to illuminate how the socio-historical and socio-legal contexts influence dimensions of identity – such as gender and race – and how this in turn impacts the leadership experience. The study addresses the aforementioned objectives through a qualitative study situated in a particular social context and analyses data by means of a multi-level approach.

Given the seemingly persistent underrepresentation of women and people of colour in organisational leadership positions, this research uses South Africa as a unique social context to answer research questions at an individual-, organisational- and societal level. The main research question and associated sub-questions are as follows:

How is leadership constructed and practised in the South African private sector?

Individual level: *What are the individual-level challenges, constraints and enablers women and people of colour experience in accessing and practising strategic leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa?*

Organisational level: *What organisational factors contribute to or hinder women and people of colour from accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector?*

Societal level: *How do historical and legislative factors influence the representation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions in private sector organisations in South Africa?*

This research offers a contribution to the leadership literature by means of a contextualised perspective on how various social processes intersect within a particular and unique social context and how that impacts upon the leadership experience. In particular, the study challenges conventional leader-centric conceptualisations of leadership, by demonstrating the interrelated nature of social structures and individual leadership experiences. The research also makes an important contribution to policy and practise by offering unique insights into perceptions of positive discrimination and related interventionist policies. These insights may be used to aid the development of improved policies and practises which might expedite the relatively slow transformation currently observed among the leadership structures of South African private sector organisations.

In order to do so, the study draws on organisational leadership literature, gender studies, race and ethnic studies, legal literature and historical literature, as well as legislation, archival material and national statistics. Drawing on a wide range of literature and data sources, this study built a rigorous foundation of existing knowledge, which underpins the qualitative exploratory methods used. Furthermore, 60 in-depth, semi-structured one-on-one interviews with women and people of colour formed the primary source of data for this study. The next section offers an outline of the structure of how this research is presented in this thesis.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Including this introduction chapter, the thesis is structured into nine chapters. These include three literature review chapters, a chapter on methodology, three analysis chapters and a final chapter containing the concluding discussion.

The three literature chapters include a critical review of mainstream leadership literature, a critical review of the leadership literature focusing on issues of gender and race and finally a review of the South African context within which the research was conducted. The review of the mainstream leadership literature in Chapter 2 covers an overview and critique of psychological-, behavioural-, relational- and context-based approaches to studying leadership since these continue to influence much leadership literature. Chapter 2 also uses existing literature to develop and present a working definition of leadership. The review of gender- and race based studies of leadership in Chapter 3 separates and critically

discusses the literature as three interrelated but distinct sections, namely ‘gender and leadership’, ‘race and leadership’ and ‘gender, race and leadership’. Chapter 4, which is on the South African context, elaborates on the significance of the South African private sector as a unique setting for identity-based research and contextual leadership research. The chapter offers relevant background into South Africa’s history and the current legal landscape. Literature, historical information, archival material and contemporary national-level statistics are used to substantiate South Africa as an appropriate site for this study. Together, these three chapters form the foundation upon which the entire research project is built.

Furthermore, I offer a chapter on the research philosophy and subsequent methodologies underpinning this study. In Chapter 5, I discuss the subjectivist ontology, the qualitative multi-level epistemology, and also offer a description of the fieldwork process along with an overview of the sampled participants. In this chapter, I also discuss in detail the process used for organising, analysing and presenting the data.

The analysis of the qualitative data was carried out according to a multi-level analytical framework. Thus, the analysis is presented in three distinct, but related, chapters. Each chapter addresses a different level of analysis, namely micro-, meso- and macro levels. At a micro-level of analysis, specific attention was given to responses regarding individual-level challenges as well as enablers experienced in accessing and practising leadership in South African organisations. At the meso-level of analysis, the focus shifted to organisational structures which posed challenges as well as offered opportunities for the access to and practise of leadership. Finally, at a macro-social level, the socio-historic and socio-legal contexts were engaged in order to analyse experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the societal context within which participants accessed and practised leadership.

The thesis concludes with a chapter discussing findings at a higher level of abstraction as in the preceding analysis chapters. Here, I discuss the theoretical, methodological and policy contributions offered by this study. In the concluding discussion, I also highlight key limitations of the study and possible avenues for future research.

Chapter 2: A critical review of organisational leadership theory

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, this research project aims to make a contribution to the leadership literature by examining the leadership experiences of those groups who have largely been excluded from theorising about leadership. In order to identify areas where this project might make a contribution, the extant leadership literature was reviewed and is presented in this chapter.

The chapter presents the critical review of the leadership literature in three broad sections. First, the leadership literature which approaches leadership as an element of the *leader* is discussed. Here, specific reference is made to psychological approaches and behavioural approaches to studying leadership. Following this section, the literature which approaches leadership as a product of relationships is discussed. The third section discusses context-based leadership theory, including theory which considers the organisation as context as well as theory which considers broader society as context.

Lastly, this chapter discusses the process which was followed in establishing a definition for the concept of leadership. This section draws on the existing literature and formulates a theoretical definition used throughout this research project to define leadership.

2.2 Studying leadership as an element of the leader

The expansive nature of leadership literature creates an illusion of a diverse group of approaches to the study of leadership, while in truth this is not the case. A large portion of the leadership literature, although diverging in their methodologies, are similar in that they approach ‘leadership as an element of the leader’ (Dinh et al. 2014; Dionne et al. 2014; Hannah et al. 2014). This section discusses two of the most dominant approaches to studying ‘leadership as an element of the leader’, namely psychological- and behavioural approaches.

2.2.1 Psychological approaches to studying leadership

Leadership has been a source of fascination that dates back to antiquity, but it only entered social scientific study in the 20th century (Yukl 2010). Various scholars (Burns

1978; Grint 1997; Bolden et al. 2011; Bryman et al. 2011; Daft 2011) concur about the general progression of mainstream leadership theorising. The earliest thoughts on leadership were concerned with the ideal of the 'Great Man'. This involved the belief that one person with extraordinary skills and abilities would be able to lead followers to a desired outcome, which essentially positions the leader as an idealised saviour who needs to protect, save or liberate the masses in some way or form. Arguably, this could be due to preoccupation with warfare and military strategy. As a result of this way of thinking, political- and organisational leadership is viewed as a kind of warfare during which the leader must act as the brave General and 'save' [his] followers from whatever impending onslaughts may come.

Refining the idea of a leader as the Great Man', scholars theorised about specific personal characteristics that would enable leadership abilities above and beyond those of the everyday person. One could also argue that advances in psychoanalysis by such individuals as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, which significantly raised awareness around concepts of personality, had an influence on the Trait Theory perspective of leadership (Hogan & Kaiser 2005; Winter 2005; Benson & Campbell 2007). Common knowledge today regarding personality profiles and their relationship to human behaviour, as is evident from the extensive use of psychometrics in recruitment selection and promotion in organisations (Odams & Smithers 1973; Buford 2002; Wren 2005; Barnett 2008; Harms et al. 2011), was relatively new in the early 20th century. This 'new' way of thinking about people provided an opportunity to think about leadership more scientifically and systematically than merely attributing leadership ability to [vague] inherent 'greatness' (Gabriel 2011).

Expectedly, the review reveals that early accounts of leadership theorising have a distinctly positivist underpinning. Classical studies of leadership tend to be situated firmly within a functionalist paradigm where the primary concern is the unilateral causal relationship between leader and outcomes, also commonly referred to as the Trait-, Great Man- or Heroic approach to studying leadership (Stogdill 1974; Huey & Sookdeo 1994; Grint 2011). This preoccupation with the relationships between leader and functional outcomes resulted in the romanticising of leadership and its influence within organisations (Jackson 2005). The influence of this approach to theorising leadership can still be seen in

contemporary studies of leadership that are leader-centric and focus on the leader-outcome relationship (Butler & Reese 1991; House et al. 1991; Prussia et al. 1998; Wang et al. 2005; Somech 2006; Jooste & Fourie 2009; Stein et al. 2009; Yukl 2011; Choudhary et al. 2012; Khan et al. 2012; Peterson et al. 2012; Carter & Greer 2013).

However, some theorists believed that an approach which assumed leaders possessed certain traits was flawed in that a single set of leader-specific personal traits was not distinguishable from non-leader traits. Possibly one of the most widely cited critiques of the trait approach to leadership is that of Stogdill (1948) who stated that a review of leadership literature could not produce a set of common traits found in all leaders. He therefore suggested that leadership is rather a social situation which occurs between people and that a leader in one particular situation may not be a leader in another. This was a seemingly fatal blow to trait-leadership as it implied that personal traits are insufficient to predict leader effectiveness (Mann 1959).

The trait approach to leadership rests on the belief that in order to be a leader one must possess a static and predetermined set of traits or abilities. Here it is important to note that a 'trait' does not refer to a skill, as skills can be developed. Leadership traits specifically refer to inherent abilities of a person that make him or her different from other non-leaders. This underlying assumption that leaders are somehow inherently different from non-leaders is key in the critiques of the literature offered in the following chapter, as these inherent traits are often gendered and racialised but presented as gender- and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009).

Despite Stogdill's (1948; 1974) seminal critique of trait-based leadership theory, a focus on leader characteristics as central to the leadership phenomenon still prevail in current studies (Grint 2005). These include, but are not limited to, leadership and emotional intelligence (Buford 2002; Stein et al. 2009), leadership and ethics (Yukl 2010), leadership style (Eagly & Johnson 1990; Eagly & Carli 2003) and leadership heritability (Chaturvedi et al. 2012).

Ideologies of the 'heroic leader' fill accounts of years gone by. Especially in times of deep crises, people tend to turn toward a person who will 'save them' from their circumstances. One's memory tends to drift towards these images when one is asked to

conceptualise the term leadership. This heroic leadership occurs when followers in crises project their needs and wants (mostly fueled by fear and uncertainty) onto some kind of social symbol (Burns 1978). This projection then offers some type of perceived solution. The result of this conceptualisation of leadership is a tendency to envision leadership as a person-centred entity or activity.

There is an abundance of critique against trait approaches to studying leadership. Arguably the most popular is that of Stogdill (1948; 1974) who asserted that no empirical evidence supports the assumption that a single set of traits, across all leadership contexts, can distinguish a leader from a non-leader. More importantly, when considering gender- and race equality in organisational leadership, it is not the assumption that leadership requires specific traits that is significant, but the nature of these traits. According to Burns (1978), trait theory's close proximity with the ideal 'heroic leader' has meant that assumed desirable leadership traits were significantly gendered to reflect stereotypical characteristics of men. A continued focus on assumed leadership traits runs the risk of reproducing inequality by fixating on an idealised 'heroic leader' (Acker 2006) and could also positively downplay the importance of complex interaction occurring between leader, followers and various other stakeholders (Grint 1997; Ladkin 2010).

Disregarding evidence against trait-based leadership theory, the question of whether leaders are born or made still rages on. In an attempt to answer this question, Chaturvedi et al. (2012) reviewed the literature on heritability, gender and leadership. Among the findings were indications that a significant level of variance in leadership role occupancy and exhibited leadership style could be ascribed to genetic factors. It should, however, be noted here that a limitation to most findings in this instance is the low statistical power of the small samples which were used. Chaturvedi et al. (2012) conclude that total variance in leadership role occupancy and leader behaviour is a product of both genetic and situational factors. In addition to this finding, there also was not sufficient evidence to distinguish genetic impact in males from genetic impact in females.

Approaches based on trait-based theory tend to be overly focused on the leader and do not give due consideration to the leader-follower dynamic. In addition to this, because of the aforementioned shortcoming, trait-based theory also does not acknowledge the existence of social processes that occur between leader, follower and other stakeholders.

Due to the inherently gendered and ethno-centric nature of organisations, a trait-based approach to leadership runs the risk of reproducing and promoting discriminatory practises by idealising the ‘heroic leader’. One alternative to trait-based theory, however, is that of a behaviour- or style-based approach.

Behavioural theories about leadership offer an alternative to the assumption that only certain biologically/psychologically predisposed individuals are able to act as leaders. The behavioural approach to theorising about leadership supposed that certain human behaviours lead to desired organisational outcomes and not necessarily inherent traits (Larson & Richburg 2004). These behaviours may include anything from effective decision-making to transparent decision-making, or positive inter-personal conduct to a positive intra-personal dialogue. Arguably behavioural theories’ biggest conceptual departure from trait theory is that leadership can therefore be developed by teaching an individual certain appropriate leadership behaviours and competencies – a belief which is still seen in contemporary leadership practises, especially in leadership development (Carey & Ogden 2004; Boyatzis et al. 2004).

Increased interest in behavioural approaches to studying leadership, however, brought to light a significant amount of evidence that a static ‘ideal’ set of desirable leadership behaviours are not necessarily applicable to every situation. From this approach to leadership, the ‘contingency theory’ approach to studying leadership was born. Massive popularity among management professionals of models such as McGregor’s X/Y Theory (1960), Blake and Mouton’s Managerial Grid (1964), Fiedler’s Contingency Model (1967), Hersey and Blanchard’s Model of Situational Leadership (1977) and Vroom and Jago’s Model of Decision Participation (1988) sparked much attention to this approach (McGregor 1960; Grint 1997; Daft 1999; McKee & Carlson 1999; Bolden et al. 2011). Some of these theoretical frameworks still influence thinking about leadership today. For example, Sahin (2012) uses the more contemporary Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory to explain why some managers adopt a Theory X style of management and why some a Theory Y style. His findings pointed towards relationships developing between leaders and followers and that the quality of these relationships determines management style. These findings also resonate with Stogdill's (1948) earlier assertions that leadership is not an activity exercised by one individual onto another, but rather a specific social

situation. This approach to theorising about leadership can also be connected to later research suggesting that women leaders have an advantage over men leaders since they have a tendency to focus on teams and relationships rather than structure and performance, which are valued leadership practises in modern organisations (Rosener 1990; Appelbaum & Shapiro 1993; Stanford et al. 1995; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Appelbaum et al. 2003). The leadership theory from a specifically gendered and racialised perspective is discussed in the following chapter.

2.2.2 Behavioural approaches to studying leadership

A move away from the classic trait theory, but still maintaining a strong focus on the individual leader, is that of the behaviourist approach to studying leadership. This approach is more concerned with enacted behaviours and styles of leadership than with inherent traits. Where classic views of a good leader often assumed a kind of authoritarian style (Daft 2011), the behavioural study of leadership allowed for investigations into alternative leadership styles that could also offer positive results. One such alternative is that of the dualism between ‘Initiating structure’ and ‘concern for people’ (Grint 2011). This leadership style dualism assumes that the good leader is able to balance the needs of the business (or tasks) with the needs of the people performing them – and thus maintaining relationships. It is axiomatic that the world of work in the West is gender stratified. Women, – arguably as a result of their societal gender role as primary caregivers in a family setting, – have often been assumed to be more suitable for work roles which require more emotional labour (Witz 1992; Collinson & Hearn 1996) – roles that are not easily reconciled with the work of an authoritarian leader. It therefore comes as no surprise that when thinking of leadership styles, that women leaders are often assumed to be more inclined towards the ‘Concern for People’ styles. The notion that one may adopt a ‘feminine style’ of leadership also assumes that people must act within their socialised gender roles (Korabik & Ayman 2007). As a result of the highly gendered conceptualisation of models of management and leadership (Collinson & Hearn 1996; Koenig et al. 2011), behavioural approaches to leadership such as ‘feminine leadership’ marginalise women within the leadership context. This assertion is supported by the literature in the form of studies indicating negative evaluations of leaders who are

perceived to be acting outside of their social gender role (Rudman & Glick 1999; Eagly 2005; Brescoll et al. 2010). Women perceived to act with agency (i.e., not being submissive) or adopting a more assertive leadership style are found more likely to be rated negatively by peers and subordinates when asked about leader performance.

However, if women do voice their unique challenges at work, it only promotes the assumption that they are different from men and therefore need to be more like men in their enactment of leadership. This then perpetuates gendered practises in that females are considered to only have reached their potential after they have fully adopted men's styles of leading (Smithson & Stokoe 2005). These perceptions of leader effectiveness, as well as perceived likelihood for success, pose challenges for leader emergence and race equality. Findings suggest that women may receive negative responses when behaving in an assertive and dominant manner (Livingston et al. 2012) and that non-White groups may have their performance negatively evaluated when they are perceived to be significantly responsible for organisational success (Rosette et al. 2008). If marginalised groups foresee negative treatment, one may argue that they would attempt to avoid these situations. If this is the case, poor representation of women and people of colour may be ascribed to this. However, Nkomo (1992), and more recently Parker (2005) and Chin et al. (2007), state that gender and also race are far more than simply demographic characteristics of a person or group; these dimensions of identity go beyond mere surface characteristics and exist as an organisational and societal dynamic. Deeper knowledge is however needed on the lived experiences of women and people of colour in accessing and practising leadership (Suyemoto & Ballou 2007).

According to Sears et al. (1991) there are few significant differences in the way men and women lead. They state that notable differences only occur in controlled laboratory-type studies, and even then in those instances women tend to emphasise both social and task leadership behaviours whereas men would generally emphasise task behaviours. Other scholars, however, assert that an increase in women into the workforce and an increasing appreciation for what is considered as more 'feminine' leadership styles, which are considered by some to be a more suitable way of leading in modern organisations (Ashcraft & Mumby 2004; Eagly 2005; Parker 2005; Eagly 2007), may offer an opportunity to combat inequality (Bass & Avolio 1994). Observed differences in

leadership behaviours between men and women could arguably also be attributed to differences in how men and women conceptualise leadership. Alimo-Metcalfe (2010), in a study in the United Kingdom, found that significant differences exist in how men and women conceptualise leadership, in that women tend towards a transformational conceptualisation and men more towards that of transactional leadership. This is indeed an on-going debate, with many scholars disagreeing on the matter.

In a meta-analysis on gender and leadership style, Eagly and Johnson (1990) did not find evidence of the commonly proposed gender stereotype of men leading with a task-orientation and women leading with a more interpersonal -orientation. They did, nonetheless, find evidence that men and women leaders differ in style in the sense that women were inclined to lead more democratically and men autocratically. However, their findings were based on data from experimental research and they contend that in organisational settings where behaviour would be influenced by other factors – like that of long-term relationships – classic gender stereotypical behaviour might be less evident.

Similarly, using the LMX framework under experimental conditions, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) found that the leadership style among women was more transformational, while being more management-by-exception and laissez-faire among men. These findings resonated with popular literature on leader effectiveness that women are more suited for leadership positions in contemporary management contexts. In contrast to these findings, Vecchio (2002) asserts that leader effectiveness relating to gender-based behaviours is overstated. He cites various other factors that may impact on leader effectiveness, such as context and temporal dynamics, and states that a prediction of significant gender differences in leader effectiveness is too extreme. Vecchio (2002) also affirms that data collected from experimental research designs plays off the possibility that behaviour may be significantly different, given the relevant leaders' natural work setting.

Notwithstanding Vecchio's position on the matter, Eagly and Carli (2003) found that even when taking into account contextual challenges or barriers to advancement into leadership roles, women still maintained some advantage over men when considering their leadership style. They argue that even in roles dominated by men and organisational structures, women still advance into top leadership positions. They reiterate their previous findings of small effect sizes in gender-based leadership behaviour and assert that even

though small, these differences may have significant practical implications. Eagly and Carli (2003) go on to say that contributing factors to the so-called 'female advantage' include a shift in the female identity, a change in the leadership role, a change in organisational practises and a shift in organisational cultures.

Still unconvinced of the evidence supporting a gender advantage in leader effectiveness, Vecchio (2003) contends that methodologies used, along with biased assumptions on the part of the researcher, have led to overestimated proclamations of a gender-based advantage with regards to leadership roles. He states that an assertion of a 'gender advantage' connotes competitive superiority and should therefore have more empirical evidence, which it does not.

Contrary to earlier assertions that women leaders possess an advantage over men in terms of leadership style, Eagly (2005) states that women leaders face different challenges with regards to establishing buy-in from followers into the organisational values they promote on followers' behalf. She posits that perceived differences in values and incongruence with traditional gender hierarchies may result in negative evaluations of women leaders. This is an integral component of transformational leadership, which involves an emotional attachment to the leader, and an emotional and motivational arousal on the part of the follower (Den Hartog et al. 1997). Eagly and Carli (2003) concluded women tend to exhibit more of this than leaders who are men.

Studies using various versions of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) from the mid 1960s to early 1970s found that women scored higher than men on various scales relating to leader effectiveness (Stogdill 1974). Similarly, using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Bass and Avolio (1990) also found differences between the leadership styles used by men and those used by women. Several explanations for these observed differences have followed in the literature. These proposed explanations notably include the suggestion that women are more nurturing and socially sensitive than men (Rosener 1990), that women are more inclined to exhibit servant leadership behaviours than men (Block 1993), and also that women show a higher concern for follower needs and are therefore trusted and respected more by followers (Grint 1997).

The problem, however, associated with the assertion that women have an advantage over men is that this assumes cross-sectional similarity in all women. Not all women are

the same and instead of treating gender, race and other dimensions of identity as separate parallel constructs, it is recommended that they are considered as inter-related and compounding (Parker & Ogilvie 1996; Richardson & Loubier 2008; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Holvino 2010). In addition to this, prejudice towards women leaders, and what is considered appropriate behaviour, still prevails because leader prototypes – like the Great Man (Paris et al. 2009; Junker & van Dick 2014) – are not compatible with women’s societal gender role (Lyons et al. 2007; Cundiff & Komarraju 2008; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Booysen & Nkomo 2010). Considering differences in what may be deemed as socially acceptable behaviour for men and women highlights another problematic assumption underlying studies which examine gendered behavioural differences among leaders. This problematic assumption is that of an assumed causal relationship between gender and enacted leadership style or behaviour. Research, however, suggests that observed differences in how women behave as leaders is influenced more by highly gendered environment than inherent predispositions to a particular style of leadership (Rudman & Glick 1999; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Von Wahl 2011; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b). Evidence suggests that women opt for alternative leadership styles out of concern for negative consequences resulting from behaviour which is incongruent with their societal gender roles. This necessitates a consideration of the context in which said leadership behaviours manifest.

Furthermore, a preoccupation with leader effectiveness and whether men or women make better leaders, is arguably an offshoot of the tendency towards objectivism that characterises leadership theorising (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012). This is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section on Critical Leadership Studies. On the issue of objectivism, and the approach to studying leadership as an objective, external phenomenon which exists outside of social constructions, one might argue that the preoccupation with ‘effective leadership’ relies heavily on an unproblematic, stable meritocracy. The assumption here is that leader effectiveness can be measured by means of objective meritorious measures.

If one is to challenge the gendered and racialised nature of notions of ‘effective leadership’ one must first problematise the central assumption of ‘merit’. First, the notion of ‘merit’ is decontextualised and thus serves as a means to mask justify and perpetuate

structural discrimination. For example Malleson (2006), while discussing merit within judicial selection in the UK, argues that seemingly objective merit-based requirements used as basis for selection, favours the qualifications of a very narrow group of people, essentially benefiting White men. The context-specific manner in which ‘merit’ is defined to match occupations with specific groups of people is also seen in other empirical studies (Uhlmann & Cohen 2005; Ashcraft 2013). Looking towards organisational leadership and South Africa’s private sector, a similar picture emerges. The socio-historic and socio-legal context in South Africa – discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 – creates an environment where seemingly merit-based requirements for senior leadership roles, such as tertiary qualifications and years of management experience, inevitably favours White men.

There also exists a large body of knowledge suggesting that even in supposedly meritorious organisations, that factors such as gender and race play a more significant role in selection, promotional and reward decisions than qualifications (Burton 1987; Krefling 2003; Deshpande 2006; Arai et al. 2008; Castilla 2008). Specifically as it relates to the recognition of achievement in leadership roles, there is also an extensive body of work indicating that women and people of colour do not receive the same evaluations when producing the same behaviours and outcomes as White men (Eagly et al. 1992; Kolb 1999; Looney et al. 2004; Lyons et al. 2007; Giessner et al. 2009). This work suggests that ‘merit’ is inherently contingent on context.

Second, the concept of merit, or more specifically the meritorious organisation, is also inherently paradoxical according to Castilla and Benard (2010). They assert that in organisations which promote meritocracy, managers ironically exhibit a higher bias in decision- making, effectively favouring men. They suggest possible underlying causes for this “*paradox of meritocracy*” to be (a) the perceived moral credentials among decision-makers, (b) the manner in which an organisation’s meritorious values are articulate and (c) lack of transparency in organisational procedures.

Third, and arguably the most insidious element of ‘merit’ is that it produces a self-sufficient discourse of egalitarianism which proponents assume to be moral and normative (Augoustinos et al. 2005). Evidence of this type of discourse regarding ‘merit’ can be seen in how career advancement is explained among women professionals in a recent study conducted by Cech and Blair-Loy (2014). Quite worryingly, they found that women in top

organisational levels were most likely to account for gender inequality as a result of deficiencies in women's human capital or motivation as opposed to structural discrimination. The assumption that disparities in advancement between different social groups can be attributed to personal choice, of course, serves as a means to perpetuate the "*myth of meritocracy*" (Rhode 1996).

Nonetheless, within the leader-centered approaches to leadership, it is clear that the question 'Who, between men and women, make better leaders?' dominates the literature (Vecchio 2002; Eagly 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly 2007). Here, it is possible to pose another question in response: 'In our quest for equality, should we really be considering whether men or women make better leaders?' It is undeniable that women have been marginalised as far as leadership positions are concerned. Women are underrepresented in leadership roles and, in addition to that, there is evidence that when women are more likely to be considered for a leadership position, the contexts are often quite precarious (Ryan & Haslam 2005). If we flip the proverbial coin and ask if women, rather than men, make better leaders, this superficial question does not address the underlying social structures that resulted in the inequality in the first place. This stance is underpinned by Carli and Eagly (2011) who argue that men dominating leadership positions is not the product of an inherent inferiority or dependence of women, but rather the result of factors and conditions that gave preference to men in terms of the bestowal of power and authority. If we desire equal representation, should the focus then not shift towards the aforementioned conditions?

Therefore, varying findings on leadership styles suggest that contextual influences may have a significant impact on how leadership manifests (Korabik & Ayman 2007). As evident from existing theoretical models reviewed, this is hardly a new concept. The next section discusses the literature on leadership as a product of relationships.

2.3 Studying leadership as a product of relationships

Further to leadership as an action resulting from traits or behaviours, leadership is also studied as a relational process where individuals are able to find a sense of self through the construction of realities which order fact and value (Hosking & Morley 1991). In this sense, leadership is a relational process which brings order to social situations. This

body of knowledge has been a key consideration in developing the definition of leadership used throughout this research project. The definition, discussed in the last section of this chapter, relies heavily on an implied relationship between leader and follower. An overview of the relational approach to the study of leadership will therefore also be offered in this section.

A major sociological perspective of leadership as proposed by Guillen (2010) – as well as others including Marxist-, Weberian- and institutional approaches – is that of the relational approach. From a relational perspective, leadership is the function of regulating various relationships and utilising the advantages of these relationships to the benefit of the collective. In this instance, the ‘benefit of the collective’ is proposed to be the creation of meaning, rather than the achievement of ‘common goals’,– which is often cited in definitions of leadership. This is the position of this research given that ‘common goals’ are arguably unlikely to occur within highly diverse work environments and are thus, by implication, inherently problematic.

Albeit, with a focus away from the leader and towards leader-follower relationships, within the relational perspective there still remain clear ties to trait- and behavioural leadership theory. Many contemporary leadership studies focusing on relationships emphasise certain personality profiles and skills, such as emotional intelligence, in being key in maintaining positive and productive relationships with followers (Rubin et al. 2005; Stein et al. 2009; Harms et al. 2011; Reichard et al. 2011). A tendency to move back towards a focus on the leader is especially concerning when one considers the review of leadership-outcomes research conducted by DeChurch et al. (2010). This review highlights the amount of research done regarding leadership and assumed outcomes from an individual-, team-, unit- and organisational level. This review not only reveals an overwhelming preference given to individual-level leadership-outcomes research, but also that research based on levels where relationships could form is actually declining. This concern is also echoed by Ospina and Su (2009) who assert that the experiences of individual leaders receive priority over collective dimensions of leadership in research. Ospina and Su (2009) go on to say that not only does the examination of leadership from a relational perspective offer an opportunity to illuminate gaps in how leadership research is

approached (i.e., with a preference to the individual leader), but it also offers an opportunity to investigate how the concept of leadership is socially constructed.

Leaders and followers engage in relationships during which legitimacy is given to follower and leader identities, which in turn are internalised (DeRue & Ashford 2010). It is also proposed that through the observation of relationships of underrepresented individuals in leadership, such as Black women, strategies for achieving leadership identity and power can be discovered and in turn used to build and test more inclusive leadership theory (Johnson & Thomas 2012). Furthermore, the observation of these relationships may also illuminate the extent to which either inadequacy or credibility is internalised as leadership identity for underrepresented individuals. Such an approach might yield great insights within this research considering South Africa's unique background in terms of the racialised distribution of power.

Through the consideration of leader-follower relationships, which have become dominant over time, the social construction of leadership and the related understanding thereof could be brought to light. One might also argue that knowledge of such socially constructed understandings of leadership, within the context of the leader-follower relationship, could then be used to understand problems such as the underrepresentation of women and people of colour in organisational leadership positions. The following section expands this unit of focus further – outside the realm of the individual or pair – into the external context within which leadership occurs.

2.4 Context-based approaches to studying leadership

Context-based approaches to studying leadership pales in comparison to the volumes of work done from an individual-leader perspective. This imbalance in approaches to studying leadership is an indication of the existence of a knowledge gap in itself. The preceding approaches emphasise only one side of the dichotomy of leadership as indicated by Burns (1978). Trait, behavioural- and relational approaches to studying leadership do not necessarily account for structural factors, including those factors which may influence the leadership dynamic but which the leader does not have full control over. Therefore, this section discusses leadership from a contextual-structural approach.

2.4.1 The organisation as context

Grint (2011) highlights the importance of context by referring to Machiavelli's Prince, which asserted that a leader needs to do what is necessary for the greater good. These actions taken out of context may seem immoral, but when considering all impacting factors, are not. Context informs not only our behaviour, but what value we assign to certain behaviour and how we evaluate this behaviour.

From a context perspective, leadership is theorised not merely as an action of one, onto another, within a vacuum. Considering context in leadership theorising, leadership emerges as a function of no less than three factors, namely the leader, the follower and the situational factors (Grint 1997). Much of the so-called contextual theories of leadership consider these situational factors to be located within the organisation. Illustrating the view that the contextual factors pertinent to leadership theorising do not extend beyond the organisation are two well-known theoretical models, namely Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard 1969) and Fiedler's Leader Effectiveness theory (Fiedler 1967).

Hersey and Blanchard's model for Situational Leadership is one of the earlier theorisations which incorporated contextual factors into a leadership framework (Hersey & Blanchard 1969; Hersey & Blanchard 1977). Their model was prescriptive in nature and in essence involved the leader adjusting behaviour to suit the follower's level of maturity, with – 'maturity' in this context referring to task-level ability, motivation to perform and self-esteem. Although widely popular among practitioners and academics, this theory of leadership has received much critique. Arguably, the earliest and most severe criticism is that of the model's unfocused nature (Blank et al. 1990). It has been said that the model relies on ambiguous constructs which lead to conceptual contradictions (Graeff 1983; Vecchio 1987; Graeff 1997). The model has also been critiqued for its simplistic and strong prescriptive nature since there is insufficient evidence to propose a link between leadership style and performance (Butler & Reese 1991).

Another theory of leadership acknowledging the significance of situational factors is contingency theory. Contingency theory is an umbrella term for the conceptualisations of leadership as a fluid set of behaviours including task-related behaviours, relations-oriented behaviour, participative leadership and contingent reward behaviours (Yukl 2011).

Possibly one of the most well-known contingency theories of leadership is that proposed by Fred Fiedler. In essence, Fiedler's model proposed that leaders should be able to diagnose their situations and adapt their behaviour accordingly (Daft 2011).

Fiedler's contingency model focuses on leader power and how the organisational context dictates how power should be exerted (Lorsch 2010). The model is divided up into opposing dichotomies for leader-member relations (good/poor), task structure (high/low) and related position power (strong/weak). A combination of situational factors then dictates a task or relationship orientation. This approach, however, still remains focused on the individual leader and how they should respond to the context. Although it seems to account for different organisational contexts, it does not provide an opportunity to explore the influence of macro-social influences – like the entrenched discriminatory practises highlighted by Witz (1992) – on the leadership process.

From a contingency approach, intersectional research offers an opportunity to gain valuable insight into how contexts affect the leadership experience of marginalised groups. Parker and Ogilvie (1996) emphasise the necessity to examine the lived experiences of successful African-American women executives in order to understand how they strategically control aspects of their oppressive environment in order to maintain their leadership role occupation. In doing so, one must however remain mindful of the fact that organisations are not the result of objective laws and regulations, but a product of historical events (Bryman & Bell 2007), and therefore remain engrained with racial and sexist structures that reproduce marginalisation.

Therefore, the leadership context is socially constructed and should be considered as such when adopting a context-based approach to studying leadership (Grint 2005). If people are actors in a socially constructed reality, then context cannot be viewed as an independent factor. Instead, leader characteristics such as race and gender, perceived leadership style and the organisational context are all socially constructed and mutually interdependent. From this argument, a model which most concisely describes the social phenomenon of leadership is that of Ladkin (2010). In this instance, leadership is not a set of desirable traits, it is not a collection of appropriate behaviours, nor is it the correct response to a given context. Rather, it is a 'moment' that occurs when all the aforementioned, socially constructed conditions *allow* it to occur. Indeed, Suyemoto and

Ballou (2007) state that leadership should be seen as a social process and should move away from trying to pin down the ideal traits, behaviours or context that could make one person into a good leader.

In addition to various critiques (Graeff 1983; Vecchio 1987; Blank et al. 1990; Butler & Reese 1991; Graeff 1997; Chin et al. 2007; Ladkin 2010), it should also be noted that mainstream leadership theories claiming to incorporate the contextual factors only seem to include those contextual effects that occur at organisational level. This is not to dispel the relevance or importance of considering factors such as follower maturity and task structure in leadership theorising, but that leadership is a social phenomenon and should arguably also take into account broader societal influences. These may include more macro-societal issues such as social norms, culture and tradition, political agendas, class structure, etc. None of the aforementioned approaches to studying leadership covers any of these macro-societal factors.

At this juncture, if a gender and race perspective is to contribute to leadership theorising, it is suggested that a shift in focus, away from classic views of traits, behaviours and conditions, should be explored. Even some of the most recent studies, like that of leadership emergence and heritability (Chaturvedi et al. 2012), support archaic, reductionist ways of thinking about leadership. This disregards leadership as a complex social process and holds the potential of perpetuating gendered and racialised organisational practises.

2.4.2 Society as context

In considering the study of leadership from a social process perspective, the critiques of the study of leadership from a leadership-centred position should be considered. The leadership context itself, however, is socially constructed (Grint 2005). Thus, assuming context to be independent of leadership, or as having a unilateral causal relationship with leadership styles, behaviours or beliefs, is problematic. This resonates with the idea that leaders and followers engage in relationships that construct a social understanding of leadership, which over time then may become absorbed into general social discourse (Ospina & Su 2009).

Arguably one of the most well-known studies of leadership with a focus on broader society is that of the GLOBE Project (House et al. 2004). This study, conducted in the United States, is predicated on the notion that factors associated with the macro-cultural context play a pivotal role in how leadership is both conceptualised and enacted by social actors (Northouse 2012). In a cross-cultural analysis of cultural beliefs and values pertaining to leadership, the GLOBE Project found that leadership dimensions such as ‘power distance’, ‘uncertainty’, ‘individualism’ and ‘masculinity’ are given highly varying rankings across cultures (Javidan et al. 2004). The GLOBE Project was, however, not the only study of its kind. Several others have performed similar studies which attempt to uncover how national culture influences the understanding and enactment of leadership (Haire et al. 1966; Bass et al. 1979; Lewis 2010; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2012). What these studies have in common, however, is regardless of their seemingly outward focus; their unit of enquiry is still individual leaders and specifically their traits and behaviours. Furthermore, these studies seem to position the societal context as an independent or objective external reality and do not acknowledge the socially constructed nature of the leadership context (Grint 2005).

Clearly, the literature reveals that many mainstream leadership theories claiming to incorporate contextual factors are either heavily informed by psychological and behavioural underpinnings or only go so far as to allow for the consideration of organisation factors. Contextual factors in society in which organisations are embedded cannot inform the theorisation of leadership if the study of leadership is not approached from a wider societal perspective. There is, however, a body of knowledge in the leadership literature which has opted for alternative views of leadership – the so-called post-heroic perspective.

Theorising from a post-heroic perspective disrupts leadership theorising that has been dominated by a preoccupation with leader-centric causal relationships since the early 20th century (Huey & Sookdeo 1994; Grint 2011). An ontological departure from classical positivist notions of heroic leadership can be seen in research that challenges the functional paradigm, which constrains the majority of early leadership theory. The ontological underpinning of a shift away from positivist notions of leadership is that leadership does not exist as an objective reality independent from the observer, but rather it is a socially

constructed idea that exists only in the experiences of the observer (Meindl 1995; Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Grint 2005; Grint & Jackson 2010). Early works on leadership theory that point towards a constructivist view of leadership emphasised an increased appreciation for the complexities of interpretations of leadership in a macro-social context (Bresnen 1995; Hunt 1999). A concern for how leadership is socially constructed and interpreted across different social contexts is echoed in contemporary studies of leadership (van der Colff 2003; House et al. 2004; Nkomo 2011; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Fourie et al. 2015).

Chin et al. (2007) state that leadership should be seen as a social process and should move away from trying to pin down the ideal traits, behaviours or context that could transform one person into a good leader. Ladkin (2010) proposes a model which seeks to explain the leadership phenomenon as a social process, as opposed to a leader function or the result of leader-follower relationships. In this instance, leadership is not a set of desirable traits, it is not a collection of appropriate behaviours – even across different national cultures – nor is it the correct response to a given context. Rather, it is a ‘moment’ that occurs when all the aforementioned, socially constructed, conditions *allow* it to occur. Johnson and Thomas (2012) also note the importance of ‘place’ with regard to developing inclusive models of leadership. They further insist that theory development would only be possible if due consideration is given to the strategies used by underrepresented groups within a specific historical and social context.

A move away from the preoccupation with leadership as a property of the leader could reveal how leadership is socially constructed and also how identities relating to leadership – or followership – are created and internalised (Ospina & Su 2009; DeRue & Ashford 2010). In addition to what a relational view might offer, examining these social constructions within the society in which they are embedded could also offer insight into how macro factors, including history or legislation, have informed these socially constructed understandings of leadership.

2.5 Critical Leadership Studies

For decades now there has been dissatisfaction with the apparent favouring of positivist approaches to studying leadership (Alvesson 1996). Indeed, as Barker (1997, p.358) states in his critique of the seemingly reductionist tendencies of scientism: “*The need to rationalize has clearly overwhelmed the need to interpret*”. As such, there has been a growing body of research attempting to address this knowledge gap through the use of more subjectivist approaches to studying leadership (Dinh et al. 2014). However, as Lincoln et al. (2011) warns, it is important that not only a shift in methodology occurs, but that the fundamental ontological gaps in leadership theorising be addressed.

As an overarching theme, Critical Leadership Studies refer to the broad collection of research which critiques power relations and identity constructions which are often overlooked and assumed in studies on leadership (Collinson 2011). Alvesson and Spicer (2012) assert that researchers must be critical of leadership ideologies, but supplement this critique with a nuanced appreciation of how leadership’s potential for meaning creation makes organisations work.

More specifically, critical leadership scholars such as Meindl (1995), Collinson (2011), Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012) and Blom and Alvesson (2015) – among others – have identified key underlying factors which problematise leadership studies. These factors include most prominently the tendency towards leader-centricism, proliferating romanticism and a proneness for objectivism. Leader-centricism takes for granted the relational dynamics between leaders and followers and assumes that leaders drive these relations (Blom & Alvesson 2015). The tendency towards leader-centricism necessitates leadership research which affords due consideration to the context within which leader-follower relations occur (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012). The problem of proliferating romanticism in leadership research is that it creates a bias regarding the relative importance of leadership in the functioning of organisations (Collinson 2011). The romanticising of leadership – as inherently positive, beneficial and necessary – in leadership research can be seen in the ideological underpinning that leadership is the solution for any problem and thus critical leadership studies criticise the role of power and politics in assumed coherence of meaning leadership supposedly creates (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012). A proneness for objectivism, in turn, risks the production of incomplete knowledge about leadership as

it assumes the existence of leadership to be outside of the constructions within leader-follower relations (Meindl 1995). Critical Leadership Studies therefore advocates for research which approaches leadership as a constant process of construction and reconstruction (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012).

A constant factor, however, in this perpetual process of construction and reconstruction seems to be that leaders exercise a considerable level of control and that leadership control and resistance to this control are mutually reinforcing (Collinson 2011). Again, the importance of power and politics and flawed assumptions about the distribution of power in leader-follower relations come to light. Here, Critical Leadership Studies suggest that the mere notion of leadership in organisations will inevitably result in conflict (Bresnen 1995; Grint 2005; Bresnen et al. 2015).

Another object of much contention within leadership research is that of identity. Specifically, how, when and why both leader and follower identities are constructed. Gagnon and Collinson (2014) argue that becoming a leader involves the transformation of personal identity which could potentially diminish a person's sense of self. If one then takes into account how mainstream conceptualisations of leadership are saturated with ideals of masculinity and whiteness (Rosette et al. 2008; Junker & van Dick 2014; Powell & Butterfield 2015), one could argue that the practice of engaging in leadership relations inherently diminishes the identities of women and people of colour.

Furthermore, leadership, at least conceptually, requires followership. The two concepts are mutually reinforcing but also mutually dependent. Arguably, leadership identities cannot be constructed in the absence of others concurrently constructing follower identities in response (Blom & Alvesson 2015). Thus, in theorising leadership, it is of crucial importance to ask under what conditions does making sense of self within an organisational setting take on this form – i.e. as the construction of mutually reinforcing leader- and follower identities (Meindl 1995). These identities are informed by uneven power relations and thus, considering power, brings into question the assumptions that are made in leadership theorising that rest heavily on the implied acceptance – on the part of the leaders and the follower – of organisational hierarchies (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012). In contrast, however, much of the leadership literature seems to shy away from addressing the underlying assumptions about power and control and rather introduce

egalitarian values of leadership, arguably in attempts to avoid representing leadership as inherently unfair or unjust (Harter et al. 2006; Learmonth & Morrell 2016).

In light of an uneven distribution of power in organisations, the question as to why, when and how leader and follower identities are constructed seems vital to the critical study of leadership. Sveningsson and Larsson (2006) suggest that leadership, as identity work, offers an escape to break away from an identity which might not be providing someone with a sufficient sense of self. Given the uneven distribution of power, not only in organisations but in society at large, it seems plausible that women and people of colour might become frustrated with social identities marred with oppressive stereotypes and expectations (Elsbach 1999; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003) and thus use leadership to construct identities that might offer higher self-esteem or a better sense of self. This, however, stands in strong contrast with the notion that the construction of a leader identity could diminish women and people of colour's sense of self, which was discussed earlier in this section.

More specifically related to this study is the fact that leadership dynamics are inescapably situated within and reproduced through multiple, intersecting inequalities (Collinson 2011). These intersections and interrelations between multiple inequalities therefore need to be investigated, specifically how they produce and are produced by how leadership is constructed in organisations. Critical Leadership Studies criticises mainstream leadership research for overlooking the interdependent nature of leadership and followership and the inescapable inequality it produces (Harter et al. 2006). Arguably driven by the positive cultural valences frequently ascribed to leadership, overlooking these intersecting inequalities produces a representation of leadership which is unrealistically optimistic (Martin & Learmonth 2012).

Arguably related to an overlooking of multiple, intersecting inequalities, issues of gender and power are often studied independently in leadership research, while Critical Leadership Studies asserts that they are inextricably linked (Collinson 2011). Indeed, Critical Leadership Studies contends that there are both vertical and horizontal asymmetric power relations within organisational leadership relations (Collinson & Hearn 2014), which are both gendered and racialised (Collinson 2011).

Where issues of gender and race are explored in leadership research, often the agency of the leader is assumed – arguably the result of the leader-centric nature of mainstream leadership research (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012) – and the focus is placed upon behavioural differences between groups (Collinson 2011). This pattern leaves a gap in the knowledge of the lived experiences of marginalised groups within these asymmetric power dynamics. In addressing this knowledge gap, however, Critical Leadership scholars warn that self-reporting data from methods such as interviews might not directly mirror lived experiences. Rather, these responses occur within a particular social context where they might indicate a) information about social events and experiences, b) information about subjective social realities or c) information about norms of expression (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009). It is also suggested that in examining responses regarding lived experiences, to examine respondents’ points of view and how they construct meaning in addition to examining the social discourse which responses might be illuminating (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003). This also places further emphasis on examining leadership in context as leadership discourse arguably *constructs* context, rather than being *informed* by context as much of the leadership literature proposes (Grint 2005). Considering the existing body of work on leadership, critiques thereof and the arguments put forward by Critical Leadership scholars, the following section operationalises a definition of leadership used for the purposes of this study.

2.6 A working definition of leadership

Constructing a definition of leadership requires close consideration of what leader and leadership mean within a specific context (Alvesson 2011). Indeed, the task of constructing a comprehensive general theory of leadership has been attempted, but has proved unsuccessful (Sorenson et al. 2011). Studies on leadership have been conducted at various societal levels and from various perspectives within these levels. As a result, leadership is differently defined in order to study it from various different approaches.

The purpose of providing a definition of leadership in this section is not to define leadership in a general or comprehensive way, but rather to focus this research within certain conceptual limits and to distinguish this research from related concepts such as management. This section presents a working definition of leadership from the various

bodies of literature this research draws upon; both classical and contemporary work on leadership has been considered for this purpose. However, before discussing the leadership literature, the concept of leadership will briefly be differentiated from the concept of management. Here, the concept of power will also be discussed. Power, however, does not occur as a phenomenon separate and distinguishable from both leadership and management. Rather, power is present within leadership and management, but in different forms.

Like leadership, management is a concept that is differently defined within different contexts. Furthermore, an element of overlap between concepts is also evident when considering definitions from management literature. What seems to be consistent, however, is that leadership and management are two distinguishable organisational functions, which both use power in some way. Tripathi and Reddy (2008) claim that little consensus exists among management scholars regarding a unified definition of management, but they offer a selection of definitions from different sources instead:

“A manager is one who contributes to the organisation’s goals indirectly by directing the efforts of others – not performing the task himself.” (p.2)

“Management is a process consisting of planning, organising, actuating and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources.” (p.2)

“Management involves the act of achieving the organisation’s objectives.” (p.3)

Although worded differently, they are similar in that they all focus on objectives and how management as a concept seems less concerned with the person and more concerned with tasks. The second definition further refers to the “use of people”, which could imply an instrumentalist view of employees as nothing more than objects to be used as organisational resource. This view of what management is – as opposed to what leadership is – can also be found in Zaleznik's (1977) clear differentiation between the two concepts. Key to Zaleznik’s distinction between management and leadership is the difference in the nature of the relationship between managers and their subordinates and between leaders and their followers. According to Gabriel (2011), the differences in these relationships can be examined on four levels. These differences are juxtaposed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Difference between managers and leaders

Managers	Leaders
Seek order and regularity	Seek change and improvement
Value efficiency and reducing waste	Allow waste for the sake of change
Focus on details and eliminate uncertainty	Focus on a broad and general future
Consider logic and rationality	Consider emotions and intuition

Adopted from Gabriel (2011)

Albeit somewhat idealistic, from Zaleznik's (1977) and subsequently Gabriel's (2011) distinction between management and leadership, we can deduce a functional and relational difference between the concepts. Managers focus on boundaries and compliance and as a result need to maintain a somewhat clinical relationship with subordinates. Leaders on the other hand focus on vision and innovation and therefore need to establish and maintain relationships based on emotion, which would sustain those relationships.

Viewing the differences between managers and leaders from a functional perspective seems to lead to this simplistic divide between concepts. However, considering how power is used and the nature of relationships between leaders/managers and followers/subordinates might offer a more fluid view of the differences between managers and leaders. This would then also allow for a person to move between management/leadership roles and for those roles to overlap. For example, according to Nye (2010), leaders might use power to attract and persuade, whereas managers might use power to reward and punish. What is key here is what power the position of the leader/manager and follower/subordinate allows, as well as what use of power would be legitimate or appropriate within a specific context.

Power is multi-dimensional; it can be used in different ways and is responded to in different ways. Bradley (2007) explains that the concept of gender, for example, is linked to the struggle over power between men and women. In reference to the work of Connell (1987), Bradley (2007) goes on to say that gender conceptions are used politically, along with other societal structures, such as the division of labour, to reproduce and maintain social inequalities. Considering that leadership utilises power in order to establish and maintain relationships, it also warrants consideration within a study about gender equality. It might therefore be of value to consider some classical work on power which has

influenced modern thought on leadership (Guillen 2010; Case et al. 2011). Weber's conceptualisation of power into rationality, tradition or charisma permeates modern thought on popular theories such as post-heroic- (Collinson 2005; Grint 2009; Gronn 2011), Transformational- (Bass & Avolio 1990; Anand et al. 2011) and Charismatic Leadership (Weber 1968; House 1999; Conger 2011), and even fringe leadership work such as aesthetics and leadership (Hansen & Bathurst 2011).

It would seem that both management and leadership would need to use power to fulfill their function in an organisation. Power also seems to be directed towards the formation of different types of relationships. Gabriel's (2011) differentiation seems to imply a cognitive relationship between managers and subordinates while the leadership-follower relationship seems to be more emotional. Where earlier studies have positioned power within the leader, concepts such as Team-Based Leadership, Self Leadership and, more popularly, Distributed Leadership have emphasised a shift of power in the leader-follower relationship from leader to follower (Hosking 2011). We can therefore deduce that power is a social tool used to perform management and leadership, or both in the establishment and maintenance of relationships.

Since the entry of leadership into scientific study early in the 20th century (Yukl 2010) many have attempted a unified theory of the concept (Sorenson et al. 2011). These attempts are to be expected when considering the sheer volume of proposed definitions that abound. Stogdill (1981) summarised some of the key definitions used in the study of leadership at that time. His summary revealed several diverging focus areas in the study of leadership, including personality, behaviour, power, influence, persuasion and societal roles. More importantly, however, this summary of vantage points from which leadership has been studied reveals that leadership had either been approached from an individual process or a group process perspective.

In the years that followed, leadership has been studied from more focused points of theorising. The literature does not reveal any form of consensus as to which of these theories is the most appropriate, however, some broad consensus regarding theoretical categories does seem to exist across theoretical frameworks. For example, DeChurch et al. (2010) propose that leadership studies can be grouped into six categories, namely trait leadership-, behavioural leadership-, leader-member exchange-, transformational-, strategic

management- and shared-leadership approaches. However, Bolden et al. (2011) explain that leadership studies can be divided simply into the three main categories of leader-centred, relational and social process orientations, with eight sub-divisions, while Grint (2011) states that a historical review of leadership texts reveals an evolution from the Great Man theory to contemporary approaches such as Distributed Leadership.

Barnard (1997), however, insists that leadership exists, at least, as a function of the interaction between leader, followers and conditions. Therefore, what seems to be lacking from Stogdill's (1981) compilation of definitions is due consideration for the conditions within which these supposed individual and group processes are embedded. If leadership has different meaning across different contexts (Alvesson 2011), then both organisational and societal factors deserve consideration in the study of leadership. The following contemporary definition of leadership seems to address the notion of leadership conditions:

“Leadership fundamentally involves meaning-making. Real change (from point of a current situation to a desired situation) involves influencing the meaning that different groups make in the context of competing and conflicting definitions of reality and value.” (Sorenson et al. 2011, p.33)

In the proposed definition of what leadership is, the notion of the creation of meaning is of particular interest. Numerous definitions of leadership cite an influence on behaviour of followers towards a common goal. However, as discussed these definitions are problematic in their assumption that followers share the leader or organisation's goals and objectives. Some examples include:

“Leadership occurs within a group with common goals and differentiated responsibilities.” (Stogdill 1997, p.115)

“Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes.” (Daft 2011, p.5)

“Leadership is a process of social influence to guide, structure and/or facilitate behaviours, activities, and/or relationships towards the achievement of shared aims.” (Bolden et al. 2011, p.39)

What these definitions do highlight, however, is an understanding of the leader as an influential meaning-maker. Indeed, it is said that leaders are the source of meaning, which in turn gives purpose to efforts through shared values, priorities and beliefs (Andreski 1983). Leaders, it can also be said, then create order and a compelling vision for the future of an organisation through the creation of meaning (Morrill 2007). Podolny et al. (2010)

propose a framework for studying leadership alongside the concept of creating meaning, which resonates with the earlier discussion about the differences between management and leadership. According to their framework, executive behaviours and activity which lead to organisational performance, but do not do so by giving meaning to activities or interactions, could be considered as management. Conversely, executive behaviours and activities which lead to organisational performance by creating meaning could be considered leadership. This performance then also feeds back into and enhances the creation of meaning for those belonging to the organisation.

According to Podolny et al. (2010), meaningful action can be separated into two main components. First, an action can be considered meaningful when it supports an ultimate end which the individual performing the act values. Secondly, an action would be considered meaningful if it affirms the individual's connection to the community they feel a part of. The alternatives to organisational management creating meaning is either to assume common goals between leaders and followers in organisational activities, or to use a purely 'good management' approach which disregards relationships and focuses simply on compliance and the completion of tasks. According to Parker (2005), however, the notion of 'leadership as good management' is insufficient for a post-industrial era as this focuses too much emphasis on goals and outcomes, which could be problematic since not all goals, aims and outcomes may be shared among followers or subordinates. Such an approach is therefore insufficient in a rapidly changing and challenging post-industrial economy. The importance of creating meaning is also emphasised by Weber's (1922) assertion that the routinisation of work in modern hierarchical organisations neutralises the very drive and values that created the organisation in the first place.

Thus, before a definition of leadership is proposed, it should be noted that relationships are created and maintained, power is exercised and meaning is created within a specific social context. Societal factors such as history and legislation all play a central role in how social actors enact their roles, either as leaders or as followers. For example, Apartheid kept people of colour from ascending into management positions, i.e., limited the distribution of power to a select group of individuals. Although Apartheid has long been abolished, official statistics still seem to point towards underlying discriminatory

practises (Statistics South Africa 2012b; BWA SA 2012; Commission for Employment Equity 2012).

All organisational activities, regardless of being with or without meaning, are embedded in a broader societal framework. How leadership is perceived and enacted will influence and be influenced by this societal framework. For the purposes of this research, after mining the literature for definitions of leadership and management, and considering how these concepts relate to power, meaning, relationships, gender and race, the following working definition of leadership was developed:

Leadership is a social process which occurs through the facilitation of power – availed through organisational practises or societal norms – within a network of purposeful relationships with organisational members, to create meaning and influence member activity.

This research, however, will not be considering leadership as its unit of analysis per se, but rather the experiences of women and people of colour in leadership positions. For the purposes of identifying specific research respondents, a definition of a ‘leader’ would also be necessary. Therefore, for the purposes of this study the leader is defined as:

An individual who facilitates available power within various networks of purposeful relationships to create meaning and influence member activity.

It is important at this juncture to note that leaders can be located at different levels in organisations. Implicit in leadership theory is that a leader could be located from shop-floor, like in the case of self-leadership (Prussia et al. 1998), at the head of work groups, like in the case of team leadership (Chatman & Kennedy 2010), and also at top management levels as with transformational leadership (Diaz-Saenz 2011). For the purpose of identifying appropriate respondents for this study, leadership is broadly categorised into team-, operational- and strategic levels (Adair 2011; Zaccaro & Klimoski 2001). Since this study draws on representation statistics, which are sourced from top executive levels in South African organisations, the research will focus specifically on individuals fulfilling or aspiring to reach strategic leadership functions in South African private sector organisations. The following is Morrill's (2007) definition of strategic leadership:

“Strategic leadership is a collaborative and integrative process and discipline of decision-making that enables an organisation to understand, define and adopt [shared] purposes, priorities and goals...” (Morrill 2007, p.258)

This definition of strategic leadership needs to be adapted to allow for the association with the proposed working definitions of leadership and leader. Furthermore, both future and current leaders were included, for example, participants in leadership development programmes. Therefore, the definition of (current and future) strategic leaders which shaped the research design is:

A strategic leader is an individual who facilitates (or intends on facilitating in future) available power within various networks of purposeful relationships to make strategic organisational decisions which create meaning and influence activity through an understanding of purposes, priorities and goals.

2.6 Conclusion

Since the earliest conceptualisations of leadership, the body of knowledge on organisational leadership has grown extensively and is characterised by an eclectic mix of approaches to theorising (Dinh et al. 2014; Mumford & Fried 2014; Parry et al. 2014). Contemporary leadership research is no longer limited to merely the study of individual leaders in their organisational contexts, but now also includes a consideration for broader social issues such as gender (Carli & Eagly 2011) and race (Holmes et al. 2011). However, despite an expansion of the theory of leadership to consider the influences of broader social factors such as gender and race, mainstream approaches to theorising leadership remain stagnant in a functionalist and positivistic paradigm (Jackson 2005; Hunter et al. 2007; Giberson et al. 2009; Grint 2011; Hannah et al. 2014; Mumford & Fried 2014). Antonakis et al. (2004) explains the rationale behind this trend in leadership research as an effort to establish a unified framework for understanding leadership through the identification of generalisable ‘truths’.

Notably, a resistance against the romanticising of leadership emerged within the leadership literature. Of particular focus in this divergence of the study of leadership, were assumptions regarding the leader’s influence over functional outcomes (Meindl 1990; Meindl 1993), as well as the very notion that leaders can be systematically distinguished from non-leaders (Stogdill 1974). As a result, key assumptions about leadership and its effect on organisations, and its relationship with functional outcomes, were critiqued (Yukl 1989; Barrick et al. 1991; House et al. 1991; Kaiser et al. 2008). This wave of post-heroic leadership theorising presents these underpinning assumptions in the leadership literature as inherently problematic. Indeed, these positivistic views of leadership become ostensibly

problematic when considering their inherently gendered and racialised nature. The influence of this view of leadership can still be seen in contemporary studies that are concerned with the legitimacy of the leadership construct (Alvesson & Spicer 2012).

Notwithstanding these advances in leadership theory, even relational and context-based approaches to studying leadership seem to represent a struggle in breaking free of the notion that ‘leadership is an element of the leader’. Mainstream leadership literature, despite the diversity in research approaches, seem to consistently refer back to leader-centric understandings of leadership. These patterns are particularly concerning within the realm of relational and context-based approaches to studying leadership because leader-centric approaches to studying leadership does not lend itself to the critical examination of how leadership is fundamentally gendered and racialised in its construction. This limitation of leader-centric approaches to studying leadership becomes quite striking when reviewing the foremost relational- and context-based approaches to studying leadership. For example, relational approaches to studying leadership are often concerned with the individual leader’s ability to establish and maintain relationships with followers. This concern is underpinned by an assumption that the way men and women leaders establish relationships with followers are evaluated in the same way. Research shows that this is not the case – very different social norms apply within the relationships women leaders have with followers and within relationships leaders who are men have with their followers (Rudman & Glick 1999; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Von Wahl 2011; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b).

Similar patterns were noted in the context-based leadership literature. In addition to being the smaller body of literature, when compared to purely leader-centric approaches, context-based approaches to studying leadership also seemed to be marred in a lack of consideration for highly gendered and racialised contexts. For example, context-based theories of ‘leader effectiveness’ assume an ideal skill-set for the ideal ‘effective leader’. However, research suggests that women and people of colour face different developmental challenges in their careers when compared to White men (Mahlase 1997; Rowe & Crafford 2003; Stone 2007; Neely 2009; Fearfull & Kamenou 2010). These challenges are overlooked by the majority of context-based leadership theory, which instead assumes that the given context is experienced in the same way by all leaders.

A review of the extant leadership literature according to the three main categories presented in this chapter demonstrated an imbalance in approaches used to study leadership. Not only do leader-centric approaches dominate the literature when compared to relational and context-based approaches, but the latter also seemed to be heavily influenced by leader-centric thought. Furthermore, a review of the mainstream leadership literature has also revealed a need to consider the literature on leadership which specifically addresses issues of gender and race. Critical Leadership Studies also emphasises the problematic nature of leader-centric approaches to studying leadership, in addition to problematising the romanticising of leadership and objectivist assumptions. Extant leadership theory seems to be highly gendered and racialised, despite being presented as both gender and race neutral. Thus, reviewing the more focused gender, race and leadership literature is important in order to delineate the specific knowledge gap this research aims to address.

Chapter 3: A critical review of the literature on gender, race and organisational leadership

3.1 Introduction

This section of the literature review builds upon the previous chapter and focuses on the leadership literature which specifically addresses the issue of gender and race. The preceding review of the leadership literature reveals a large body of knowledge which is primarily objectivist and psychological in nature. The review indicates that even leadership approaches which claim to have a contextual or societal focus are heavily informed by the notion that leadership is ‘an element of the leader’ (Dinh et al. 2014; Junker & van Dick 2014). What is highly problematic among these approaches is that they are largely presented as being gender- and race neutral while in fact being constructed from highly gendered and racialised concepts (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009).

Furthermore, the manner in which ‘leadership’ is defined as a social process within this study necessitates the consideration of how the concepts of gender and race are addressed in the literature. Gender and race are not merely categories of classification for biological differences. One’s gender and race identity shape work-related experiences and behaviours (Roberts 2005; Joshi et al. 2015). It therefore stands to reason that gender and race will also influence how one understands, enacts and experiences leadership (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Foldy 2012; Kyriakdou 2012).

This chapter reviews the leadership literature on gender, race and leadership and is presented in three sub-sections. First, the most extensive ‘gender and leadership’ research is discussed, followed by ‘leadership and race’. The last section represents a review of the smallest body of research within the field of organisational leadership, namely gender, race *and* leadership.

3.2 Gender and leadership

Gender may be considered as a complex web of social networks enacted across a range of societal and institutional practises (Fletcher & Ely 2003) and gendering, in turn, as a contextually embedded dynamic of social interaction (Acker 1990; Hardy & Clegg 1996). Thus, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, ‘gender’ – as with other identities – refers to identifying oneself and others in relation to culturally defined social categories (Watson 2008). Therefore, within gendered contexts, people create and enact gendered identities and also perceive others as doing so (West & Zimmerman 1991; Mavin & Grandy 2016b). In addition to identities regarding gender, social interaction also produces the construction of leader-follower identities (Ospina & Su 2009; DeRue & Ashford 2010). Since the gendering of work permeates all social interactions, considering gender as an analytical lens when studying leadership holds value as it offers an opportunity to deconstruct the meanings attached to leadership within the specific societal context, and through this deconstruction gain insight into how understandings of leadership might be perpetually reproducing inequalities.

Powell (2012) reviews the literature and assert that there are six emerging trends in how issues of sex and gender are approached in leadership research. First, research which emphasises the lower proportion of women in leadership roles, compared to men. Second, research which considers leader preferences and indicates that male leaders are preferred over female leaders. Third, research which investigates leader stereotypes, specifically how leadership is conceptualised as masculine – inherently disadvantaging women. Fourth, research which examines gendered attitudes toward leadership and the resulting resistance and hostility towards women in leadership roles. Fifth, research which evaluates notions of masculinity and femininity having a causal relationship with leader effectiveness, and lastly, research which explores actual gender differences in leader behaviours.

With the exception of evaluating a causal relationship between leader effectiveness and that of masculine and feminine leadership behaviours, this study explores all the research trends proposed by Powell (2012). Using national-level statistics, this study addresses the issue of lower proportions of women occupying leadership roles. Various questions during semi-structured interviews elicited responses regarding participants’ perceptions of why this proportional discrepancy exists. Questions in the interviews also

explored attitudes in preferred leader characteristics, if leadership is constructed as a male concept, if women experience different challenges than men and also if women enacted leadership differently from men.

More recently, however, in a longitudinal study stretching over forty years (Powell and Butterfield (2015) have found that the construction of the prototypical leader has become less loaded with traits associated with either masculinity or femininity. This stands in strong contrast with scholars such as Collinson and Hearn (2014, p.87) who assert that leadership predominantly remains a form of “*men’s practices*”, and other more contextualised theories which view leadership as a fundamentally gendered social construct (Ryan et al. 2011). Powell and Butterfield (2015), however, contend that both “*good-manager masculinity*” and “*good-manager femininity*” have declined over the last forty years, with masculinity showing the greatest decline. Here one might argue that the differences in findings when compared to other works on gender and leadership could be due to the study’s acontextual nature – a limitation which they mention themselves as well.

Claims made by Powell and Butterfield (2015) are brought even further into question when considering very recent studies which still suggest that the leadership experience is simply not the same for women as it is for men. At a surface level, there remains evidence of women and men being evaluated differently when exhibiting the same (masculine) leadership characteristics (Rhee & Sigler 2015). These differences in leadership experiences between men and women highlight not only how leadership remains to be very much a gendered concept, but also how leadership and the asymmetric distribution of power in organisations are inextricably linked (Kiser 2015). Indeed, Briskin (2006) contends that women’s leadership is constructed, in part, by powerlessness and the resistance against it. Arguably, the relatively slow rate of improvement seen in the access to leadership roles women experience (Carli & Eagly 2016) will remain unchanged if these power relations are not disrupted.

Before we move forward with a discussion regarding gender and leadership, it is of key importance to problematise the notion that gender is a somehow static, biological category. ‘Gender’ has no objective value outside of how we construct it at various points in history (Billing 2011). Gender as a fluid set of prescriptive social norms, rather than a means of mere descriptive classification, can be seen in conceptualisations of the ‘ideal

worker'. The 'ideal worker' is seen as one who prioritises work-related responsibilities over all else – such as working long hours and travelling extensively – which contrasts with the lived experiences of women who are expected to prioritise domestic responsibilities (Acker 1990; Rapoport et al. 2002; Gambles et al. 2006). The conceptualisation of the 'ideal worker' therefore illustrates how organisational policy favours traditionally masculine notions of work (Acker 2006).

The concepts of gender and leadership seem to intersect in a manner which disadvantages women at every possible juncture of the leadership journey. Women experience more difficulty accessing leadership roles (Askehave & Korning Zethsen 2014), difficulty during leadership development (Hewlett 2013), gendered trends in receiving promotions (Johnston & Lee 2012) and in simply fulfilling their leadership roles (Mulcahy & Linehan 2014).

Arguably these challenges stem from the manner in which leadership is understood. Indeed Askehave and Korning Zethsen (2014) assert that the language used when talking about leadership not only facilitates men's access to leadership roles, but also make it easier for men to assume leadership identities when they find themselves in these roles. Similarly, Kirton and Healy (2012) – while examining leadership talk among women in trade unions – found that even in spaces that allow for discourse on alternative forms of leadership, women engage in leadership talk which reinforces the masculine leadership status quo. While the nature of how leadership is spoken about facilitates men assuming leadership identities, women are marginalised from the conversation as they are perceived to be "*incompatible with leadership*" (Carli & Eagly 2016, p.521).

The notion that women are incompatible with leadership can be seen in how women, who do manage access leadership roles, construct their leadership identities. Pini (2005), in an examination of women's leadership experiences in a largely male-dominated industry, found that women engage in constant self-monitoring while the men do not. Indeed, as Billing (2011) explains, our identities are called into question when we work in gender incongruent areas. Thus, one might argue here that the women's perceived incompatibility with leadership spills over into their processes of constructing a leader identity and results in a state of perpetual self-doubt. Furthermore, Mavin et al. (2016), in a meta-analysis of broadcast and print media, also confirm this highly gendered manner in which leadership is

spoken about. Specifically, women in leadership are glamourised; they construct leader identities in relation to follower expectations and are less likely to be positively portrayed. However, the literature suggests that there exists a ‘representation paradox’ which women have to navigate. While the representation of women in leadership are sexualised and fetishised (Bell & Sinclair 2016; Mavin et al. 2016), some studies on attitudes towards women in management suggest a perception that women must be represented as desexualised in order to be taken seriously as a professional (Kelan 2012).

Earlier accounts of women in management, such as that of Stogdill (1981), were treated as a special- or separate case from mainstream leadership studies. These are the very types of ‘additive theorising’ which the literature on intersectionality warns against (Brewer 1993; Simmons 2007; Richardson & Loubier 2008; Dhamoon 2011; Crenshaw 2012). However, to some extent this seems to still be the case if one considers approaches such as the ‘female advantage’ (Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2007) or ‘feminine leadership’ (Eagly & Johnson 1990). To some extent a ‘distinctly female’ approach to leadership has developed in the study of leadership, which stands in quite strong contrast with the classical Western, male dominated approach to leadership (Parker & Ogilvie 1996). The traditional approach to a male dominated view of good leadership is associated with instrumentality, autonomy and is result oriented (Billing & Alvesson 2000). It has been claimed that men lean towards leading autocratically, while women tend to lead democratically (Eagly & Johnson 1990). Women leaders have also been said to exhibit more transformational leadership styles (Carless 1998), with a focus on effective teams, building and maintaining relationships, and trust (Stanford et al. 1995; Trinidad & Normore 2005; Paris et al. 2009).

These simplistic connections made between gender and leadership outcomes are quite reductionist in nature and run the risk of further reproducing inequality by inadvertently legitimising the masculine conception of leadership (Parker 2005) and by failing to acknowledge meso- and macro structural constraints to gender equality (Mavin et al. 2014). These assumed links between gender and leadership outcomes presume significant homogeneity across all women leaders (Mavin 2006a; Patterson et al. 2012b), disregard the fact that men and women’s identities are co-constructed (Powell & Butterfield 1979; Collinson & Hearn 2014; Mavin & Grandy 2016b) and also fail to

recognise that these social constructions are embedded in a wider societal context with various influences like history or legislation. It has also been found that claims of interpersonally-oriented women leaders versus task-oriented men leaders are mainly supported by research from laboratory experiment and assessment studies, from which participants are not selected for actual leadership role occupancy (Eagly & Johnson 1990).

It is therefore not surprising that a body of knowledge has appeared which challenges the common conception that 'effective leadership' is limited to attributes such as assertiveness and confidence, since they are generally associated with masculinity and in conflict with normative conceptions of femininity (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001). In a meta-analysis of research findings regarding perceived leadership styles (as rated by followers), Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) found that women are observed to exhibit more transformational leadership behaviours which seem to fit the earlier critiqued view of a gender-dichotomy within organisational leadership enactment. However, it is proposed that these differences in ratings made by followers for their various men and women leaders is argued to be the result of challenges women face when attempting to use traditional hierarchical styles of leading, rather than an innate preference towards said transformational styles. In fact, Pini (2005) asserts that implying a causal link between gender and leadership behaviours is inherently problematic as it relies on the very stereotyping it criticizes. However, should women in leadership enact leadership behaviours in line with follower expectations, they inadvertently also accept gendered leadership discourse which serves as a marginalising and exclusionary mechanism (Billing 2011).

Further criticism against the idea of a gender advantage in organisational leadership can be found in the secondary analysis of interview data conducted by Bryant-Anderson and Roby (2012), which reports men and women's experiences of being, and becoming, union stewards. They note that in a union context, White men were far more likely to show an easy-going, hands-off or democratic leadership approach, while stewards of colour and White women lean towards a more strong, direct and uncompromising style. However, instead of these leadership enactments being assumed to be the product of some inherent property of the leader (union steward), it was found that women and people of colour were supposedly more easily perceived to be incompetent or not taken seriously as a result of

racial and gender prejudice, and therefore opted for a more direct and uncompromising leadership style.

From a methodological stance, the 'female advantage' in leadership has been challenged for its objectivity and empirical rigor (Vecchio 2003). It is said that the attempted merging of leadership and gender constructs, which imply an inherent relationship between constructs such as femininity and concern for people or between masculinity and initiating structure (on which the argument for female advantage is based), is superficial and overly simplistic (Vecchio 2002). Vecchio (2002) cites various authors in support of this assertion. Firstly, it is said that the 'people-structure concern' dichotomy in itself is overly simplistic as more leadership behavioural dimensions exist, and it is proposed that a preoccupation with this dichotomy reveals more about the researchers than the actual leader (Kerr & Jermier 1978). It should also be noted that the notion of a distinct difference in how men and women lead has its roots in a study where 200 women and 50 men were interviewed, which had an unreported number of women either refusing to participate or insisting that there are no real differences between men and women leaders (Loden 1985).

If the aforementioned argument about a female advantage holds true and, in addition to this, one considers national policy for the promotion of equality and diversity like that of the Employment Equity (EE) Act or Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act in South Africa, one may pose the question 'why are women still so severely underrepresented in organisational leadership positions?'. In an attempt to answer this question, one may consider some critiques against the proposed 'female advantage'. There are several accounts in the literature of how individuals who act outside of their (gender) stereotypes are discriminated against (Glick et al. 1988; Eagly & Karau 2002). However, the claims of advantages based on gender may not be as beneficial to women as one may expect. Billing and Alvesson (2000) explain that the gender labelling of leadership may be useful in that it challenges conventional conceptions of leadership. However, they warn that this practise may present misleading impressions of women's orientation towards leadership and reproduce stereotypes and the gender divide. These stereotypes are reproduced because the acknowledgement of 'feminine leadership' as an alternative to 'masculine leadership' inadvertently legitimises 'masculine leadership' (Parker 2005) and

supports the ideal White male leader prototype. In addition to this, evidence exists against the position that women lean towards transformational leadership behaviours.

Therefore, if there is no inherent 'leadership advantage' among either men or women, there must be another explanation for the widespread underrepresentation of women in senior leadership roles. Carli and Eagly (2001) delineate two schools of thought on the matter, namely underrepresentation due to discrimination as well as discrimination due to talent pipeline problems. Further review of the literature suggests that notions of women lacking appropriate educational and vocational backgrounds – and therefore constituting a leadership talent pipeline problem – have no basis in truth. Indeed, Catalyst (2005) suggests that the primary barrier to women's advancement into leadership roles are not their lack of expertise, but rather cultural perceptions of their suitability – and the impact thereof on their careers – which they must overcome. These perceptions become barriers to advancement as organisations fail to create environments which support and develop qualified women into leadership candidates (Combs 2002; Combs 2003). Thus, by deduction, the only explanation for the seemingly systematic underrepresentation of women in leadership is that of covert and overt discrimination (Carli & Eagly 2001). According to Linehan (2001), these barriers exist as a result of women largely being excluded from leadership networks. As a result, women are not afforded the necessary power, status or opportunity to contribute to the conversation on organisational leadership (Kanter 1993).

The literature reveals that discrimination against women in organisations occurs in a variety of ways. With specific reference to this discrimination, and how it relates to accessing and practising leadership, three related and arguably well-known concepts should be discussed. These are the phenomena metaphorically named the 'glass escalator', the 'glass ceiling' and the 'glass cliff'. In each case, the metaphor of glass is used to denote the invisible, institutionalised and normalised nature of these types of discrimination. Research has shown that in women-dominated occupations such as early child care and nursing, men tend to experience career progression at a much faster pace than women (Hultin 2003). This phenomenon has been called the 'glass escalator'.

In contrast to the 'glass escalator', the 'glass ceiling' hypothesis states that women experience higher difficulty in penetrating senior organisational positions and face more

challenges in senior positions when compared to men. The ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon is characterised by ‘unseen barriers’ that keep women from reaching the upper echelons of organisational leadership, which do not relate to actual job criteria. The effect of the ‘glass ceiling’ increases as one moves up the organisational hierarchy, affecting chances of advancement disproportionately and also growing over the span of one’s career (Cotter et al. 2001). Factors found to reproduce the ‘glass ceiling’ effect include a denial of its existence; the gendered socialisation of women into certain social roles and with limited views of success; restricted access to informal social networks based on historical precedence; and also corporate cultures of not hiring or promoting women into senior positions (Wrigley 2002). Furthermore, research shows that corporate culture and organizational politics does not have to be explicitly discriminatory to produce a ‘glass ceiling’ effect as organisational politics are inherently gendered and thus influence women leaders’ careers differently (Doldor et al. 2013).

A preliminary study of archival data on organisational performance and board appointments of FTSE 100 suggested the existence of a ‘glass cliff’ (Ryan & Haslam 2005). These so-called ‘glass cliffs’ are situations where the culmination of various actions by decision-making groups in an organisation lead to a disproportionate appointment of women into leadership positions in times of crisis (Ryan & Haslam 2007), which then in turn could create the illusion that the board’s appointment could have been the cause of the crisis (Judge 2003). It is argued that this is not a ‘natural’ or inevitable step in women leaders’ careers but a reality nonetheless (Ryan & Haslam 2007) and in such cases women are inevitably set up for failure (Haslam & Ryan 2008).

A possible explanation for the existence of a ‘glass cliff’ for women but not for men could be argued to be the absence of suitable leadership role models and mentors who are women. The literature on women in leadership suggests that women have little to no access to both role models and personal mentors who are women (Eagly & Carli 2007a; McGinn & Milkman 2012; Rhode 2016). This places women at a significant disadvantage since mentors and role models who are women can significantly improve the development of women as leaders (Ragins & Cotton 1999; Ragins et al. 2000; Ely et al. 2011) and also challenge organisational power imbalances which result in homophilous professional networks (Ibarra 1992).

Ashcraft (2013) challenges the division in management research between the study of work and the study of diversity at work and theorises the concept of the 'glass slipper'. She argues that occupational segregation – as seen in occupations such as nursing, engineering, and the like – is evidence that occupations are informed by- and organised around social identity. Resultantly, certain identities might be perceived as more congruent with certain occupations than others. The consequence of the 'glass slipper', of course, is the systematic disadvantage of groups whose identities thus seem incompatible with certain occupations. This theoretical framework resonates with research which suggest a societal perceived incompatibility between leadership- and female identities (Carli & Eagly 2016).

In problematising the concept of 'merit', highlighting how it is not stable nor objective but rather unstable and context-contingent, Simpson and Kumra (2016) build on Ashcraft's (2013) concept of the 'glass slipper' and argue that performance and recognition are undermined when there is a perceived misfit between social- and occupational identities. Simpson and Kumra's (2016) theorising of the 'Teflon Effect' implies that because of a perceived incongruence between female- and leadership identities, women's performance in leadership roles go unrecognised and thus 'merit' fails to adhere to them. The concept of the 'Teflon Effect' resonates with studies which find significant gendered differences in how leader performance is evaluated (Eagly et al. 1992; Kolb 1999; Looney et al. 2004; Lyons et al. 2007; Giessner et al. 2009).

Carli and Eagly (2016) propose an alternative view of the various challenges women face when attempting to access and practice leadership in organisations. They suggest that instead of considering gendered challenges as various 'glass' - and other – metaphors, that the leadership challenges women face should rather be conceptualised as a 'labyrinth'. Carli and Eagly (2016), in considering the plethora of work done on women in leadership, assert that a 'leadership labyrinth' is a suitable metaphor for the challenges women face as it remains a suitable tool with which to investigate women's leadership experiences even while the conditions that construct these experiences may change.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges women are faced with when attempting to access and practice leadership in organisations, there is also a growing body of knowledge on what women experience as enablers. These enablers for women who

aspire to become leaders include, but are not limited to, women-only development opportunities which serve as safe spaces that specifically address the gendered nature of leadership (Ohlott 2002; Kirton 2006), visible leadership role models (Healy & Kirton 2013), and mentors who are able to grant access to leadership opportunities, promote self-confidence and offer guidance (Healy & Lieberwitz 2013).

Clearly, the organisational context holds many institutionalised barriers and potential enablers for women and their advancement into leadership roles. However, the literature reveals that barriers are not the result of exclusively organisational processes, but that the societal context within which they are embedded largely informs and supports them. Indeed, the way in which gender is constructed at societal level informs notions that women are not suited for the demands of a leadership position (Carli & Eagly 2001). For example, when examining how men and women perceive their personal and work lives, it transpires that men view their personal and professional lives as separate realities, while women are not able to perform the same compartmentalisation and thus experience conflicts between work- and personal responsibilities (Mintzberg 1973; Helgesen 1990; Rapoport et al. 2002). Another example of how societal understandings of gender influence organisational experiences can be found in how gender, as a status characteristic, dictates that men's achievements hold more value than those of women (Roth 2004; Simpson & Kumra 2016). At an organisational level, this societal understanding of gender results in a divergence in how the performance of men and women leaders is evaluated, especially in cases where the style of leadership used is stereotypically masculine (Eagly & Karau 2002; Koenig et al. 2011). Gendered differences in how leadership performance is evaluated can arguably be attributed to the unproblematic manner in which 'merit' is understood (Simpson & Kumra 2016). Meritocracies are in fact a myth and use highly subjective measures – presented as objective standards – in justifying the marginalisation of women in the workplace (Malleon 2006; Healy & Lieberwitz 2013).

The influence of how gender is socially constructed on the leadership experience seems unavoidable and inevitable when considering that gender forms part of our identity as social beings. Identity, or identification, in turn forms part of the basic cognitive mechanisms which humans use to sort themselves and others – a basic function for understanding the world. As humans, it is doubtful that we would be able to make sense of

the world without this cognitive process of classification (Jenkins 2014). Gender, as an integral aspect of identity, matters when studying leadership because gender schemas influence how social interactions are understood (Fletcher & Ely 2003). Men and women, from this stance, will therefore experience leadership differently and will be in dissimilar positions to fulfill their roles as leaders due to powerful social structures and norms. These norms, arguably also inform how women construct their leader identities. Indeed, Billing (2011) found, in a study exploring the experiences of women's management experiences, that masculine norms associated with managerial roles resulted in women perceiving themselves as an exception to norms ascribed to women and took active steps to develop more masculine characteristics.

A further critique to be noted, regarding the research on women's experiences in leadership, is the descriptive nature of 'women's voice literature' (Broadbridge & Simpson 2011). It is said that the literature is replete with accounts of women's subjective experiences and how they differ from men's experiences. However, this literature fails to develop a contextualised understanding of the meaning of these experiences. Arguably, knowledge of women's experiences may offer a more significant contribution to the leadership literature if they are contextualised and assigned meaning.

Despite a growing body of knowledge on leadership and intersecting identities (Pini 2005; Livingston et al. 2012; Atewologun 2014; Corlett & Mavin 2014), much of the 'gender and leadership' research focuses on women and how women's leadership experiences are different from men's. This leaves a significant gap in the understanding of how the experiences of women might vary among themselves (Brewer 1993; Parker 2005; Simmons 2007; Collins 2009; Rosser-Mims 2010). The most salient difference in this instance is that women of colour face different challenges from those faced by White women (Carli & Eagly 2016). Therefore, this study also explored the potential for racialised differences in leadership experiences. The next section briefly discusses the literature on the comparatively less researched field of 'race and leadership', which offers an opportunity to address the assumed homogeneity among women in leadership.

3.3 Race and leadership

There are some sources focusing on race and leadership that go as far back as the 1970s (Stogdill 1977; Stogdill 1974), but when compared to work on gender and leadership, research on leadership and race was significantly outnumbered (Byrd 2008). This was also noted by Parker (2005) as she states that far more research has been done on the ‘gendered patterns of organisation’. Conversely, Ospina and Foldy (2009) assert that much work on leadership and race has been done, yet it appears to remain on the periphery of mainstream leadership theory. This situation points towards a significant knowledge gap when considering the role social identity might have on people of colour accessing and practising leadership (Ospina & Su 2009). Furthermore, Ospina and Su (2009) classify leadership studies that deal with the issue of race into three distinct categories: firstly ‘race as a constraint’, secondly ‘race as a tool’ and lastly ‘race as a resource’. ‘Race as a constraint’ studies assume that the race identity of underrepresented groups represents an obstacle to them accessing and practising leadership. ‘Race as a tool’ studies consider how leaders use race identity in order to influence followers towards identifying with the leader and to commit to group objectives. Lastly, ‘race as a resource’ studies focus on how race identity is not simply an obstacle people of colour need to overcome, but that it can also serve as a source of strength and resilience. ‘Race as a constraint’, however, dominates the conversation on race and leadership (Nkomo 2006; Parker & Villalpando 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009; Ospina & Su 2009; Rosser-Mims 2010; Logan 2011). This research avoids simplistic views of race and attempts to adopt all three views.

One could argue that the peripheral nature of race in leadership studies could in fact be a result of this preoccupation with race as an obstacle which needs to be overcome in order to practise leadership effectively. However, this preoccupation in the literature is arguably justified by the fact that the leadership experiences of people of colour are typically characterised by a greater scrutiny, heightened resistance and unfair evaluations of performance when compared to White people (Cobbs & Turnock 2003).

Rosette et al. (2008), in a sequence of laboratory-type studies where respondents were asked to provide perceptions of leader effectiveness and ‘suspected’ leader race, found that there is a definite link between race and leadership in that the organisational leader prototype is seen as White, White leaders are perceived as more effective, and that

White individuals are perceived to have more leadership potential. These findings are also echoed by Logan's (2011) descriptive case study, which shows that race – specifically the Caucasian race – is one of the most salient factors in leadership ascension in American public relations firms. It is also generally accepted that in order to be promoted into a leadership position, one must go through a process of evaluation by others, and if this evaluation process is either compromised by a lack of competence due to poor access to networks, or due to negative evaluations from acting outside perceived (racial) norms (Rudman & Glick 1999; Livingston et al. 2012), then people of colour might be at an inherent disadvantage when attempting to access leadership positions. It is therefore crucial that inherent differences between racial groups and how they experience and enact leadership are not assumed. Essentialist views when studying race and leadership, similar to that discussed in regard to leadership assumptions based on gender which assume one aspect such as race necessarily implies certain behaviours or views, should be avoided (Nkomo 2011). These types of views assume leader enactments and their related perceptions of these enactments to be a function of nothing more than leader characteristics, and as a result, neglect to take into account the impact of relational and power dynamics which are informed by society.

Diverging from this warning against an assumption of differences, Eagly et al. (2010) state that social group membership shapes psychological characteristics that collectively form identities associated with that group. Considering race might in fact be a resource in constructing a social identity (Ospina & Su 2009), which could in turn aid in the meaning-making process, could yield valuable insights into leadership as a social phenomenon. This is in direct contrast with such findings by Littrell et al. (2005), which hold that different racial groups may in fact experience leadership situations in the same way, and Nkomo (2011), who advocates for a move away from essentialist views of race and leadership. In fact, in a study examining the attitudes of people of colour in senior management roles in South Africa, Booysen and Nkomo (2010) found a strong belief among the black men in the think-manager-think-male stereotype. These beliefs held by black men might arguably not adversely affect racial transformation at senior leadership levels, however, it could act as a barrier to gender equality. Considering Booysen and Nkomo's (2010) findings together with work done in the South African military service,

which indicate that black men with traditional values find it difficult to accept women's authority (Menon & Kotze 2007), highlights the importance of intersectional research which explore possible differences within seemingly homogenous groups. Furthermore, this body of work also resonates with Atewologun's (2014) theory of sites of intersectional identity salience as men in other social contexts might not share the same beliefs (Kiser 2015).

Difference, therefore, is an important consideration to take into account when studying race and leadership since these social identities are generally central aspects of people's self-definitions, although the salience thereof will depend on the context (Eagly & Chin 2010; Atewologun 2014). Identity in its most basic form is a process of pointing out differences. In order to identify oneself it is necessary to identify differences between the self and others (Jenkins 2014). Therefore, individuals will seek to act within the scope of their social identities and seek out situations where this expression is possible. One may therefore argue that an organisation unable to recognise the complexity of social identities would not be in a position to create an environment which is conducive to social identity expression and would in all likelihood have an underrepresentation of racial minorities in leadership positions.

Critiques of leadership trait theory as simplistic and lacking sufficiently strong empirical support (Stogdill 1974; Yukl 1989), behavioural approaches to be limited to specific contexts (Ibarra 1992; House et al. 2002; Javidan et al. 2006) and with an apparent shift in mainstream leadership theory towards the process of leadership as a social exchange (Chin et al. 2007; Ladkin 2010; Ospina & Su 2009), suggest that leadership in organisations should be considered as a dynamic social process, rather than a static act or activity independent of context. In considering the previous section on gender, it also seems necessary to view the two dimensions of identity, namely gender and race, as interdependent and mutually compounding mediators of social experience. The evidence seems to suggest that considering the dimensions of social identity in isolation may yield only partial or simplistic conceptions of organisational leadership.

3.4 Gender, race and leadership

A major critique of the literature on gender and leadership is a tendency towards ‘additive theorising’, which assumes mainstream leadership – based on research involving predominantly men – is the norm and attempts to ‘add’ knowledge about women in leadership onto existing frameworks. This approach to leadership theorising implies that women must either have their own distinct body of knowledge or adapt to masculine conceptualisations of leadership. Such additive theorising practises also hold a rather narrow view of gender identity in that the gender identity of women is always considered as a constraint or obstacle.

This is not the only limitation of the so-called ‘feminine leadership’ school of thought. Simmons (2007) asserts that the ‘invisibility’ of women in leadership is more harshly experienced by women of colour as White women still retain White privilege despite the disadvantages they face as women. Therefore, to advance the current body of knowledge on women in leadership – which is largely based on the experiences of White women – serves to further marginalise women of colour (Parker 2005). Therefore, leadership theorising from an intersectional gender and race perspective, which allows for an investigation into complex and layered leadership experiences within a specific social environment (Richardson & Loubier 2008), is discussed in this section.

The literature reveals a systematic reproduction of gender and racial inequality in organisational leadership. These inequalities are produced and reproduced through organisational processes that promote invisibility and legitimacy of inequalities, and controls that prevent protest against inequalities (Acker, 2006). Using tools such as Acker's (2006) Inequality Regimes as an analytical tool and by considering the strategies adopted by underrepresented individuals in organisational leadership, such as Black women, to construct leadership identities (Johnson & Thomas 2012), provides an opportunity to examine leadership experiences from a gender and race perspective without engaging in simplistic ‘additive theorising’ practises. If we reflect on the three main bases of intersecting inequalities as Acker (2006) postulates, and consider her example of male middle managers that are men who may stand to lose more (privilege) than top executives that are men, it illustrates clearly how not only gender – or even gender and race – may serve to benefit some and place others at a disadvantage, but also how social class may add

further complexity to an organisation's degree of inequality. Indeed, these inequalities are maintained through structural barriers, but also by the absence of support structures such as role models and mentors. The literature on leadership, gender and race suggests that there are simply not enough women and people of colour currently in senior leadership roles to credibly influence understanding of how underrepresented people experience leadership (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Cobbs & Turnock 2003).

The absence of a critical mass of women and people of colour in leadership roles (Cobbs & Turnock 2003) is not surprising when considering Klenke's (1996, p.188) assertion that "leaders are very much the product of their particular era". Social structures, which are embedded into historical periods, have not only informed the masculine conceptualisation of leadership (Catalyst 2005; Paris et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2011), but have also resulted in the creation and justification of White leadership prototypes (Rosette et al. 2008; Logan 2011). This suggests that intersectional approaches to studying leadership also hold the potential to expose socio-historical structures which serve to maintain widespread inequalities. As Collins (1990) suggests, the only way to empower women and people of colour is to identify and challenge the power structures in society which constrain their power.

Organisational structures such as hierarchies, reporting lines, working hours and the like which are considered as a given in the corporate world, are deeply embedded in these social power structures, which in turn serve to reproduce and perpetuate inequality in organisations (Acker 1990; Collinson & Hearn 1996; Itzin & Newman 1995). As Acker (2006) explains in her discussion on Inequality Regimes, the commonly known 'working day' is based on the assumption that the work is done by a man who has the ability to do so because he has a partner at home that is a woman who is taking care of the domestic responsibilities. Therefore, even with organisational practises that promote diversity and inclusion, and legislation which positively discriminates to promote equality at work (Noon 2010), entrenched gendered organisational structures prevent equality from being realised (Mavin et al. 2014). These structural concerns are similar to those explained earlier regarding how the 'ideal worker' is conceptualised (Acker 1990; Rapoport et al. 2002; Gambles et al. 2006), which is inherently discriminatory against women.

This situation would arguably remain unchanged until mainstream management theory is penetrated by gender and race leadership theory. Currently, the extant leadership theory is largely presented as gender- and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009), while in fact the extant leadership theory is dominated by ‘White male exemplars’ of leadership, which results in the subsequent marginalisation of groups outside the Caucasian middle-class male category (Rosette et al. 2008). Furthermore, women of colour who are suitably qualified for advancement experience marginalisation and discrimination not experienced by White women (Glazer-Ramo 2001). Myers (2002) summarises these challenges as being subjected to higher performance expectations, receiving differential performance evaluations, an expectation of trivial interests, in addition to gender- and racial bias.

At the core of the literature on the disadvantage experienced by women of colour are the limitations placed on self-expression. Membership of a particular gender- or race group shapes identity (Jenkins 2014), which in turn steers behaviour towards situations where such identities may be enacted. Considering the possible reasons behind why Black women do not necessarily experience the same backlash as White women (Livingston et al. 2012), and more importantly the meaning of this backlash, might offer an opportunity to contribute to the leadership literature and in turn promote gender- and race equality in organisational leadership. In this specific instance, proposed explanations for this occurrence include enduring gender stereotypes and thus the perception that women leaders, and especially Black women leaders, are holding a gender incongruent position (Brescoll et al. 2010; Patterson et al. 2012a). This further emphasises the importance of considering compounding gender and race effects on the leadership experience rather than one single facet of identity.

However, it was discussed in the previous section on ‘race and leadership’ that race need not only be studied as a constraint, but also as a tool or resource for the mobilisation of followers (Ospina & Su 2009). Furthermore, it was also mentioned that leaders are a product of their historical context (Klenke 1996). As a result, women of colour have to adopt alternative strategies in order to acquire leadership (Rosser-Mims 2010). Examples of accessing leadership through non-traditional means can be seen throughout history in women-of-colour strengthening communities through charity, politics and the arts (Hine &

Thompson 1998). This speaks to the resilience of women of colour and their ability to turn oppression into a source of strength.

Indeed, Eagly and Carli (2007) challenge mainstream conceptualisations of the proposed obstacles women face in accessing and practising leadership by arguing that these notions reduce women to mere victims of oppressive social- and organisation structures, with little to no agency over their own careers. They explain that even though women – and especially women of colour – face leadership challenges not experienced by men, they also adopt unique strategies for overcoming these challenges. A consideration of coping strategies while using experiences as a source of theorising about leadership offers a more balanced perspective. It has been found that these coping strategies usually take shape as multi-faceted approaches, which may include retreating, working harder, accessing support networks, as well as turning to spirituality (Patitu & Hinton 2003; Watts 2003).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the leadership literature which focuses specifically on gender, race and a combination of both. This body of literature reveals that both gender and race compound to influence leadership experiences. It also revealed that gendered- and racialised concepts are socially constructed, but inform on how organisations respond to gender -and racial identity to create a complex network of barriers to advancement not experienced by White men.

The leadership literature is characterised by essentialist views on gender and race, which imply homogeneity of experiences, behaviours and views among women and people of colour (Mavin 2006b; Holvino 2010; Nkomo 2011; Patterson et al. 2012b). Firstly, the leadership literature largely views race as a constraint for people of colour (Nkomo 2006; Parker & Villalpando 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009; Ospina & Su 2009; Rosser-Mims 2010). Conversely, views on gender – and related advantages and disadvantages – in the leadership literature are rather divergent (Vecchio 2002; Eagly 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly 2007). A common theme in a large majority of the gender and race research in the leadership literature is a pattern of considering issues of gender and race in isolation, in addition to assuming homogeneity within gender- and race groups.

Therefore, this research has endeavoured to avoid simplistic views of gender and race in the examination of participants' leadership experiences. As opposed to viewing women and people of colour as 'victims' with little agency over their own careers, this research followed a more holistic approach in that gender and race are indeed considered to be obstacles in accessing and practising leadership, but that these identities also hold the potential to serve as a resource or tool to facilitate the social process of leadership. Furthermore, this research also acknowledges that gender- and race identities intersect, compound and jointly influence leadership experiences.

In addition to gendered and racialised organisational structures being informed by macro-social constructions of gender and race, the literature also reveals that leadership is contingent on the socio-historical context. That is to say that the societal context is transient, and that associated gender and racial concepts change over time. Therefore, it is argued that by considering how identity dimensions such as gender and race compound and affect leadership experiences, one is able to uncover more of the complex social dynamics, which could give insight into societal structures which maintain inequalities within organisational leadership.

Chapter 4: The South African context

4.1 Introduction

South Africa is infamous for its history of Apartheid. Despite relative judicial independence (Malleon 1999), following their election into power in 1948 the National Party instituted legislation that classified South Africans into four racial groups, namely ‘White’, ‘Native’, ‘Coloured’ and ‘Asian’ (Baldwin-Ragaven et al. 1999). The White category was reserved for Caucasian or European people, Native referred to those individuals of African descent, the Asian category included people who were of Asian (Asia continent) heritage and those from a Mixed-race background were classified as Coloured (Watson 2007). During the Apartheid regime, residential areas, education, medical care and public services were segregated with inferior services provided to the non-White areas. Political representation by non-White candidates was prohibited and from 1970 Black people were even deprived of their South African citizenship (Beck 2000). These racial categories are still used by government and by citizens to self-identify.

This chapter discusses the context within which this research is carried out. South Africa presents a unique context for exploratory research given its history. This, in addition to the focus of this research, necessitates the need to describe the historical and legislative context. The historical context is discussed with reference to notable pre- and post-Apartheid events, which shaped the lives of women and people of colour. Similarly, the legislative context is discussed by referring to particular pieces of public policy which have a significant influence on the experiences of the research participants. The chapter draws on legislation, national statistics, news articles, and the literature on South Africa’s history and legislative landscape to outline the research context.

4.2 The socio-historic context

4.2.1 Before Apartheid: A brief history of Southern Africa leading up to the four decades of National Party rule

In an effort to understand the enduring segregation visible in modern day South Africa, one should go back to where it all began – to the days when the southernmost tip of Africa had yet to become the site of the gross injustices and institutionalised racial

segregation known today as Apartheid¹. Much like in other parts of the world, the Republic as it is known today inherited widespread socio-political segregation from the region's colonial past. This section situates the research within a historical context, specifically in reference to how events of the past led up to the establishment of a democratic republic and the legislative context of modern day South Africa.

Significant interest in the southern tip of Africa came into being when the Dutch started showing interest in using it as a halfway post for their trades with India, after which the Dutch East India Company – or “*VOC*” in Dutch – established the Cape of Good Hope, modern day Cape Town, as permanent settlement (Gaastra 2003). Jan van Riebeeck, the first Commander of the Cape of Good Hope and a man still revered as a pioneer by many South Africans, along with the VOC started importing slaves in the mid-17th century (Coolhaas 1960), bringing with it a significant contribution to South Africa's modern day ethnic diversity (Worger et al. 2001). The import of slaves from other parts of Africa and South Asia did not only add to the ethnic richness of the then trading halfway post, but it also created what was, and still is, recognised as a separate racial group, i.e., Coloured people. This was the result of slaves marrying Dutch settlers and having Mixed-race children (Thompson 1949). ‘Coloured’ remains a racial category used to self-identify in modern South Africa and is also an official racial category in the national census (Statistics South Africa 2012a).

Towards the end of the 18th century, large numbers of Dutch settlers, who did not share a sense of identity with other settlers in the colonies, embarked on an inland exploration of Africa. Known today as the Voortrekkers, a name still synonymous with Afrikaner culture, they moved their families away from the Cape area into the unknown inland territory (McKenna 2011). Families of Dutch settlers would move inland with only their slaves, livestock, wagon, tents and Bible and live a simple life as nomadic farmers (Nathan 1937). These nomadic farmers later became known as ‘Boers’. The term ‘Boer’ is still used in the Afrikaans language in reference to a farmer, although based on its origin the term also has some racial stigma associated with it, i.e., technically a Boer can be a

¹ Apartheid is an Afrikaans word literally meaning “separateness”. The term was used as the name for the racially segregated political regime of the ruling National Party in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 (Clark & Worger 2011).

farmer of any race, but in South Africa, the term is also used in a derogatory manner to refer to White people.

The rapid expansion of White settlements involved large-scale land seizures from indigenous tribes (McKenna 2011). However, since the Voortrekkers did not venture into Southern Africa with the intention of Dutch colonisation, a decline in mercantile activity provided an opportunity to the British to take control (Greswell 1923). In 1806, the British had complete control over what is known today as the Western Cape. Another decade later, British sovereignty in the Cape was recognised at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (Nicolson 1946).

At what is known today as Bloemfontein, the Voortrekkers split into two groups after dispute over leadership. Some went North and found the South African Republic, which would later become known as Transvaal, others went East towards the Zulu² controlled Natal area (Wylie 2006). The leader of the East-trekking Voortrekkers, Piet Retief, paid the Zulu leader, Dingaan, a visit to discuss the intentions of the Voortrekkers to establish a Southern African Republic. At this intended meeting, Retief and his men suffered a surprise attack. In December of 1838, the Boers struck back and killed nearly three thousand Zulu warriors. This event is well known among South Africans as ‘The Battle of Blood River’ as the banks of the Ncome River were literally stained with the blood of the fallen Zulu warriors (Laband 2009).

Despite this victory of the Voortrekkers over the Zulus, the establishment of a Republic did not materialise as the British took control over the Natal region in the establishment of yet another colony (Spencer 2001). Instead, the Boers established republics elsewhere. These included the Republic of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, both of which make up provinces of modern day South Africa.

In 1880, a war of independence broke out between the Boers and the British. This is known today as the first Anglo-Boer War (Laband 2014). The British suffered a quick defeat, but despite this the British carried on with their efforts to merge the various colonies and republics that had already been established at that point (Sowden 1944). The political situation reached boiling point and in 1899 Paul Kruger, the then leader of the South African Republic or Transvaal, declared war on the British for the second time

² The Zulus were an indigenous African tribe (Wylie 2006).

(Fisher 1974). The British won the second Anglo-Boer War in 1902, after which a treaty was signed where the Boer Republics accepted British sovereignty and both groups agreed to peace.

Post-war, the early 20th century marked Britain's attempt to rebuild the colonies and republics, while still endeavouring to unite them all together. In 1910, legitimised by the United Kingdom's South Africa Act of 1909, the two colonies and Boer Republics were united into the South African Union. The Union was known as British territory, but was under home rule by local government (Watson 2007; McKenna 2011). The new Union status came with international respect, as South Africa was now seen as being on par with other British colonies such as Australia (Sowden 1944). From 1910 to 1948, the practise of voting changed from only allowing men to only allowing White people to vote in national governmental elections and the rise of the National Party in 1948 saw a complete abolition of the non-White voters' roll (Allen 2005). As a result, South Africa was immersed in the well-known Apartheid regime, which lasted from before the establishment of a Republic in 1961 until the birth of the new democracy in 1994. The legacy of this segregation is still very much visible in post-Apartheid South Africa in all facets of society, including education and employment (Matsinhe 2011).

This section not only summarised the historical events leading up to the establishment of the oppressive Apartheid regime, but also highlighted the significance of the historical context in understanding how race was constructed. The practice of slavery and the systematic seizure of land from indigenous peoples indicate an understanding of race that positions non-White people as somehow sub-human and not entitled to the same rights and treatment as White people. The next section elaborates more on this understanding of race and how it defined the political climate in South Africa for 46 years.

4.2.2 The Republic of South Africa: Apartheid and the birth of the 'new South Africa'

The South African National Party³ government of 1948 to 1994 is infamous for the oppressive Apartheid regime. However, a systematic process of establishing White dominion of non-White people in Southern Africa started long before the Republic (1961)

³ The National Party (NP) was a political party in South Africa founded in 1915. It first became the ruling party of the South African Union in 1924. Most notably, however, was its return to power in 1948 – after some years of opposition – when it started implementing its severe segregation policies known today as '*Apartheid*' (Stultz 1974).

or even the South African Union (1910) was established. A review of key public policy enacted during the century preceding the fall of Apartheid in 1994 highlights the systematic and insidious nature of White oppression in Southern Africa.

Under British rule, voting rights in the colonies were contingent on property ownership. In 1892, the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Cecil John Rhodes, enacted the Franchise and Ballot Act, which significantly raised the property qualification for voting and instituted a literacy assessment. This effectively excluded the majority of non-White inhabitants of the Colony from voting in public forums (Hofmeyr 1936; Switzer 1993). Shortly after, in 1894, the Natal Legislative Assembly Bill was passed in the Natal Colony, which prevented the large Indian population from participating in parliamentary vote (Pannu 2005; Du Bois 2015). The systematic enactment of public policy removing all non-White inhabitants of the colonies and Boer Republics from public decision-making, in addition to the large-scale appropriation of Black-inhabited land by White colonists and settlers, reflected the intent of the White minority to hoard the social power necessary to ensure a stable supply of cheap labour. This racist system of production was also heavily gendered in that Black men were considered most suitable for manual labour in industry and White-owned farms, and Black women were considered to be most suited for work as domestic labour (Nolde 1991).

In 1905 the Lagden Commission, which comprised entirely of English-speaking White men, institutionalised racial segregation through the recommendation of the establishment of reserves for Black people, designated labour districts, and pass laws⁴ (Joyce 2007). In 1909, a public referendum regarding the unification of the four British colonies was held. Due to the existing legislation regarding voting rights, the only colony effectively allowing non-White men to vote was the Cape colony, which had a small population of non-White literate property owners (Hofmeyr 1936; Switzer 1993). No women were allowed to participate in public elections at the time (Inter-Parliamentary Union n.d.). Following the referendum, the South Africa Act was passed in September of 1909 by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, which granted the now unified colonies a significant degree of autonomy (Hahlo & Kahn 1960). Not only did the South Africa Act

⁴ Pass laws were a key mechanism of the Apartheid regime. It was a system designed to manage the racially segregated population of South Africa which required Black African citizens to carry pass books when travelling outside of Black "Homelands" or designated urban areas (Shear 2013).

of 1909 unify the colonies, but it also gave the minority White population complete control over all other race groups (Allen 2005).

The establishment of the South African Union was only the beginning of the region's history of extreme racism, which, as heinous public policy intended to restrict social power to the White minority population, continued to be enacted until the late 20th century. In 1913, the Native Land Act prevented Black people from purchasing land outside of designated Black reserves. In 1918, the Natives in Urban Areas Bill initiated the forced relocation of Black people living in cities to designated Black residences known as 'locations', and less than a decade later the Colour Bar Act of 1926 prevented Black people from practising skilled trades (Davenport 1971; James & Lever 2001; Hutt 2007).

Following their rise to power in 1948, the South African National Party expanded the existing legal framework, which was built on an ideology of racial segregation, and instituted a slew of particularly obscene and divisive laws (Stultz 1974; Moodie 1975; Ferree 2011). Notable examples of these laws include the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, which nullified marriages between Europeans and non-Europeans; the Immorality Act of 1950, which prohibited any form of sexual contact between persons of different racial backgrounds; the Bantu⁵ Education Act of 1953, which prevented Black people from obtaining education which was considered to be above their social status; and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which prohibited people from different race groups using the same public services (Norval 1996; Fleisch 2002; Watson 2007; Bernstein & Bernstein 2015). An unintentional side effect, however, of the Bantu education system was allowing more Black girls to enter into the schooling system and subsequently the labour market. This offered an opportunity for young Black women to gain a certain level of independence from their breadwinners who were traditionally men (Watson 2007). However, arguably diminishing any possible benefits – intended or otherwise – of the Bantu education system and subsequent work opportunities, were other socio-economic restrictions such as mobility and housing. As discussed earlier, shortly after the establishment of the South African Union in 1910, residential areas were highly segregated, with Black people only allowed to live in certain urban 'locations' and

⁵ *Bantu* is a general term used to refer to over 600 groups of Bantu-language speaking peoples originally inhabiting the southern to central parts of Africa (Butt 2006).

prohibited from purchasing property outside of designated Black reserves. This residential regulatory system exacerbated Black women's dependency on men, as Black women were not allowed to engage in tenant agreements – a regulation which even applied to widows and unmarried women (Poinsette 1985).

The legal landscape of mid-20th century South Africa was characterised by a response to severe social unrest. Understandably, Black South Africans were deeply dissatisfied with poor living conditions and various societal restrictions such as pass laws. Manifestations of this intense dissatisfaction were seen in uprisings such as the Sharpeville Massacre⁶. As a result, the Apartheid government needed a mandate to swiftly and decisively address any challenges to the regime. Several tyrannical pieces of legislation were therefore enacted in order to suppress all forms of rebellion against the Apartheid government. Notable examples were the Native Labour Act of 1953, which effectively prevented any form of strike action among Black workers; the Mine and Works Act of 1956, which formalised and legitimised direct racial discrimination in employment; and the Indemnity Act of 1961, which protected all government officials from any prosecution or civil liability regarding the Sharpeville Massacre (Dugard 1978; Evans 1997; Nerlich 2008).

Arguably, legislation enacted by the Apartheid government towards the end of the regime was the most severe. Official talks to end Apartheid started in 1990 (De Klerk 1994; Attwell & Harlow 2000), but not before the tyranny of the regime reached a climax in its ruthlessness. The extreme nature of new legislation enacted by the ruling National Party during the 1960s and 1970s suggests a certain level of desperation to maintain the power imbalances, which afforded the White minority complete dominion over all other South Africans. Notable examples include the Sabotage Act of 1962, which allowed for house arrest without trial or legal counsel; the General Law Amendment Act of 1963, which allowed for a 90-day detention period without trial or legal counsel; and the Terrorism Act of 1967, which allowed for indefinite detention without trial (Fullard 2004; Allen 2005). Furthermore, in 1970, the Bantu Homelands Act legitimised the forced relocation of more than three million Black South Africans – considered to be superfluous

⁶ The Sharpeville Massacre happened on 21 March 1960 in the Sharpeville Township in what is known today as the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Approximately 7000 Black protestors were demonstrating against pass laws at the local police station when police officers opened fire and killed 69 people (Frankel 2001).

in the demand for cheap Black labour – to ten designated Black reserves referred to as ‘Homelands’, and in 1971 the Black Homeland Citizenship Act effectively changed the citizenship status of Black people from South African citizen to Homeland inhabitant (Horrell et al. 1971; African National Congress 1980; Thomas 2001; McCusker et al. 2016).

At the intersection of a racist government and societal gender roles – which seem to transcend ethnicity and culture – lied the compounded oppression faced by Black women. Not only were millions of Black women forced to live on Black reserves, which constituted a mere 13.5% of the total area of South Africa, but they were also considered to be inferior to- and wholly dependent on men. At the time, women were expected to remain home and attempt to make a living off the land while the men travelled to urban areas in an effort to obtain work as extremely poorly paid migrant workers (African National Congress 1980). As one would expect, these legal and social restrictions led to the rapid deterioration of the economic and social welfare of Black women under the Apartheid regime (Clarke & Ngobese 1975; Van Vuuren 1979). It would seem that once again, for Black women in particular, racist public policy under the Apartheid regime seemed to exacerbate the effects of gender inequalities faced by women of all races.

Furthermore, those women who were able to escape the abject poverty associated with life in the Bantu homelands found themselves faced with yet another form of hardship. Firstly, life outside the homelands was entirely dependent on the support of a ‘male guardian’ as Black women were not allowed to purchase or rent property in urban areas in their personal capacity (Poinsette 1985). Secondly, due to a lack of education and restrictions to trade – both of which legally mandated – Black women had limited options available to them (Dugard 1978; Cucuzza 1993; Evans 1997; Hutt 2007; Nerlich 2008). In fact, according to South Africa’s 1970 census, more than 70% of service workers were women (Department of Statistics 1970). The majority of these women in service roles were employed as domestic workers in White households. Black women working as domestic workers, who worked exorbitant hours and were paid meager wages, were not allowed to live with their partners or children if they worked as ‘live-in maids’ – an arrangement which was effectively slave labour (Nolde 1991).

However, allowing White women to pursue interests other than domestic responsibilities seemed to result in a paradoxical relationship between Black maids and their White ‘madams’. Social norms dictated that a woman’s place is at home, regardless of her race. Therefore, with all but childbirth being delegated to the Black housekeeper, under Apartheid the majority of White middle-class women found themselves trapped in a state of ‘endless consumption’ and the construction of a social identity based entirely on the extent to which they could display their husbands’ wealth (Cock 1990). This stood in strong contrast with the sense of identity Black women seemed to be able to extract from their roles as domestic servants. This sense of identity is evident from the level of organisation and mobilisation observed among groups of Black domestic workers as part of the anti-Apartheid movement (Poinsette 1985; Nolde 1991). Supporting the notion that White women were deprived of an independent social identity – apart from that of mother and wife – can also be seen within the significant changes in the composition of the South African labour force during the last couple of decades before the fall of Apartheid. During this time, large numbers of White women workers in the food-, liquor-, tobacco- and clothing industries were replaced by semi-skilled Black workers (African National Congress 1980). In fact by 1970, only 4% of production workers were White women, while more than 50% were Coloured women and approximately 30% were Black women (Department of Statistics 1970).

A review of public policy before and during the Apartheid regime illustrates the extent to which the minority White population was given dominion over all other races. From the restriction of mobility, property ownership and education, to the exclusion from public voting, it is clear that the oppression of people of colour has always been a highly calculated and sinister process, which maintained extreme social power imbalances. The nature of legislative frameworks put in place to maintain these power imbalances suggests not only the intent to oppress people of colour, but also to prevent any kind of challenging of the regime from even the privileged White population. Under the Apartheid regime, racial segregation was absolute and permeated all facets of South African society. What the review of public policy during the Apartheid regime also reveals is that the oppression of people of colour was largely formalised, while the oppression of women – although to a certain degree also supported by formal policy – was largely enforced through cultural

norms and exacerbated by formal racist policy, the most salient norm of which is women's assumed dependence on men, as this was observed for both White women and women of colour.

In 1990, amidst international and local pressure in the form of sanctions and social unrest (Kaempfer & Moffett 1988; Moorsom 1989; Frankel 2001; Ndlovu 2004), then president FW de Klerk commenced negotiations for political reform in an effort to end Apartheid (De Klerk 1994; Attwell & Harlow 2000). In 1992 a referendum was held among White South Africans in order to gauge public opinion on this large-scale political and social reform (Tiernet 2012), during which a majority of 68.6% voted in favour of reform (BBC News n.d.; Evans 2014). In 1994, the first multiracial and fully inclusive democratic elections in South Africa occurred (Oxfam-Canada 1994), and in May of that same year Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of the Republic (Attwell & Harlow 2000). Nearly two decades later, South Africa is colloquially known as the 'Rainbow Nation' due to its vibrant diversity. Included in this diversity are indigenous African tribal traditions, Voortrekker traditions, some new and uniquely South African traditions, as well as European traditions inherited from the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British settlers from centuries ago. Sadly, the continuation of discrimination and oppression of years past can also still be observed in modern South Africa. It would seem that even in the so-called 'New South Africa', social- and economic freedom still remain contingent on one's gender and race.

This section on the socio-historical context further supports the assertion that how race was conceptualized in South Africa's recent history, had a grossly dehumanising impact on non-White people. Furthermore, considering gender within historical context also suggests the emergence of a racialised patriarchy that governed all facets of life in South Africa. The next section discusses the current socio-legal context in South Africa and illustrates how this context is informed by the preceding socio-historical context.

4.3 The socio-legal context

4.3.1 A case for interventionist policy: Race and gender in contemporary South African workplaces

It is undeniable that South Africa has made some tremendous strides in addressing the injustices of the past since the fall of Apartheid in 1994. However, the remnants of both racial- and gendered oppression in all facets of life remain visible in modern day South Africa. This section discusses socio-economic issues in contemporary South African society and, in particular, how gendered- and racialised differences can be observed.

The 2011 Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity Report stated that in the United States, White and Asian women were more likely to fill management roles than Black women (Solis & Galvin 2011). In the United Kingdom, a larger proportion of economically active White people fill management roles than those of ethnic minorities (Connolly & White 2006). More extreme, however, is South Africa's most recent EE Report, which indicates that 62.7% of top management positions are filled by White people even though they only account for 8.9% of economically active South Africans.

Similarly, based on a review of 1644 constituent companies within 23 developed markets, leading financial index provider MSCI Inc. indicates that a mere 18.1% of all directorships are held by women worldwide (Lee et al. 2015; MSCI Inc. 2016). South Africa is no exception to this trend in that women are underrepresented at only 20.6% of all top management positions, while they account for nearly half of the economically active population of South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2012a; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Thus, the consistent underrepresentation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership roles appears to be a phenomenon that crosses national boundaries.

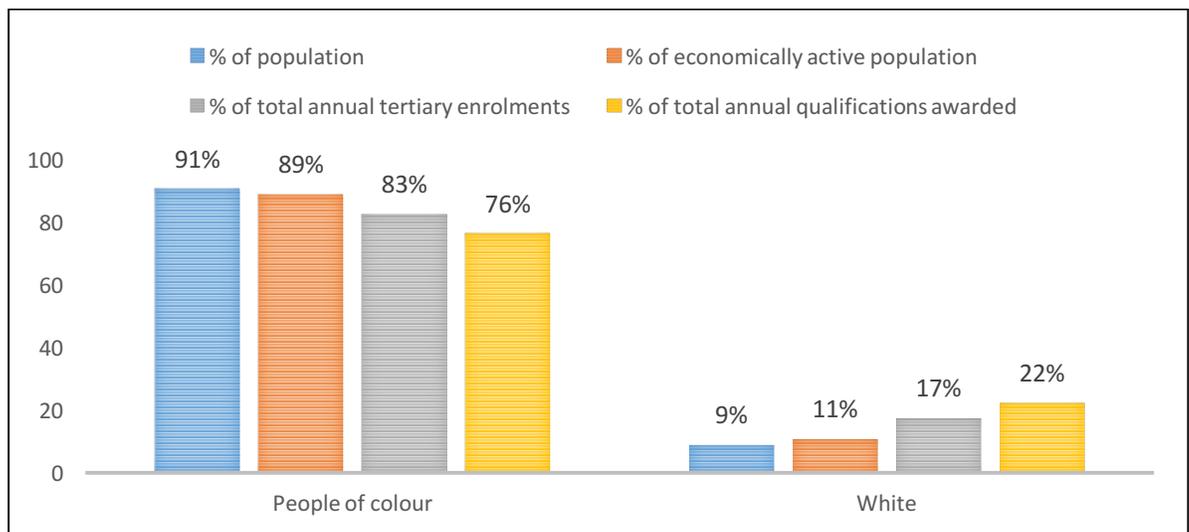
As far as race is concerned, it is not surprising that South African organisations do not possess equitable representation among top leadership structures if one considers recent key socio-economic indicators. According to Statistics South Africa (2011), 20.8% of Black households use wood or dung for cooking, yet a mere 0.4% of White households do so. Similarly, 34.9% of Black households are without piped water, while only 1.4% of White households are. Statistics South Africa (2011) also reports that the percentage of

White children under the age of 7 years at childcare facilities is far higher than the percentage of Black-, Coloured- and Indian children.

Clearly, political transformation has not yet translated into economic parity between race groups in South Africans (Booyesen 2007b). Arguably, the level of participation in higher learning across demographic groups could be considered as a key indicator of racialised power imbalances – especially considering the historical ban on integrated education and people of colour practising skilled trades (Cucuzza 1993; Fleisch 2002; Hutt 2007). Figure 4.1 presents population size, higher education enrolment and qualification attainment for White people and people of colour.

Public record statistics on educational attainment paint a dire, but not surprising, picture for people of colour. Recent statistics indicate that people of colour account for 91% of South Africa’s population, yet only 76% of all qualifications awarded by higher learning institutions were awarded to people of colour. Conversely, White people account for a mere 9% of South Africa’s total population, yet nearly a quarter of all higher learning qualifications awarded in 2013 were to White South Africans.

Figure 4.1: Participation in higher education by race



Statistics South Africa 2012

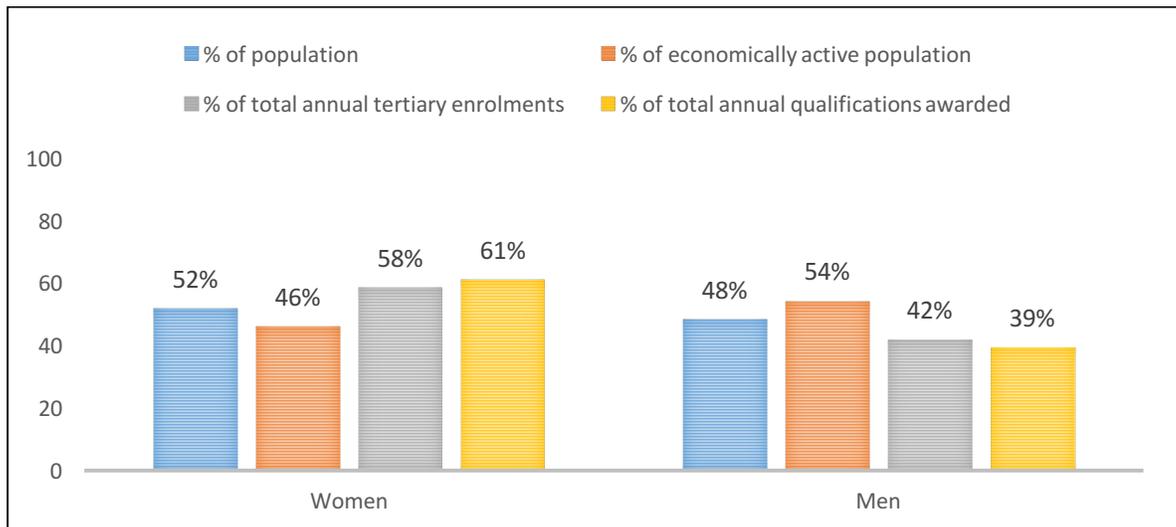
Commission for Employment Equity 2014

Council on Higher Education 2015

High drop-out rates and subsequently poor attainment rates among people of colour highlight how leadership is not a race-neutral concept. For the majority of leadership roles in private sector organisations, a tertiary qualification is a necessary entry credential at various career stages. Furthermore, as a result of South Africa’s history of segregation and exclusion, many people of colour enter into higher learning from a position of severe disadvantage. These disadvantages include poor schooling, financial constraints and a lack of support (Scott et al. 2007; Mtshali 2013). The statistics shown in Figure 4.1 highlight education as a key indicator of economic power and imbalances thereof between racial groups. Arguably, the compounding effects of history and legislation result in a contextual nexus characterised by the perpetuation of disadvantage. Considering the leadership journey, the absence of a solid educational background can arguably lead to poor performance or failure in a leadership role, which then reinforces stereotypes and racialised expectations.

Surprisingly, a similar trend did not present itself in a comparison of educational attainment between men and women. Figure 4.2 presents population size, higher education enrolment and qualification attainment for men and women.

Figure 4.2: Participation in higher education by gender



*Statistics South Africa 2012
 Commission for Employment Equity 2014
 Council on Higher Education 2015*

The national statistics represented in Figure 4.2 indicate that women make up a slightly smaller proportion of the economically active population, yet a significantly higher enrolment rate and awarding of qualifications are observed for women when compared to that of men. The proportionately elevated participation in higher education among women is somewhat surprising when one considers these statistics in the context of women's experiences in South African workplaces.

Within a South African context, various support structures are available for women who choose to have a career (Rowe & Crafford 2003). However, the problematic nature of dominant approaches to studying work-life balance is that support structures are assumed to be in place for *women* as opposed to for *parents*. Even within a seemingly inclusive approach to work, efforts to assign support structures for women to balance their home and work responsibilities only reinforces what Rowe and Crafford (2003) refer to as a 'kitchen mentality'. Indeed, much of the research on the experiences of working mothers and married women in South Africa finds high levels of work-life conflicts and the notion that motherhood is a central part of their role in society (Wallis & Price 2003; Patel et al. 2006; Van den Berg & Van Zyl 2008). Expectations related to societal gender roles are also exacerbated by poorly developed professional networks among women, men dominating management roles, women's tendency not to self-promote and significantly gendered promotion strategies in organisations (Rowe & Crafford 2003; Lloyd & Mey 2009). It is therefore interesting to observe a higher proportion of women participating in higher education – arguably with the intent to enter the formal work sector – given the aforementioned societal barriers.

The inequalities women face in the South African workplace are also reflected in recent national statistics presented by Statistics South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2011; Statistics South Africa 2014a). Regarding earnings, in 2011 20.5% of South African women were in the very lowest income scale, compared to only 9.7% of men. Not surprisingly, 11% of men were in the highest income scale, compared to 5.4% of women. More alarming, however, are the trends regarding gender representation across sectors, as well as the geographical distribution of men and women. National statistics indicate a significant overrepresentation of women within the service industry, particularly in private households. This trend in employment, in addition to a larger proportion of men living in

urban areas with a larger proportion of women living in non-urban areas, is frightfully reminiscent of the socio-economic climate in South Africa under the Apartheid regime.

Considering the same national statistics from an intersectional perspective paints an even more worrying picture for women and people of colour as far as social equality is concerned – especially for women of colour. Of particular concern are trends in access to private medical care, education, unpaid work and average earnings.

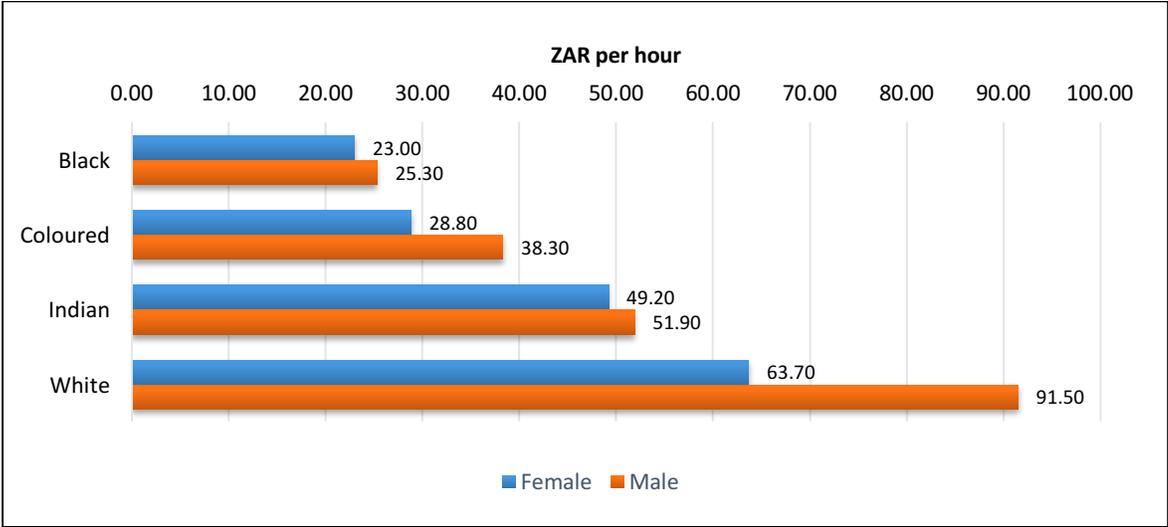
Various sources highlight access to medical care as an indicator of the enduring societal inequalities that plague the people of South Africa (Coovadia et al. 2009; Harrison 2010). Healthcare in South Africa is built on a two-tier structure where in the first tier the state provides subsidised health services to approximately 80% of the population, while the majority of middle- to high-income earners use the second tier of commercially operated private healthcare facilities, mostly by way of private health insurance (SouthAfrica.info 2012). This two-tier structure of South Africa's healthcare sector is significantly informed by the Apartheid regime's policies on the segregation of public services (Norval 1996; Watson 2007) and inevitably serves to maintain gross societal inequalities. Inequalities in this structure of the healthcare sector are represented by an insufficient supply of healthcare professionals, the poor quality of care, and severe operational inefficiencies (Harrison 2010). National statistics also suggest that the inequality of this healthcare system does not affect everyone in the same manner or to the same extent, and both gender and race influence the impact of unbalanced social structures. Statistics South Africa (2011) report that 82.6% of White men and 84% of White women use private healthcare facilities, while only 32.3% of Black women use private healthcare facilities. Similarly, 70.5% of White men and 70.7% of White women are reported to have access to private medical insurance, while a mere 9.3% of Black women are reported to have access to private medical insurance.

Likewise, there is a significantly larger proportion of White men and women who possess tertiary qualifications than there are people of colour (Statistics South Africa 2011), which is arguably a representation of racialised norms and stereotypes regarding the 'suitability' of people of colour for higher education. In the same way, gendered norms may be observed in patterns that indicate a significantly larger amount of time spent on unpaid housework among all women when compared to that of men. Furthermore, within

the noticeably gendered pattern of assigning housework, there also seems to be a racial effect since White women are reported to spend an average of 198 minutes per day on unpaid housework, while Black women spend a daily average of 266 minutes (Statistics South Africa 2011) – this is further evidence of gender and race compounding in their effect of social experience.

Arguably, the most striking differences observed in national statistics on gender and race are wage gaps. This is not surprising, however, since there is a large body of literature on both the gender and race wage gap (Eagly & Carli 2003; Acker 2006; Acker 2009; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011; Acker 2012; Williams 2013; Bernstein & Bernstein 2015). It should be noted that the literature on wage gaps generally refers to individuals receiving differential remuneration for the same work, while the national statistics discussed here reflect differences in average earnings as a result of the effect of a wage gap, in addition to women and people of colour occupying roles which pay less. These differences in average earnings – shown in Figure 4.3 – are nevertheless of vital importance when considered within the context of the broader social inequalities discussed in this section. Social and employment inequality statistics confirm the notion that women and people of colour in South Africa are ‘legally free’, but not socially or economically.

Figure 4.3: Mean hourly earnings according to gender and race



Adapted from Statistics South Africa (2011)

The statistics shown in Figure 4.3 indicate that on average White people earn higher wages when compared to other race groups. In fact, White men earn nearly double, triple and quadruple the average wage of Indian, Coloured and Black men, respectively. Similarly, White women earned average hourly wages higher than both women *and* men from other race groups. These statistics on average earnings highlight the significantly gendered and racialised nature of work in South African organisations. Differences in average earnings between men and women, as well as across race groups, represents the material impact and the enduring nature of the legacy of Apartheid. Decades of exclusion from education and career development has resulted in the current situation where women and people of colour are under-represented in strategic decision-making- and generally higher-paying roles (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). This under-representation of women and people of colour in strategic decision-making roles and the extreme differences in average earnings are especially alarming when considered alongside the statistics on patterns in access to private medical care, education and time spent on unpaid work. It would seem from the statistics on education, healthcare, geographical distribution and average earnings that social inequalities are interrelated and have a compounding effect on the lives of women and people of colour in South Africa.

This review of recent national statistics within the context of South Africa's history with gender and race reveals that women and people of colour do not enjoy the same socio-economic freedoms White men do. The tangible disadvantages resulting from decades of barriers to advancement still shape the lives of people of colour in South Africa. Similarly, debilitating societal gender roles also pose significant challenges for women who wish to pursue careers in the private sector. Considering the dynamic and inclusive nature of equality legislation in South Africa, it would seem that the development of public policy is significantly informed by the knowledge of enduring racial- and gender inequality. In the following section, a review of South Africa's legal context as it applies to the workplace reveals a keen consideration for the alleviation of the impacts structural barriers have on the advancement of women and people of colour into strategic leadership roles in organisations.

4.3.2 Equality- and employment legislation in South Africa

In 1994, the abolition of Apartheid in South Africa occurred and the country received not only a new president and ruling party, but also a new constitution (Olivier 1994). In the years that followed, some laws needed to be repealed, some needed to be amended and some new pieces of legislation had to be introduced in order for South Africa's legal framework to be in line with the newly enacted constitution. Employment legislation was no exception since work was a central component of the Apartheid regime's systematic oppression (Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009). Particular pieces of legislation are of concern here, as they shape the context of this research. These are the Basic Conditions of Employment (BCE) Act, the EE Act, the BBBEE Act, as well as the Skills Development (SD)- and Skills Development Levies (SDL) Act (Skills Development Amendment Act No 37 2008; Skills Development Levies Amendment Act No 24 2010; Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act No 20 2013; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013; Employment Equity Amendment Act No 47 2013). This legislation has been implemented as a means of ensuring fairness and equality in the workplace, but also as an effort to redress the injustices which occurred in employment during the Apartheid regime (Coetzee & Vermeulen 2003; Duffett 2010; Vermeulen & Coetzee 2011). This section discusses the legislative context within which women leaders and leaders who are people of colour practise leadership in their organisations.

To some extent, all of these Acts regulate a form of 'affirmative action'. This concept was first cited in the Wagner Act of 1935 in the United States (Bacchi 1996). In a modern context, the concept refers to various practises that involve organisations taking positive steps towards a more inclusive, fair and equitable employment situation. Specifically, it involves ensuring that equal employment opportunities exist for individuals who have the same ability to compete for a position as others (Rossouw 1994) and in South Africa it also includes remedial 'positive discrimination', which is applied to lend more opportunities to those groups who have previously been denied them (Gamson & Modigliani 1994; Noon 2010). These ideals are all crystallised in both the EE and BBBEE Act and, though to a lesser extent, in the BCE-, SD- and SDL Acts.

As the name indicates, the BCE Act outlines the basic conditions of employment which apply to all economically active South Africans in all industries and at all levels of

employment. In this Act, employee rights regarding hours of work, safety at work, leave time, and the like, are outlined. While the BCE Act is more concerned with fair treatment in general, the EE Act is concerned with equality and disadvantage. Specifically, the EE Act is concerned with the promotion of equality in the workplace, the elimination of unfair discrimination and the promotion of diverse representation. Under the EE Act employment practises that are not proven to be fair and unbiased are strictly forbidden – these practises refer to recruitment processes, promotion decisions, wage scales, and the like. The BBBEE Act, in turn, is primarily concerned with large-scale socio-economic transformation. ‘Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment’ has the core function of providing a systematic framework for industry to work towards equitable racial representation within the South African workforce, but is constructed in a manner that also affords consideration to issues of gender, class and, to a certain extent, disability. The BBBEE Act offers a guide for positive discrimination to take place, in order to address the enduring inequalities in employment in South Africa. Similarly, the SD- and SDL Acts provide a mandate and financial incentives for the active development of those groups previously denied access to development opportunities.

At this juncture, it might be of value to clarify what is meant in reference to ‘interventionist policy’. The aforementioned pieces of equality legislation could be collectively referred to as *positive discrimination* as it involves the specific recognition of protected characteristics – such as gender or race – and incorporates this recognition into formal decision-making (Noon 2010). *Positive action*, on the other hand, refers to a broader collection of practices such as targets, quotas, appointing-for-potential and preferential decision-making, which might be used to promote equitable workplaces (Malleeson 2009). Typically, *positive discrimination* would occur at a macro-social, national or other regulatory level, while positive action would typically occur at an organisational or individual level – with some overlap. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘interventionist policy’ will be used to collectively refer to both positive discrimination and positive action, except in instances where there is a level-specific implication for *either* positive discrimination or positive action.

Interventionist policy such as Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment have had a significant impact on transforming South African workspaces

(Jack 2003; Van Zyl & Roodt 2003; Janse van Rensburg & Roodt 2005; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Since their introduction and in their current amended forms, both the EE and BBBEE Acts have caused a significant disruption in the South African labour market by creating a legal mandate for equitable representation at all levels of organisation (Nzukuma & Bussin 2011). Not only do the laws create the legal mandate for transformation, but their respective operationalisations such as the ‘BEE Scorecard’ and the ‘employment equity code of good practise’ also offer pragmatic guidelines for the removal of barriers to advancement, which are necessary in order for the South African labour force to realise its full potential.

Since the abolition of Apartheid and the introduction of affirmative action policies, the majority of transformation, however, seems to have taken place within the public sector, which has remained the situation to date (Scott et al. 1998; Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009; Sing 2011; Statistics South Africa 2012b; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Somehow, while appearing to remain within the boundaries set by the aforementioned equality legislation, the South African private sector seems to be lagging far behind equality and inclusion targets in comparison to the public sector. Pilot studies and opinion surveys within the private sector have indicated that research is needed on the experiences and perceptions of affirmative action (Amos & Scott 1996; Vermeulen & Coetzee 2011). The slow progress of the private sector in ensuring equal opportunity and representation, especially at strategic leadership level, could arguably be considered as an indicator to focus the research on experiences and perceptions at this point. Thus, in terms of theorising about organisational leadership, the South African private sector context offers a unique opportunity to gain valuable insight into how the socio-legal context shapes the construction of the concept of leadership. This socio-legal context, however, is not without its critiques – particularly from a policy-, implementation- and perception perspective.

There is a body of research which suggests that at a policy level, interventionist strategies in contemporary South Africa are idealistic and overly reliant on rational market behaviour, which promotes such phenomena as the growing Black bourgeoisie, rather than effecting real social change (Iheduru 2004; Southall 2004; Andrews 2008; Belshaw & Goldberg 2008; Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009; Pooe 2013). Indeed, assuming a rational

market response to large-scale interventionist policy, such as BBBEE, discounts the potentially negative impact volatile emotional responses might have on South African industry (Edigheji 1999; Motileng et al. 2006). Another concern became apparent from the literature on interventionist policy in South Africa, namely that the slow rate of transformation in the private sector is due to South African interventionist policy not being sufficiently stringent. This point of view is reflected in references to the government's reluctance to impose 'restrictive' transformation measures for fear of hampering economic growth in work on South African public policy, such as Tangri and Southall (2008) and Poee (2013).

Despite the aforementioned policy level concerns, a wide consensus among equality scholars is that national interventionist strategies have had a positive impact on transformation in South Africa. However, realising this impact seems to pose a significant challenge as research suggests that the majority of problems associated with positive discrimination and other related interventionist policy, arise from policy implementation and not from the policy itself (Bendix 2010). Arguably the most frequently discussed of these problems is the phenomenon of 'window dressing' (Ngwenya 2007; Garcez 2010). BEE 'window dressing', as it is colloquially referred to, is the practise of appointing a person from a designated group for the sole purpose of earning a BEE score or to appear more inclusive, while this person is in fact not allowed to add value or contribute to decision-making. Unfortunately there are no statistics available on the frequency of this occurrence, but as the reviews of scholarly and news articles by Ngwenya (2007) and Garcez (2010) reveal, the topic is very frequently discussed. The phenomenon of BEE 'window dressing' is of notable importance as it highlights various pertinent assumptions underlying problematic policy implementation. In particular, it draws attention to White- and male fear (Rudman & Glick 1999; Motileng et al. 2006); dichotomous assumptions regarding equity and competence (Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009; Coetzee & Bezuidenhout 2011); the assumption that equity appointments are the only form of positive discrimination (Noon 2010); as well as the vicious cycle of poor policy implementation and the reinforcement of stereotypes (Bendix 2010; Johnson 2011).

Naturally, a legal mandate to promote equitable representation at all levels of organisation, and especially at strategic leadership level, threatens the privilege enjoyed by

men and by White people in strategic leadership positions. Therefore, it is to be expected that a significant level of fear would be observed among men and White people. Frequent reference to the expectation that BEE will inevitably result in ‘window dressing’ suggests the perception that low representation of women and people of colour is not due to societal- and organisational barriers, but due to incompetence among women and people of colour. Furthermore, a fixation on alleged ‘window dressing’ also suggests the assumption that appointments based on gender or race and appointments based on competence are mutually exclusive. Additionally, the concept of ‘window dressing’ inherently implies an assumption that an affirmative action appointment is the only manner in which interventionist national policy can be implemented. The manner in which policy is operationalised clearly shows that policy implementation may occur in a variety of ways that does not involve an affirmative action appointment. The most notable operationalisation of policy for the purpose of implementation takes the forms of the ‘BEE Scorecard’, the ‘EE Plan’ and the ‘Workplace Skills Plan’.

The ‘BEE Scorecard’ is a standardised process by which organisations are rated on their implementation of the national BBBEE policy. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate how the ‘empowerment’ categories are delineated and what the compliance rating implication of different scores are. As indicated in Table 4.1, organisations must be able to provide evidence of transformation across a wide range of factors in order to obtain a positive compliance rating. This rating process is highly regulated under the patronage of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), which was established under the Accreditation for Conformity Assessment Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act of 2006, acts as the official BBBEE accreditation body on behalf of the DTI (BEE Navigator 2015; Department of Trade and Industry 2016; SANAS 2016).

Organisations with an annual turnover not exceeding ZAR 10 million are exempt from the BBBEE rating process and are automatically recognised as a level 4 enterprise. Furthermore, the penalties for non-compliance are less direct in that the BBBEE Act is enforced primarily by means of preferential procurement. This approach to enforcing transformation policy considers the extent to which trade between organisations favour BBBEE compliance. The preferential procurement effect therefore trickles down from

enterprises who do business with government agencies, which would require a certain compliance rating, to their respective suppliers who are also required to have a positive BBBEE compliance rating (Werksmans 2014; BusinessTech 2015). It is, however, a criminal offense to falsify or in any way misrepresent information related to an organisation’s BBBEE rating (Leclercq 2015).

Table 4.1: BBBEE scoring matrix

Element	Weighted points
Ownership	25
Management control	20 plus 4 bonus points
Skills development	15 plus 5 bonus points
New enterprise and supplier development	40 plus 4 bonus points
Socio-economic development	5
Total	118

Adopted from Werksmans (2014)

Table 4.2: BBBEE level matrix

BBBEE level	Total points
1	≥ 100 points
2	≥ 95, but < 100 points
3	≥ 90, but < 95 points
4	≥ 80, but < 90 points
5	≥ 75, but < 80 points
6	≥ 70, but < 75 points
7	≥ 55, but < 70 points
8	≥ 40, but < 55 points
Non-compliant	< 40 points

Adopted from Werksmans (2014)

Similar to the structure for BBBEE offered by the DTI, the Department of Labour (DoL) publishes and updates regular guides, which assist organisations in maintaining best practise in their employment equity. Most notably, under Section 20 of the EE Act, is the Employment Equity Plan. The Plan must contain a detailed description of affirmative action measures taken by the organisation; information on representation based on gender, race and disability; information on wage differentials; and strategies for the monitoring of employment equity (Department of Labour 2014). Organisations with more than 50 employees are required to submit an annual EE Report as well as an Employment Equity Plan. Non-compliance may result in the removal from preferential procurement lists by the DoL, as well as compensation due to individual employees who wish to bring a claim against employers who engage in unfair labour practises (SouthAfrica.info 2013).

Another notable example of how interventionist policy may be implemented in organisations is via the ‘Workplace Skills Plan’. Under the SDL Act of 1999 and Skills

Development Levies Amendment Act of 2010, South African organisations with a salary bill⁷ of more than ZAR 500 000 per annum, are required to pay a Skills Development Levy of 1.0% on their entire salary bill (SARS 2015). These levies are administered by the South African Revenue Service and are paid to organisations' respective Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA). Each sector in South African industry has its own specialised SETA, which strategically regulates, certifies and monitors vocational training and development. SETAs are statutory bodies under the SD Act of 1998 and were established in an effort to address the drastic skills shortage resulting from South Africa's oppressive past (Department of Labour 2005). Originally a DoL initiative, as of 2009 all 21 SETAs fall under the mandate of the Department of Higher Education (iEducation 2016).

SETAs receive their primary funding from skills development levies within their respective sectors. Each SETA develops an annual sector-specific skills plan, which is in line with South Africa's broader National Skills Development Strategy and uses levy income to fund skills development initiatives which are in line with these Sector Skills Plans. Organisations are then in turn able to claim back a large portion of their skills development levies paid if they are able to produce Workplace Skills Plans which detail skills development initiatives they plan to undertake that are in line with the Sector Skills Plan (Truman & Coetzee 2007; Stuart 2011).

The examples of the BEE Scorecard, the Employment Equity Plan and the Workplace Skills Plan give credence to arguments which suggest that interventionist policy in South Africa is not sufficiently stringent and is therefore unable to affect the large-scale social transformation needed to achieve an equitable society. These various forms of policy operationalisation highlight the high level of discretion organisations may exercise in regard to participation in transformation initiatives. Organisations that do not trade with government entities or their suppliers are effectively exempt from instituting any affirmative action, as they might not necessarily require a positive BBBEE rating to conduct business. Large organisations could easily adopt manipulative tactics, which avoid individual employees from pursuing claims of unfair labour practises and thus never experience the necessity to bring labour practises up to date with employment equity best practise. It is this 'discretionary' nature of participation in transformation initiatives that

⁷ A 'salary bill' refers to the total moneys payable by the organisation to its employees for wages and salaries.

have spurred many calls for stricter enforcement of specifically BBBEE and Employment Equity (BusinessTech 2012; City Press 2013; Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr 2013; BusinessTech 2015).

Therefore, despite strategic interventionist policy and sophisticated operationalisation, implementation seems to pose a challenge as the necessary transformation has not yet occurred (Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009). This is especially the case for gender and racial equity at strategic leadership level in private sector organisations (Statistics South Africa 2011; Commission for Employment Equity 2014; Statistics South Africa 2014a).

The experience and perception of interventionist policy has also received significant attention in the literature. The research on Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment in South Africa suggests that how policy is received plays an important part in its success (Rankhumise & Netswera 2010; Kruger 2011; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011). The influence of perceptions of interventionist policy extends to both those who are set to gain from it and those who are not, since Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment initiatives have been found to be some of the most highly sensitive, emotive and hotly debated subjects in contemporary South African society (Oosthuizen & Naidoo 2010). Furthermore, there is evidence that employment equity and BBBEE compliance is perceived to be counterproductive in terms of organisational outputs (Kruger 2011). With regard to approaches to studying the experiences and perceptions of interventionist policy, there are some concerns, namely a preoccupation with the skills shortage among people of colour, the apparent understanding of how interventionist policy is applied, and the nature of research on experiences and perceptions.

Research which addresses public concerns regarding the implementation of interventionist policy indicates an acute preoccupation with people of colour's skills shortage (Thomas & Bendixen 2000; Gillis et al. 2001; Mazola 2001). Although it is undeniable that the legacy of Apartheid has resulted in a severe skills gap between White people and people of colour (Nzukuma & Bussin 2011), the preoccupation with this skills gap among both White people and people of colour suggests a pervading assumption that no improvement in skills levels has occurred since the fall of Apartheid (Leopeng 1999; Gillis et al. 2001; Department of Labour 2005; Rankhumise & Netswera 2010; Council on

Higher Education 2015). This preoccupation seems to be more informed by White fear and internalised stereotypes rather than knowledge of an actual skills gap.

The literature suggest that an understanding of interventionist policy in South Africa is generally framed around the notion of ‘quotas’, ‘handouts’ and ‘reverse discrimination’ (Oosthuizen & Naidoo 2010; Malleson 2013), which does not account for nuances in policies which focus on procedural fairness and development rather than ‘quotas’ and ‘handouts’ (Malleson 2009; Noon 2010). A lack of understanding of the complexities of interventionist policy and its implementation inevitably results in resistance, which in turn undermines the achievement of transformation goals (Motileng et al. 2006; Oosthuizen & Naidoo 2010; Coetzee & Bezuidenhout 2011; Commission for Employment Equity 2014).

Finally, the nature of research on experiences and perceptions of interventionist policy itself raises possible cause for concern. There has been a growing body of knowledge on the experiences and perceptions of EE and BBBEE among the South African labour force since its introduction in 1998 and 2003. This research, however, is characterised by quantitative research, particularly in the form of surveys (Janse van Rensburg & Roodt 2005; Rankhumise & Netswera 2010; Coetzee & Bezuidenhout 2011; Kruger 2011; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011). These types of studies have proven invaluable in identifying patterns in how interventionist policy is perceived and identifying the most salient public concerns regarding policy implementation. However, they run the risk of limiting the depth of our understanding of public perception as research participant responses are constrained by the often rigid quantitative frameworks. Qualitative work on the perceptions and experiences is crucial if the aforementioned fears and resistance to interventionist policy are to be appropriately addressed.

4.4 Conclusion

A review of the history of Southern Africa reveal that institutionalised racism did not come into effect in 1948 when the National Party came to power and instituted what is known today as the Apartheid regime. Long before the National Party’s rule, the Boer Republics and colonial settlers had already begun the systematic oppression of the non-White minority. Concurrent with the widespread legitimisation of racism, women were

also seen as being inferior to men. This gender hierarchy stretched across ethnicities, resulting in women's dependence on men in all facets of life.

Although a gender hierarchy was the norm across all racial groups, the historical literature suggests that the impact of oppressive laws and societal restrictions on people of colour was exasperated by societal gender norms, and vice versa. A review of historical statistics on employment and living conditions confirm this position as it reveals that women's dependence on men was more acutely experienced by women of colour. Before and during the Apartheid regime, White women – although not enjoying social parity with men – enjoyed more social liberties than women of colour. For example, before and during Apartheid, White women were allowed to vote in public elections while women of colour were not. What is interesting to observe in the statistics and historical literature is that racial segregation and hierarchies were maintained through formal public policy, while gender roles and gender hierarchies seemed to be maintained through social norms.

The historical literature reveals a political regime from 1948 to 1994, which was ruthless in its efforts to hoard power for the White minority and effectively enslave the non-White majority. A review of legislation enacted by the Apartheid government highlights progressive action taken to strip people of colour of all social agency and an intention to supply the White minority with a steady supply of cheap labour. The oppressive nature of the Apartheid government and those governments which preceded it, was so severe and prolonged that the mere repeal and ban of formal institutionalised racism was not sufficient to address the vast race and gender inequalities in South African society. The new democratic government therefore had to institute corrective measures in an effort to bring about a more equitable balance in power.

A review of the legal landscape with regard to equality and employment revealed a sophisticated network of interventionist policies. Not only does legislation exist in contemporary South Africa which strictly prohibits unfair discrimination, policy which promotes the active development and empowerment of people has also been enacted. Furthermore, the South African government often engages in consultation which results in revisions and amendments to public policy.

However, despite the South African government's efforts to institute policy for the development and empowerment of the previously disadvantaged majority, there seems to

be much resistance against interventionist policy. Furthermore, the literature on perceptions of interventionist policy suggest that resistance is displayed among those who stand to benefit from policy implementation as well as among those who do not stand to benefit from policy implementation. Finally, it was observed that the majority of research conducted on the experiences and perceptions of interventionist public policy is quantitative in nature. It is suggested that in order to gain deeper understanding of the observed responses against current public policy in South Africa, rich qualitative data about lived experiences, as provided by this study, is much needed.

Chapter 5: Research philosophy, strategy and methodology

5.1. Introduction

In following the ‘natural history’ approach suggested by Silverman (2013), this chapter explains the methodological approach underpinning this case study. Firstly, the need for conducting this research is justified. Next, the choice of methodology is rationalised by considering the ontological and epistemological thought underlying an exploratory research project such as this. Finally, this chapter concludes with an explanation of the research strategy and qualitative methods of collection and analysis used.

5.2. Research philosophy

This section discusses the key considerations underpinning my research: my ontological position, the research epistemology and finally the notion of intersectionality. What follows is an elaboration on my subjectivist ontology, which underpins a qualitative, multi-level epistemology. Furthermore, I discuss how the literature on intersectionality has influenced my work.

5.2.1 A subjectivist ontology of leadership theorising

Ontology is concerned with the ‘nature of reality’ (Allison & Pomeroy 2000), that is to say ‘what is not’ and, more importantly, the nature of ‘what is’. An ontological position underpins one’s beliefs regarding what is ‘truth’. In order to develop my own ontological position for this study, I critically reviewed the leadership literature to gauge what other researchers’ underpinning beliefs are regarding leadership.

Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) cites various authors (Angen 2000; Lerum 2001; Valsiner 2006) in highlighting the importance of acknowledging the limitations of science and knowledge creation. In particular, she refers to the notion of science as a collection of methods for ‘objective knowledge creation’. Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) and her contemporaries argue that even research underpinned by an objectivist ontology is dependent on the researcher’s beliefs about research methods, which in turn are an abstract representation of a society at a specific point in time, and are therefore subjective. We must therefore carefully consider our assumptions about reality itself before we embark on

research aimed at understanding reality. In order to do so, I examined the leadership literature from an ontological perspective. This examination offers insight into what is assumed to be ‘the reality of organisational leadership’, in addition to providing direction for this research project.

My review of the leadership literature revealed a disproportionate amount of objectivist-oriented research (Hernandez et al. 2011; Dionne et al. 2014). By ‘objectivist’ I refer to perspectives of reality, which hold that reality exists externally and independently from social actors. Objectivism stands in contrast with ‘subjectivism’, which views reality as the consequence of social actors being concerned with their own existence (Crotty 1998; Mathison 2014; Saunders et al. 2015).

Even the body of work on gender, race and leadership focuses largely on styles, behaviours and outcomes, suggesting the assumption of an ‘objective reality of leadership’ (Rosener 1990; Appelbaum & Shapiro 1993; Stanford et al. 1995; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Heilman 2001; Appelbaum et al. 2003; AFL-CIO Executive Council 2004; Chin et al. 2007; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010). There is, however, a growing body of knowledge which challenges conventional, predominantly objectivist, understandings of leadership (Carli 1999; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Parker 2005; Grisoni & Beeby 2007; Lyons et al. 2007; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Ospina & Foldy 2009; Alimo-Metcalfe 2010; Koenig et al. 2011; Dinh et al. 2014).

In my research, I specifically considered the leadership literature which addresses subjective experiences because, as Huizing (2007) explains, humans interpret all information in order to make sense of their experiences. He continues to say that ‘labelling’ knowledge, as one does by means of abstraction in science, is useful for transferring knowledge, but that labelling in itself does not prevent subjective interpretations of transferred knowledge – a function of knowledge which is not recognised by objectivist perspectives of reality. The following statement highlights the objectivist ontology underlying the majority of extant leadership theory:

“As a field, we have amassed an extensive body of research and theory that has solidified the importance of leadership in organizational science. However, we also know much more about the outcomes of leadership than the processes that affect the emergence of these outcomes.” (Dinh et al. 2014, p.55)

The preceding statement is the result of an extensive review of the leadership literature, which includes high-ranking academic journals such as the *Leadership Quarterly*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Psychologist*, the *Journal of Management*, the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Academy of Management Review*, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Organization Science*, and *Personnel Psychology*. Dinh et al.'s (2014) review indicates that leadership theorising is characterised by a preference for objectivism and a concern for outcomes rather than a concern for social processes that underlie these outcomes. These findings are also echoed by other scholarly reviews of the leadership literature. In their review, Parry et al. (2014) describe typical leadership studies as 'atemporal' and 'decontextualised'.

The literature on gender, race or ethnicity, and leadership is no exception to this trend in leadership theorising. Even the extant leadership theory incorporating broader social factors such as gender and race is characterised by a concern for leadership outcomes such as leadership styles, individual- and organisational performance, and leader effectiveness (Carli & Eagly 2011; Vecchio 2002; Eagly & Carli 2003; van der Colff 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly 2007; Fourie et al. 2015). Arguably, a focus on leadership *outcomes*, rather than the processes underlying them, has meant that in-depth insight into race (Ospina & Foldy 2009) and gender (Korabik & Ayman 2007) has yet to penetrate mainstream leadership theory. Despite this shortcoming, mainstream leadership theory remains presented as being gender- and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009).

The purpose of this study was to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on organisational leadership. In order to do so, a specific knowledge gap needed to be addressed. In the literature review and this section I highlight that this knowledge gap exists due to how leadership theorising considers macro-social contexts – or rather fails in doing so. This PhD study therefore needed to be built on an ontology which allows for the creation of knowledge, which addresses the shortcomings of extant leadership theory. The theory of knowledge creation therefore selected to be the most appropriate to do so is subjectivism.

Subjectivism as a theory of knowledge asserts that one should not accept observations at face value, but that one must scrutinise and evaluate these observations.

Only in doing so is one able to produce knowledge of social phenomena that is true (Mathura 2004). Furthermore, a subjectivist epistemology also values reflection, how meaning is socially created and challenging naturalistic misinterpretation (Farber 1959). Based on a review of the leadership literature, leadership is considered in this study as a complex social process of meaning-making. I believe this view of leadership to be in line with the ethos of subjectivist ontology. Specifically, the following definition of leadership is used:

Leadership is a social process that occurs through the facilitation of power – availed through organisational practises or societal norms – within a network of purposeful relationships with organisational members, to create meaning and influence member activity.

This definition delineates leadership from other associated concepts such as management, and positions this research within a specific ontological paradigm, namely subjectivism.

Adopting subjectivist ontology as underpinning research philosophy has allowed me to contribute to leadership theory by placing a much needed emphasis on the unique experiences of those groups who have been largely excluded from the organisational leadership conversation. The following section discusses the qualitative, multi-level approach, which I built on this subjectivist ontology.

5.2.2 A qualitative, multi-level research approach

Closely related to ontology and the nature of reality, epistemology refers to a concern for the ‘nature of knowledge’ (Allison & Pomeroy 2000). While ontology is concerned with ‘what is’, epistemology is concerned with how one goes about ‘knowing what is’. Therefore, if an ontological position underpins the beliefs regarding what is considered as ‘truth’, epistemology underpins the beliefs of what methods are appropriate in determining what is ‘truth’.

Furthermore, epistemology not only implies a concern for how knowledge is produced, but also the nature of the relationship between knowledge and the ‘knower’. Indeed, Letherby (2003) states that epistemological thought implies a concern for the relationship between the knower and what is known. Therefore, the central epistemological concern for this study could be framed as ‘how do we produce knowledge about

leadership'. In order to establish an epistemological foundation for this study, I once again looked towards the extant leadership theory and considered how past research have produced knowledge about leadership.

Humans interpret information in order to make sense of their experiences (Huizing 2007). We do so by building theories based on our observations (Dubin 1978). These theories reflect patterns within observations as well as our reasoning regarding these patterns (Mintzberg 1979). With regard to the creation of knowledge, it is said that quantitative research approaches along with deductive reasoning lends itself better to theory *testing*, while qualitative approaches and inductive reasoning are better suited for theory *building* (Trochim 2001; Niglas 2007; Niglas 2010; Saunders et al. 2015).

In order to make a contribution to the leadership literature, this study had to be of such a nature that it aids in the creation of new knowledge about leadership in organisations. The literature suggests that a consideration for personal narratives holds the potential to offer insight into how leadership is constructed (Turner & Mavin 2008). Thus, a qualitative approach was identified as being the most appropriate as it generates rich data, which might contain emerging themes that can aid in leadership theory building.

Furthermore, in addition to utilising research methods which are qualitative in nature, the approach I used to generate data also had to address the issue of mainstream leadership literature being described as 'atemporal' and 'acontextual' (Parry et al. 2014). The literature reveals that leadership is understood and practised as a complex social process. Therefore, focusing leadership research at a single level of analysis risks oversimplified inferences and possibly overlooking key factors (Layder 1993). The qualitative epistemology therefore also had to marry a concern for individual experiences with a concern for the context within which these experiences occur. This marriage of concerns would involve the production of data, which lends itself to a multi-level analytical approach. Therefore, I decided on a multi-level micro-meso-macro approach (Kelle 2001; Dopfer et al. 2004; Lawrence 2005).

Subjectivism asserts that the 'reality' of leadership can be only studied through those who experience it. A multi-level, qualitative epistemology allowed me to transcend mainstream leadership theorising largely trapped at individual levels of society. A subjectivist approach has allowed me to consider research participants' unique experiences

concurrent with my own reflections on the external social reality within which these experiences are embedded. Finally, I also drew upon the literature on intersectionality to enable a candid consideration for social context. Black feminist critique of research examining gender, is that gender is treated outside of the historical societal context, essentially rendering experiences of non-white, working class women invisible (Hill Collins 2000). Research which draws on intersectionality thus emphasizes the importance of social context (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016; Rodriguez et al. 2016). The following section discusses the methodological implications of studying leadership within the context of gender and race.

5.2.3 Gender, race and intersectionality in leadership research

This research draws on intersectionality as both a research paradigm (Hancock 2007; Dhamoon 2011), framework (Syed 2010; Atewologun 2014; Corlett & Mavin 2014) and an analytical tool (McCall 2005; Crenshaw 2012). Drawing on the intersectionality literature has enabled me to generate rich data from research participants and subsequently analyse this data in a multi-level manner, which gives due consideration to the ‘layered’ reality of leadership. My research uses gender and race as analytical tools to identify shortcomings in the leadership literature and propose possible ways of addressing these shortcomings (Letherby 2003). At this juncture, I feel it is important to clarify and make explicit some of my beliefs and assumptions regarding the notions of gender and race.

First, and arguably most importantly, I acknowledge both the concept of gender and race to be socially constructed (Rich 1990; Nkomo 1992; Brewer 1993; Fletcher & Ely 2003; Ashcraft & Mumby 2004). That is to say that classifying people into gender and race categories does not imply an objective ‘biological taxonomy’, but rather that it is a prescriptive process of ‘social cognition’ which excludes and marginalises based on social norms, roles and expectations (Loury 2006).

I also acknowledge that the social categories of gender and race are highly contested (Gilroy 2000; Alsop et al. 2002). In no way or form was it ever the intent of this research to imply that the list of gender and race categories used are exhaustive, nor was it the intent to imply complete homogeneity among members of these gender- and race groups. Instead, these categories were used in order to design a practical study which explored the lived

experiences of those who have been excluded from the conversation on organisational leadership.

Furthermore, equitable representation at all levels of organisation is an essential feature of a democratic society. Therefore, my assertion that women and people of colour should be equitably represented within organisational leadership is not based on reductionist views of gender and race, underpinned by ‘difference theory’, but rather a view of equality based on equity and legitimacy (Malleon 2003).

It should also be mentioned that I acknowledge and appreciate the term ‘people of colour’ as a broad social category which encapsulates various different racial identities. In this study, the term ‘people of colour’ refers to individuals who identify as Black, Coloured, Indian, and Asian as per the official South African government census categories (Statistics South Africa 2012a). The grouping of all ‘non-White’ people into one single category is in itself a subject of some contention as it might imply that all sub-groups of people within the broader ‘people of colour’ category might share the same backgrounds, experiences or perceptions. This was by no means the case in this study. The motivation behind my decision to include participants of different racial identities into one broad category was because of the seemingly systematic underrepresentation of *all* non-White people in strategic leadership roles in South African private sector organisations – albeit to varying degrees (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). I did however include this as an area for further exploration, especially from an intersectional perspective, in the section on limitations, reflections and future research in Chapter 9. I feel confident in my decision while at the same time valuing the position of feminist scholars who assert that research which does not consider the dynamics of social inequalities risks the reproduction of these inequalities (Mertens 2003; Parker 2005).

However, considering single dimensions of identity during social research, such as gender *or* race, may be misleading and could obscure and oversimplify complex social processes (Burman 2004; Acker 2006). Furthermore, broadly speaking, work on gender in social science is based on the lived experiences of White women and studies focussing on race are based on the lived experiences of Black men (Crenshaw 1991). Using intersectionality as framework offers an avenue for my research to address these gaps.

In addressing lived experiences relative to identity, it should also be mentioned that I subscribe to the conceptualisation of identity as theorised by Watson (2008) and Shields (2008). Specifically, Watson (2008) asserts that identities are societal in nature and that one identifies self and others in relation to culturally defined social categories. Furthermore, Shields (2008) argues that identities are mutually constituting, reinforcing and naturalising in that they – different identities, such as gender and race – mutually create meaning, dynamically engage individuals and become self-evident relative to other identity categories, respectively. Indeed, this view of identity is shared amongst other leadership scholars (Booyesen & Nkomo 2010) as this approach offers an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the social realities that shape a person's or group's lived experiences (Farrow 2008; Jean-Marie et al. 2009).

Therefore, in this study, I carried out my analysis by using the intersectional groups of 'White women', 'women of colour' and 'men of colour' as opposed to considering gender- and race identity – and how it influences experiences – in isolation. This approach is assumed to be able to illuminate practises of multiple discrimination, and how they conceal asymmetric power relations, which may have become institutionalised (Acker 2006) as well as exposing the conflating manifestations of power at a societal level (Crenshaw 1991).

The vast underrepresentation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership roles, amidst mainstream leadership theory which is presented as being gender- and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009), demands the need for research that is able to identify asymmetric power relations which have become institutionalised. Intersectionality offers such an opportunity by allowing for both individual and structural levels of analysis (Arifeen & Gatrell 2013).

The institutionalisation of uneven power relations is of critical importance in theorising organisational leadership because organisations are racialised and gendered social spaces (Acker 2006; Holvino 2010; Healy et al. 2011). Social science studying human phenomena should therefore consider how these multiple dimensions of identity inform how society, and specifically work, is organised (Parker 2005; Ashcraft 2013). Intersectionality offers an opportunity to cut across these multiple dimensions of identity in an effort to explore how leadership theorising is informed by complex systems of social

inequality (Collins 2009). A failure to consider the multi-dimensional nature of social interaction, social identity and social phenomena could in fact inadvertently render invisible or even perpetuate discriminatory practises. For example, as explained by Parker (2005), focusing only on women and assuming race neutrality perpetuates White privilege and assumes that all women are the same and, more specifically, face the same challenges and have the same experiences.

An examination of leadership theory reveals that concerns for gender and race are often addressed by engaging in dichotomous thinking or ‘additive practises’ (Sharma 1990; Brewer 1993; Jones et al. 1996; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Fourie et al. 2015). Intersectionality offers an opportunity to view social phenomena leadership for the complex social processes they are and in turn avoid this dichotomous type of thinking. It also avoids ‘additive practises’ in social research, which implies a base ‘norm’ and subsequently adds factors onto that base as variation of said base – a practise which is often observed in the leadership literature (White 1985; Sharma 1990; Jones et al. 1996; Javidan et al. 2004; Rotberg 2004; Laher & Croxford 2013; Vongalis-Macrowa 2016). Furthermore, the core principle of intersectionality to avoid ‘additive theorising’ speaks to the very nature of identity, in that identities are mutually constituting, reinforcing and naturalising (Shields 2008). For the purpose of my study, this means that gender identities will inform racial identities and racial identities will inform gender identities. This is a key consideration, especially at an analytical level, because as Bowleg (2013) explains, research participants might not always be able to articulate what it means to identify with a particular race or gender, because these identities are so intertwined.

Traditionally, intersectionality has focussed on experiences at intersecting and compounding bases of *inequality* (Nash 2008; Corlett & Mavin 2014). Given the socio-historic and socio-legal context of this research *White* women and *men* of colour were also included in the study – creating to the possibility that an intersectional approach might be problematic. However, Bowleg (2013) demonstrates that intersectionality may be expanded to include inequalities *and* assets related to intersecting identities.

Shields (2008) and Hulko (2009) propose that context is of crucial importance in identity-based research, because the meanings attributed to different identities and their intersecting oppressions are fluid and are different across varying settings. Atewologun

(2014) refers to ‘identity salience’ in discussing the notion that varying social sites have a multi-dimensional effect on how individuals construct a sense of self and of others – essentially that different social sites will result in varying levels of salience in particular identities. Thus research using intersectionality as a framework also offers the researcher an opportunity to focus the research as a highly context-specific inquiry (Cho et al. 2013). In the case of my research, intersectionality has allowed me to explore the unique challenges and enablers women and people of colour experience when attempting to access and practise senior leadership roles within South Africa’s socio-historical and socio-legal context. In particular, empirical research on the experiences at the intersection of gender and race in post-Apartheid South Africa reveals information about institutional and societal structures which renders the leadership experiences of women and people of colour invisible (Warner 2008; Arifeen & Gatrell 2013).

Thus, by examining lived experiences with an intersectional lens, I was able to expose the social structures that produce and reproduce highly gendered and racialised leadership theorising (Lewis 2009; Carrim & Nkomo 2016). Intersectionality is therefore not simply a tool to gather more ‘comprehensive’ qualitative data, but also an analytical tool which can be used to identify pervading structural inequalities and imbalances of power in society at large (Romany 1996; Özbilgin et al. 2011; Cho et al. 2013; Mavin et al. 2014).

As the purpose of interpreting data regarding individual experiences is not to gain insight into individual traits and behaviours, but rather of the broader social context within which these experiences occur, the process of assigning meaning to responses in intersectional research is key. Bowleg et al. (2003) stresses that it is important to consider what research participants are talking about but also what they are *not* talking about and that meaning can be derived from both what is said and what is omitted. This resonates with what Critical Leadership scholars say about language, how it is used in context and how researchers need to investigate deeper than what becomes immediately apparent from responses (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009). Indeed, a process of careful interpretation can within the macro socio-historic and socio-legal contexts can highlight structural inequalities that may not be directly observable in the data (Bowleg 2008).

The concept of intersectionality and its application in social research is, however, not without critique. Not least of these critiques are the virtually impossible task of dealing with the vastness of complexity in identity all at once, and of course the problematic of the act of using social categories (Corlett & Mavin 2014). First, I use the marginalisation of women and people of colour's voices in leadership literature which is presented as gender and race neutral (Nkomo 2006; Korabik & Ayman 2007; Sanchez et al. 2007; Ospina & Foldy 2009) as justification for both selecting specifically gender- and race identity *and* for using these categories in research which critiques social categorisation. Secondly, I cite the systematic underrepresentation of women and people of colour within my research setting (Statistics South Africa 2012a; Commission for Employment Equity 2014) as further justification for both selecting specifically gender- and race identity and for using these categories in research which critiques social categorisation.

Lastly, I consider visibility, in that I contemplate the consequence of who is given attention in my study and who is not (Warner 2008). In doing this research, various dimensions of identity such as religion, sexual orientation, disability, age and the like have been collapsed into gender and race identities. That is not to say that these dimensions have no influence on experience or are not important. Rather, I have done so for the aforementioned reasons regarding identity salience in social location, the research gap and also for practical reasons. Possible avenues to address this is future research is discussed in Chapter 9.

5.3. The research strategy

This section discusses how I operationalised the aforementioned philosophical and methodological principles into a practical research process. First, the research design is broadly discussed. Here I offer an explanation of the suitability of one-on-one interviews for the collection of rich qualitative data, with reference to the particular target audience of interviewees. Second, the multi-level analytical framework for the analysis of rich qualitative data is discussed as a blend of various theories, which build a single coherent framework for analysis. Thereafter, the fieldwork process is discussed, including a discussion on the interview guide, sampling, the collection of secondary quantitative data

and the data analysis process. The section concludes with an explanation and justification of the groups used in this study to organise the data.

5.3.1 The research design

This PhD research has followed the traditional approach for an empirical study. The process commenced with a review of the literature on leadership and in particular the literature on leadership, gender and race. The literature review was followed by a consideration for appropriate research methods, after which the primary data was collected and analysed.

Based on my review of the literature, I understand leadership as a socially constructed concept (Grint 2005; Parker 2005; DeRue & Ashford 2010; Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Grint & Jackson 2010). It is also assumed that leader identities of women and people of colour are socially constructed through various purposeful relationships (Collinson & Hearn 1996; Mumby 1998; Rudman & Glick 1999; Collinson 2005; van Knippenberg et al. 2004; Motileng et al. 2006; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Collinson & Hearn 2014), which are in turn embedded in a historical and legislative context (Ospina & Foldy 2009; Nkomo 2011; Ryan et al. 2011; Johnson & Thomas 2012). The research design therefore needed to lend itself towards the identification, description and investigation of unique experiences that occur within a complex context that is shaped by these various social constructs. Given the nature of the concepts under investigation, an exploratory, qualitative case study seemed most appropriate for this study. Albeit at the cost of wider generalisability of findings, an in-depth qualitative research design offers the researcher “a profound sense of the realities of leadership” (Bryman 2004, p.763).

Furthermore, the literature reveals that the societal and organisational context within which these identities are embedded is both gendered and racialised (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Williams 1985; Acker 1990; Acker 1992; MacPherson 1999; Lea 2000; Acker 2006), with a strong legacy of Apartheid still permeating structures, policies, culture and everyday activities (Matsinhe 2011). An appropriate research design must avoid reinforcing these institutionalised discriminatory practises in classifying and categorising participants and subsequent data. An appropriate research design is sufficiently flexible and dynamic as to allow for the open and unconstrained communication of personal

experience to the researcher. Finally, the research design would have to be suitable for the gathering of rich data, which could be used towards the building of more inclusive leadership theory.

Given these aforementioned conditions, I decided that in-depth one-on-one interviews would be the most appropriate method to collect the primary data for answering the research question. Additionally, secondary statistical and archival data regarding employment equity and access to development opportunities along with biographical statistics collected from participants were used to add a level of contextualisation to the primary qualitative data. Finally, pieces of South African legislation were also considered as secondary data during the analysis of the primary data in order to better understand participant experiences, attitudes and opinions.

The key objective of this study was to contribute to the leadership literature through a better understanding of experiences of underrepresented groups. Therefore, only women and people of colour were selected as participants. A sample of women and people of colour were selected from two populations, namely 'current leaders' and 'aspiring leaders', with the majority of respondents being the former. 'Current leaders' were individuals who resided in strategic leadership positions in South African private sector organisations and 'aspiring leaders' were individuals who were enrolled in a formal organisational leadership development programme at the time of sample selection.

An analysis of the primary data was carried out by means of a multi-level analytical framework in line with a subjectivist ontology. Various theoretical models were drawn on to create an analytical framework, which allowed for analysis at a micro-, meso- and macro level. The following section elaborates on the structure of this framework.

5.3.2 The analytical framework

In establishing an analytical framework, I value Carrim and Nkomo's (2016) work on intersectionality which considers the interaction between individual, organisational and societal processes of differentiation and domination, which systematically reproduce social inequalities. In proposing an analytical framework, I also draw on the work of Layder (1993) who suggests a multi-level framework for the study of human action and social organisation within a historical context. I adopted this approach in my study of leadership

by stratifying the analysis into micro-individual, meso-organisational and macro-contextual levels. Although these levels of analysis offer a structured approach to analyse the data within discrete ‘layers’, it should be noted here that the analysis was sensitive to potential overlaps and interaction between the conceptual levels.

In addition to an analysis of the data within a multi-level analytical framework, an eclectic combination of theoretical models was used. At each level of analysis, the data guided a selection of appropriate theoretical models from the literature to facilitate the analysis. The following section explains the three levels of analysis, which theories and debates were used at each level, as well as what the particular sources of data were in each instance.

5.3.2.1 Micro-level analysis: The individual

This level of analysis is framed around the personal challenges and enablers participants experienced in the access and practise of organisational leadership. Within both ‘challenges and constraints’ and ‘enablers’, various theoretical models were used to analyse and discuss relationships, power and social norms, and roles and expectations. This level of analysis addresses the following research question:

What are the individual-level challenges, constraints and enablers women and people of colour experience in accessing and practising strategic leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa?

The extant literature on leadership, gender and race asserts that women and people of colour face unique challenges in both accessing- and practising leadership in organisations. Responses regarding ‘challenges and constraints’ were analysed by drawing on the literature on power (Dunlap & Goldman 1991; Kreisberg 1992; Gordon 2011), gender roles (Billing & Alvesson 2000; Carli & Eagly 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014), racial stereotypes (Rudman & Glick 1999; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012), leadership prototypes (Eagly & Karau 2002; Junker & van Dick 2014), as well as professional networks, leadership role models and leadership development (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997; Ely et al. 2011; Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010; Ibarra et al. 2014; Day 2011). Primary data organised into the axial codes of ‘Conceptualisation’, ‘Challenges and Constraints’, ‘Networks’, ‘Enablers’ and ‘Leadership Development’ were used to offer a micro-level analysis of participants’ experiences and perceptions.

Carli and Eagly's (2016) Leadership Labyrinth criticises frameworks of analysis which present women in leadership as 'victims' with little to no agency regarding their career paths. Their metaphor of the Leadership Labyrinth asserts that those faced with challenges to accessing and practising leadership in organisations also adopt unique strategies to overcome these challenges. I therefore also considered what participants felt were enablers to them accessing and practising organisational leadership. For this analysis I once again turned to the literature on professional networks, leadership role models and leadership development (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010; Day 2011; Ely et al. 2011). I also drew on the extensive body of work on relational approaches to organisational leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Diaz-Saenz 2011; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014; Doldor et al. 2013). The relevant theories and data sources for this level of analysis are tabulated in Table 5.1 in Appendix 5.

5.3.2.2 Meso-level analysis: The organisation

This level of analysis is framed around the challenges, constraints and enablers participants experienced at an institutional level. Within both 'organisational challenges and constraints' and 'organisational enablers', various theoretical models were used to analyse and discuss the legacy of Apartheid in the South African workplace; institutionalised discriminations; affirmative action; the gendered- and racialised nature of leadership; and leadership development. This level of analysis addresses the following research question:

What organisational factors contribute to or hinder women and people of colour accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector?

There is a significant body of literature that suggests organisations are sites of deeply ingrained institutional discrimination (Acker 2006). For the purpose of my research, I focused specifically on discrimination based on gender and race. Responses regarding 'organisational challenges and constraints' were analysed by drawing on the literature on institutionalised discrimination (Feagin & Feagin 1978; Coates 2011; Durrheim et al. 2014); Apartheid in the South African workplace (Cock 1987; Booysen 1999); gender; race and organisations (Kanter 1977; Acker 1990; Nkomo 1992; Acker 2012); and gendered and racialised notions of leadership in organisations (Collinson & Hearn 1996;

Rosette et al. 2008; Logan 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014; Junker & van Dick 2014). Primary data organised into the axial codes of ‘Enactment’, ‘Conceptualisation’, ‘Challenges and Constraints’, ‘Legislation and Public Policy’, ‘Networks’, ‘Enablers’ and ‘Leadership Development’ were used to offer a meso-level analysis of participants’ experiences and perceptions.

The South African government places a large emphasis on transformation and the removing of boundaries to advancement. Based on participant responses, private sector organisations do seem to address the severe underrepresentation of women and people of colour within their top leadership structures – at least at a policy level. The analysis of responses regarding ‘organisational enablers’ drew on theoretical models within the literature on affirmative action and interventionist policy (Malleon 2006; Malleon 2009; Motileng et al. 2006; Noon 2010; Sweigart 2012), the legacy of Apartheid in the workplace (Ally 2009; Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009; Matsinhe 2011), affirmative action implementation (Amos & Scott 1996; Bacchi 1996; Thomas 2002; Motileng et al. 2006), work-life balance (Doherty 2004; Drew & Murtagh 2005; Smithson & Stokoe 2005; Gambles et al. 2006) and leadership development (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010; Day 2011; Ely et al. 2011). Additionally, several pertinent pieces of South African legislation, including the EE- and BBBEE Act, were also used in this level of analysis. The relevant theories and data sources for this level of analysis are tabulated in Table 5.2 in Appendix 5.

5.3.2.3 Engagement with macro-level structures: The context

This level of analysis is framed around the legacy of Apartheid in contemporary South African organisations and the interventionist policies instituted by the South African government as a response to this legacy. Within both ‘the socio-historic’ and ‘the socio-legal’ context analyses, various theoretical models were used to analyse and discuss the history of Apartheid, the legacy of Apartheid and leader identity. An engagement with macro-level structures through an analysis of the participants’ experiences and perceptions of the socio-historic and socio-legal contexts addresses the following research question:

How do historical and legislative factors influence the representation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions in private sector organisations in South Africa?

South Africa's history is tainted with the gross humanitarian atrocities committed under the Apartheid regime (Clark & Worger 2011; Allen 2005). The most salient factor in these atrocities was complete racial segregation, which was legally mandated and remained the status quo until 1994 (Norval 1996; De Klerk 1994). However, in addition to the unspeakable acts committed against people of colour, the Apartheid government was also severely patriarchal (Mahlase 1997; Bernstein 1978; Moodie 1975). An analysis of this 'socio-historical context' was carried out by drawing on the literature on the history of Apartheid (Hazlett 1988; Norval 1996; Clark & Worger 2011), responses to Apartheid (Kaempfer & Moffett 1988; Dugard 1989; Moorsom 1989; Culverson 1999; Frankel 2001), access to opportunities for advancement (Cucuzza 1993; Matsinhe 2011), and race- and gender identity (Bell & Nkomo 2001; Loury 2006; Howarth 2006; Jenkins 2014), as well as primary and secondary historical data from archival material (Department of Statistics 1970; Horrell et al. 1971; Stultz 1974; African National Congress 1980; Coovadia et al. 2009; Bernstein & Bernstein 2015). Primary data organised into the axial codes of 'Enactment', 'Conceptualisation', 'Challenges and Constraints', 'Legislation and Public Policy' and 'Enablers' were used to offer a meso-level analysis of participants' experiences and perceptions.

Although Apartheid's political and legal structures were dismantled at the end of the 20th century, many of the social structures of oppression still remain to this day and have a material impact on the lives of modern day South Africans. The government recognises this legacy of Apartheid and has instituted, arguably as part of large-scale judicialisation (Malleon 1999), various national-level interventionist policies to address the persisting social inequalities. An analysis of responses relating to this 'socio-legal context' was carried out by drawing on the literature on leadership, the merit principle and organisational performance (Weiner & Mahoney 1981; Wang et al. 2005; Malleon 2006; Castilla 2008; Carter & Greer 2013), gendered leadership expectations (Loden 1985; Sharma 1990; Rosener 1990; Billing & Alvesson 2000), division of labour (Collinson & Hearn 1996; Hill et al. 2004; Golombisky 2015), and emerging social trends within South African society (Vallabh & Donald 2001; Iheduru 2004; Southall 2004; Tangri & Southall 2008; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011). Additionally, several pertinent pieces of South African legislation, including the EE- and BBBEE Act, were also used in the engagement with

macro-social structures. The relevant theories and data sources for this level of analysis are tabulated in Table 5.3 in Appendix 5.

5.3.3 The fieldwork process

5.3.3.1 Preparing for data collection

In line with the research philosophy discussed earlier in this chapter, qualitative data were collected in order to answer the research question. Additionally, quantitative secondary data were extracted from interview participants' biographical information as well as from publicly available statistics. This section elaborates on the process of preparation prior to carrying out the data collection. In particular, preparation required attention to be given to the interview guide, observations, field notes and publicly available sources of contextual data.

5.3.3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Kvale (1996, p.1) defines qualitative interviews as follows:

“...attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.”

Qualitative research, which utilises tools such as the semi-structured interview, can lead to the discovery of new dimensions to an existing problem (Miller & Brewer 2003). This view is in line with my earlier assertion that a quantitative approach is best suited for research involving theory *testing*, while a qualitative approach is best suited for theory *building* research (Trochim 2001; Niglas 2007; Niglas 2010; Saunders et al. 2015).

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews, which adopt open-ended questions, are particularly beneficial in exploratory studies such as mine. Open-ended questions within an interview that is not overly constrained by a predetermined structure and expectations are able to generate new insight into the research problem by revealing attitudes and obtaining facts (Saunders et al. 2015).

I therefore decided to opt for an exploratory, semi-structured, open-ended qualitative interview as the research tool for the collection of my primary data. A semi-structured interview guide was designed by identifying broad themes within the leadership literature.

5.3.3.1.2 The interview guide for the participants

An open-ended interview guide was developed in order to direct one-on-one interviews in a sensible and practical, yet flexible and unconstrained manner. In order to generate rich data that builds on existing knowledge, this interview guide was developed through careful consideration of previously conducted research (Bryman 2004). A brief summary and justification for the inclusion of salient themes in the interview guide is offered here, while the full interview guide can be found in Appendix 1:

i) Conceptualisation of leadership

The theoretical underpinning of this study is that notions of leadership involve a process of continuous social construction (Grint 2005; Parker 2005; DeRue & Ashford 2010; Fairhurst & Grant 2010; Grint & Jackson 2010). The literature reveals power, control and relationships as central themes of a social view of leadership (Zaleznik 1977; Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Sinha 1995; Collinson 2005; Ospina & Foldy 2009; Nye 2010; Bolden et al. 2011; Gordon 2011; Grint 2011; Grint & Jackson 2010; Hosking 2011). Thus, of particular concern was how participants understood social power, control and relationships in relation to leadership, and how this understanding reinforces or challenges classical views of leadership that result in the exclusion of women and people of colour.

ii) Enactment of leadership

A recurring theme in the leadership literature is the differences in enactment of leadership position incumbents. As an example, there is a large body of research on the so-called 'feminine leadership' (Loden 1985; Sharma 1990; Berdahl 1996; Rudman & Glick 1999; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Vecchio 2002; Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly & Carli 2007a; Mavin & Grandy 2016b). Notions of distinctly 'feminine leadership' and claims of a 'female advantage' in leadership highlight how mainstream leadership theorising tends to marginalise and engage in a process of othering when the subject of the study is not a White man. This is especially the case when the enactment of leadership is under investigation. Another pattern the notion of the 'female leadership advantage' reveals is that the literature on leadership enactment also tends to focus heavily on psychological factors, at the cost of a consideration for external factors that may influence leadership enactment.

iii) Mentoring, networking and leadership training

The literature revealed both formal and informal leadership development to be a major determinant for success in a leadership role (Fulmer & Goldsmith 2000; Mostovicz et al. 2009; Day 2011; Chun et al. 2012). Furthermore, the literature also indicates that access to leadership developmental opportunities are not necessarily the same for women and people of colour as they are for White men (Ohlott 2002; Heilman 2001; Kalra et al. 2009; Carton & Rosette 2011).

iv) Challenges, constraints and enablers

One major initiating factor for this study was the significant underrepresentation of women and people of colour among the top leadership of private sector organisations in South Africa (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). The literature on gender, race and leadership reveals that this underrepresentation is in no small part due to the distinct challenges and constraints women and people of colour face in accessing and practising leadership (Booyesen 1999; Leigh et al. 2010; Johnson 2011). Concurrent with these challenges, however, are unique opportunities for advancement afforded to previously disadvantaged groups under South African law aimed at social transformation (Iheduru 2004).

v) Legislation and public policy

The fifth and final theme in the interview guide was that of legislation and public policy – specifically participants' perspectives and experiences thereof. South Africa's post-Apartheid democratic government recognises the injustices of the past and the impact thereof on the lives of modern day South Africans (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). As a result, legislative structures and related public policy have been put in place and are continuously revised in an effort to address persisting social inequalities in a structured and dynamic manner (Iheduru 2004). This section of the interview required participants to share their personal perspectives of such interventionist policies and of how they experienced the implementation of these policies in their daily lives.

In line with the philosophical underpinning of this study, questions were phrased in a general non-leading manner in order to allow for an open in-depth discussion that is not constrained by any potential researcher bias. A list of thematic questions aimed at eliciting robust responses from participants were written for each theme and potential probe- and

follow-up questions were also developed to ensure that interviews remained within the domain of the identified key themes. I conducted a pilot study with two colleagues to test for efficacy of the interview guide. The duration of interviews was between 60 and 90 minutes.

5.3.3.1.3 Field notes

Keeping an unstructured research diary is a valuable tool in qualitative research. Notes taken before, during and after interviews can offer insights that inform the use of theoretical frameworks as well as subsequent data analysis (Nadin & Cassell 2006). I found that this was exactly the case with my research – prior to an interview, I would reflect on the literature in relation to the specific person I was preparing to interview. I would consider their position, company and industry and make notes of specific probes I might include in the interview given their specific position. During the interview, I relied on a digital voice recorder to record the entirety of the conversation so I was able focus my attention on the conversation itself in order to make notes on observations of non-verbal cues. Finally, after the interview I would reflect on the participant’s responses along with my observations and consider possible theoretical models and analytical directions. Figure 5.1 is an excerpt from the unstructured research diary I kept alongside the structured interview guide.

Figure 5.1: Excerpt from research diary

THEMES	RELEVANT LITERATURE	QUESTIONS	PROBES
Conceptualization of Leadership	Alvareson 2011		What is the role of a leader?
	Benford et al. 2011		Does a leader have power?
	DeChurch et al. 2010		Where does this power come from, if any?
	Galbraith 2011		How does a leader use power, if any?
	Green 2011		Do leaders control followers?
	Hollies 2010	How do you understand the concept of leadership?	How do leaders control followers?
	Harrison & Elgart 1988		Do leaders have (professional) relationships with followers?
	Hosking 2011		How do leaders establish relationships with followers, if any?
	House 1999		How do leaders maintain relationships with followers, if any?
			which of these concepts would you associate with good leadership?
		What makes an ideal leader in South Africa?	Rolemodels? Why these? Does his/her race play a role? Does his/her gender play a role?
	Wise 2010		
	Parker 2005		
	Podolny et al. 2010		
	Gorenson et al. 2011		
	Weber 1922		
	Zakheim's 1977		

So many eyes on you, you work very hard to defend your own actions in industry.

Lack of role-models.

Inability to make decisions.

Maturity

Growing to fast too soon.

Disconnect between:

More calculated risks to diversity appointments.

Over-regulation.
Lack of leaders.

5.3.3.1.4 Contextual quantitative data

In order to lend a higher level of contextualisation and nuance to the primary qualitative data, some contextual quantitative secondary data was also collected before and during interviews. Secondary quantitative data was collected from two sources. Firstly, prior to conducting interviews, publicly available statistics were collected from a variety of credible sources. These statistics included information on national population trends and economic activity (Statistics South Africa 2012a; Statistics South Africa 2014b), employment equity (Commission for Employment Equity 2014) and higher education (Council on Higher Education 2015). Secondly, a section for the collection of quantitative biographical information was built into the beginning of the interview guide. At the start of each interview, participants were asked a list of simple biographical questions such as their gender, race, age, position in the organisation and educational background.

5.3.3.1.5 Administration and research ethics

Before fieldwork could be carried out, certain administrative tasks had to be carried out. A formal application was submitted to the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee (QMREC). Full ethical approval was received from the QMREC (reference: QMREC2013/84 included as Appendix 3) on 16 January 2014. I personally contacted the initial batch of potential participants via email and electronically distributed the research information sheet and consent forms (included in Appendix 4) for their consideration. The following section discusses the detail of the data collection process.

5.3.3.2 The data collection process

In-depth one-on-one interviews with 60 participants were carried out in my home country of South Africa. This section covers in some detail the task of obtaining access to research participants, the fieldwork and the profile of sampled participants included in the study.

5.3.3.2.1 Sampling procedure

The seemingly systematic underrepresentation of women and people of colour within top leadership is rampant in South African private sector organisations and this became the

setting where the fieldwork for this case study was carried out. Both ‘current leaders’ and ‘aspiring leaders’ were sampled from South African private sector organisations.

Within the two populations, two sampling techniques were used concurrently to identify potential research participants. These techniques were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. In purposive sampling, researchers rely on their own judgement in order to obtain a representative sample by including and excluding groups from the sample (Palys 2008; Patton 2015). Purposive sampling therefore attempts to mimic the composition of a particular population in question (Kruskal & Mosteller 1980), which in this case will be the largely excluded women and people of colour in senior leadership roles. Using purposive sampling techniques also holds the potential to improve the rigor of qualitative research by ensuring the researcher captures the diversity within heterogeneous populations (Barbour 2001; Tongco 2007). Therefore, from the two populations, White men were excluded – on account of their significant overrepresentation in top organisational leadership – and potential participants were only contacted for participation in the study if they were current or aspiring leaders who were women or people of colour.

Subsequent to the identification of the appropriate potential participants from the two populations, I initiated a process of snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, a conveniently available group of participants is included in the study, after which these participants are requested to provide the researcher with information regarding more potential participants (Babbie 2015). The result is a ‘snowball effect’, with the number of total participants growing exponentially as participants suggest suitable friends and colleagues who might be interested in participating in the research. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) assert that snowball sampling is particularly useful when the research is concerned with private or sensitive matters such as mine. Furthermore, snowball sampling has also proved to be highly useful in research that deals with issues that are political and interactional in nature (Noy 2008).

In addition to sampling ‘current’ and ‘future’ leaders, I also interviewed a small number of ‘key informants’. These participants were sampled in order to collect qualitative data from an alternative, ‘outsider’ perspective. I interviewed key informants using the same interview guide and therefore discussed the same themes with them as I did with all the primary participants. I continued sampling research participants in accordance with the

procedure outlined in this section until the qualitative data reached a point of saturation where similar themes continued emerging. The next section explains how I went about gaining access to the profile of participants I identified using this sampling procedure.

5.3.3.2.2 Obtaining access to research participants

Access to research participants was obtained primarily through the leveraging of my personal and professional networks. In many cases, my friends and colleagues acted as gatekeepers to potential research participants in their respective organisations. I have been fortunate in the sense that I was granted access relatively easily throughout the fieldwork process. Having worked in the private sector prior to my PhD studies, I was able to directly contact old colleagues as well as acquaintances from conferences and training seminars I have attended in the past. Since the majority of my classmates from undergraduate and Masters courses were working in the South African private sector, they too offered a source of access to participants.

In some cases I interviewed the individuals I contacted and in other instances the person I contacted referred me to other people in their personal and professional networks. My research and the need to collect qualitative data by means of one-on-one interviews was overwhelmingly well received. Based on my interactions with participants and the positive response I received regarding my requests for access, I argue that there was a general appreciation for my topic of study and my efforts to make a contribution to the study of both leadership and equality in South Africa. The next section describes in more detail how I went about conducting my fieldwork.

5.3.3.2.3 The fieldwork

I visited South Africa twice to conduct interviews – once from April to May in 2014 and again from January to February in 2015. Being a white Afrikaans man from a privileged background, it was an initial concern that it might be difficult to establish rapport with the participants. To minimise any potential resistance and to ensure open and honest responses from participants, I took great care in starting every interview with a brief introduction of myself, my research interests, Queen Mary University and the nature and purpose of my research.

Interviews were conducted with participants who work in private sector organisations across a wide range of industries. These industries included Fast Moving

Consumer Goods, Technology, Telecommunications, Construction and Financial Services, among others. In addition, interviews were conducted with respondents who live and work in various cities in South Africa. The majority of the interviews were conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg, but also in Pretoria and Port Elizabeth.

South Africa is rich in cultural diversity. As a result, the government recognises 11 official languages. All 11 official languages are taught in schools and used in print and broadcast media. English, however, is considered to be the business language of South Africa (Casale & Posel 2010; SouthAfrica.info 2016). Therefore, all the participants included in this study were fluent in English and as such did not appear to have any difficulty being interviewed in English. All the interviews were conducted in English apart from two. Two participants preferred to be interviewed in Afrikaans as this is their, and my, mother tongue. I allowed them to speak in Afrikaans and translated the interviews into English afterwards.

5.3.3.2.4 The participants

60 participants in total were interviewed. A summary of the entire sample's characteristics such as sample size, location, age and the like is presented in Table 5.4. Furthermore, Figure 5.2 is an overview of the industries from which participants were sampled.

The analysis of the data was informed by the literature on intersectionality. Therefore, I attempted to control for sample size to ensure the number of participants in each intersectional group were relatively the same. I was able to achieve this balance and the number of participants for each intersectional group remained relatively the same size, with White women being slightly bigger and the women of colour group being slightly smaller. This is to a certain extent representative of the availability of participants, in that White women occupied senior leadership roles the most and women of colour occupied senior leadership roles the least.

Table 5.4: Summary of sample characteristics

Participants' gender	Men	Women	Women	Total
Participants' race	POC	POC	White	
Sample size	21	16	23	60
Sampled from Cape Town	11	6	9	26
Sampled from Johannesburg	9	8	9	26
Sampled from Pretoria	1	2	4	7
Sampled from Port Elizabeth	0	0	1	1
Sampled current leaders	7	7	17	31
Sampled aspiring leaders	11	8	3	22
Sampled key informants	3	1	3	7
Average age	37	36	43	39*
Post-graduate qualification	67%	69%	83%	73%**
Internally promoted	10	8	8	26
Externally appointed	11	8	15	34
Average years in position	3.49	1.65	4.70	3.5†
Average years in organisation	7.07	4.39	7.52	6.5‡

POC – 'Person of colour', including Black, Coloured, Indian and Asian participants

* Calculated as an average of the entire sample's ages in years

** Calculated as a percentage of the entire sample

† Calculated average of the entire sample's tenure in their current position

‡ Calculated average of the entire sample's tenure in their current organisation

Figure 5.2: Total sample composition according to industry

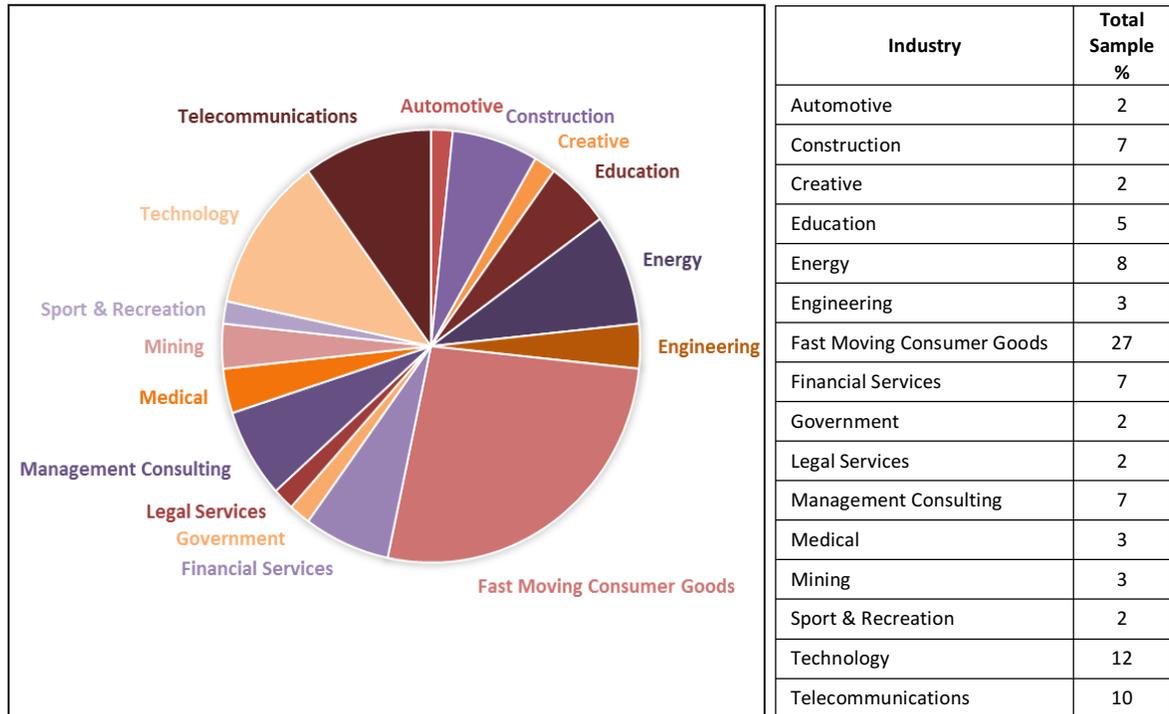
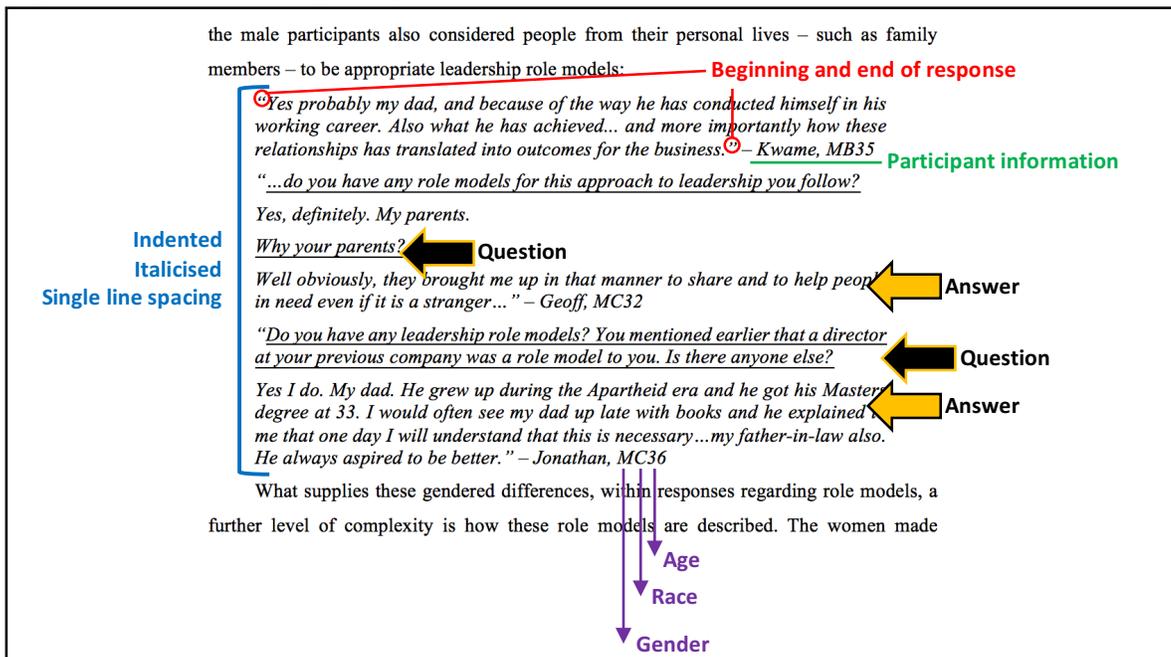


Table 5.5 in Appendix 2 presents a list of the sampled participants, along with a summary of their biographical background, including gender, race, age, occupation and sector. In order to avoid quotes becoming cumbersome, only selected biographical information is indicated alongside quoted responses. Figure 5.3 shows graphically how participant information are indicated when quoted. All quoted responses are indented, italicised and formatted to single line spacing. Quotation marks signify the start and end of one specific response, after which the relevant participant details are indicated. Additionally, the symbols behind each pseudonym indicate gender, race and age respectively. In instances where the interview question is also quoted, the question is indicated as underlined text.

Figure 5.3: Presentation of participant information



Three ‘types’ of respondents were interviewed. Participants included in this study were either ‘current leaders’, ‘aspiring leaders’ or ‘key informants’. ‘Key informants’ were individuals who did not fulfill a leadership role themselves, but who had credible expert opinions that added valuable perspectives to the qualitative data. These ‘key informants’ were typically Human Resource Managers, Leadership Development Experts and

government officials. 'Current leaders' made up the majority of respondents, with 'key informants' being the least.

Furthermore, I also attempted to regulate the number of participants in order to have a relatively even distribution between age groups. Naturally this task was somewhat challenging due to the nature of the requirement for someone to fulfill an organisational leadership role. As a result, the majority of 'current leader' participants were older than 36 years, and the majority of 'aspiring leaders' were under the age of 36 years.

One might also notice a distinctly higher statistic in participant average age among the White women compared to the other two groups. This is quite interesting, especially compared to the group of Black men participants, since both groups seem to have a similar average tenure trend within their organisations, with the White women only being with their current organisations on average six months longer than the men of colour. The White women do, however, also have a much higher number of them holding a post-graduate degree when compared to the other two groups. An argument could be made here that White women spend more time at university and enter the workforce at a later age than the men- and women of colour.

Finally, the last interesting demographic difference found between the groups was how they were appointed to their current strategic leadership role. While among the men- and the women of colour there seemed to be a balance between internal and external appointments, i.e., being promoted from within the organisation or recruited from outside the organisation, the White women seemed twice more likely to be appointed externally than be promoted into a senior leadership role internally. The process of analysis of the qualitative data from interviews, within the context of these demographic indicators, is discussed in the next section.

5.3.4 The data analysis process

Transcription of the audio files was carried out with the aid of the NVivo software package. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, with the exception of pseudonyms being used to distinguish between participants, and all company names mentioned during the interview were replaced with 'the company'. These substitutions were carried out to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Transcription of the audio was done in concurrent

consideration of the relevant field notes so that non-verbal cues and post-interview reflections could be added at the relevant points of the transcripts. These notes were added by using NVivo's memo function.

In order to ensure that the intended meaning of the original responses were preserved, I engaged in a process of back translation (Brislin 1970; Brislin 1980; Brislin 1986) to test the accuracy of my own translations from Afrikaans to English. To save costs and to ensure confidentiality, I asked my mother to assist with the back translation. I presented her with an anonymised collection of noteworthy Afrikaans quotes I had translated into English and she translated them back into Afrikaans for me. My mother's back translation into Afrikaans indicated that the original meaning was preserved during the original translation into English and that responses were not distorted.

Subsequent to the transcription and translation, I engaged in a process of coding. Categorisation of the data by way of coding is the most appropriate if the purpose of the research is exploring emerging themes (Maxwell 2012), as is the case with this study. Coding is arguably the most commonly used technique to organise and manage large volumes of qualitative data (Babbie 2015). It involves a process of abstraction of the raw data, where participants' responses are labelled, grouped and organised before the analysis is carried out (Saldana 2015; Yin 2016). Furthermore, in-depth qualitative interviews about lived experiences produce data which lends itself to analysis based in a subjectivist ontology (Crotty 1998; Mathison 2014; Saunders et al. 2015).

Layder (1998) distinguishes between two approaches that might be used to guide the coding process. The first, 'Middle Range' approach, states that a theoretical framework for coding and subsequent analysis should be created prior to the start of the data collection. Within this approach, the empirical data is analysed within the boundaries of existing categories. The second, namely a 'Grounded' approach, asserts that the research must be carried out with as little as possible predetermined theory and instead base coding structures and a subsequent analysis on emerging themes from the data.

In a review of the leadership literature produced through qualitative studies, Bryman (2004) found that a significant limitation to the body of knowledge is a tendency among qualitative leadership researchers to neglect the work done by others. This finding by Bryman (2004) highlights the importance of careful consideration of research conducted in

the past when engaging in leadership research. Conversely, Nkomo (2006) points out that leadership theory is largely represented as universal, while in-depth insight into race (Ospina & Foldy 2009) and gender (Korabik & Ayman 2007) has yet to penetrate mainstream leadership theory. This current state of the leadership literature therefore warrants the necessity to engage in research that is not overly constrained by existing theoretical frameworks.

Therefore, a combination of the Middle Range- and Grounded approaches was used to guide the coding and analysis of the data collected from semi-structured interviews. Due consideration was afforded to the existing leadership literature by using it to design the semi-structured interview guide. Questions during the interview, however, were open-ended and non-leading in order to allow for the collection of in-depth, unconstrained accounts of personal experience. The coding and analysis of these responses followed suit by using existing theoretical frameworks in conjunction with a consideration for emergent themes.

Further to utilising both Middle Range- and Grounded approaches to guide the analysis, coding was also carried out at two levels: thematic- and axial coding (Creswell 2014; Saldana 2015; Yin 2016). The first level, often referred to as thematic coding, involved the identification of distinct topics, issues, concerns or themes represented by the responses. If a response was considered to be representative of a particular ‘theme’ of interest, the quote in question would be assigned a thematic label.

The second level of coding, often referred to as axial coding, refers to the grouping together of identified thematic codes into logical groups. The creation of axial codes occurs at a higher conceptual level than thematic codes and involves a higher level of abstraction. Figure 5.4 shows a screenshot of the NVivo interface, which lists all the axial codes. NVivo functionality allowed me to expand this list of axial codes into their respective thematic codes. This expansion into thematic codes is shown in Figure 5.5.

Great care was taken to ensure codes were not duplicated and that they were representative of the emerging themes from the data in line with a subjectivist ontology (Crotty 1998; Saunders et al. 2015). By way of example, I present in Table 5.6 the axial code of ‘Challenges and Constraints’, which thematic codes it consists of, a description of each thematic code, and an example quote from the data. A fuller presentation and

explanation of thematic and axial codes together with descriptions and exemplary quotes can be found in Tables 5.7 to 5.12 contained in Appendix 5.

Figure 5.4: Screenshot of axial codes in NVivo

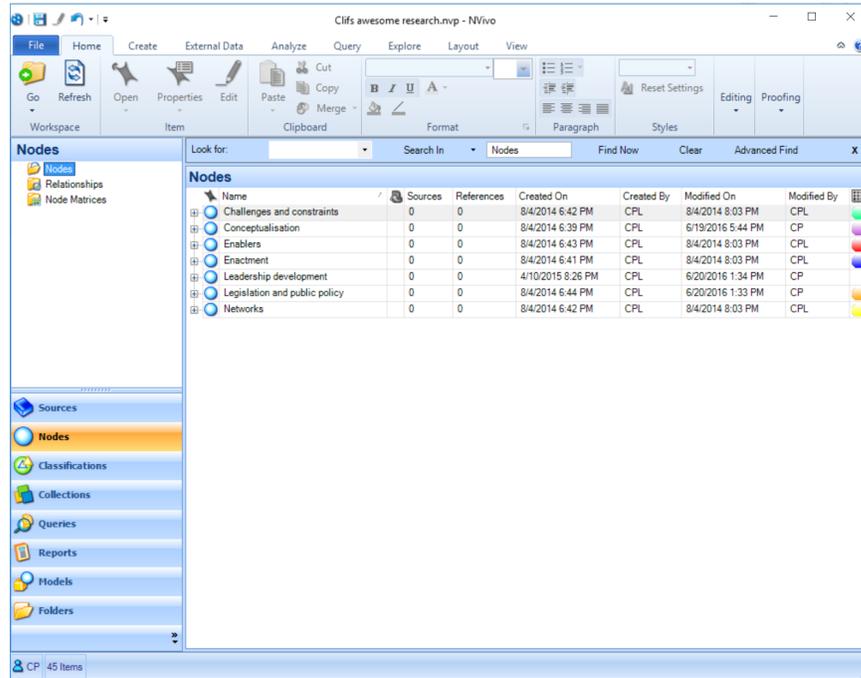


Figure 5.5: Screenshot of axial codes expanded to thematic codes in NVivo

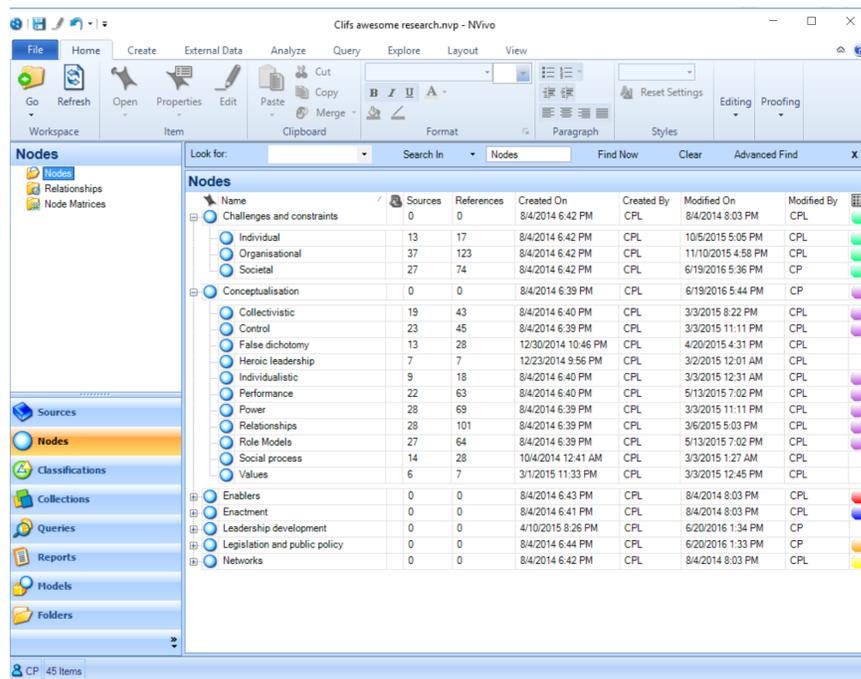


Table 5.6: ‘Challenges and constraints’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Challenges and constraints	Individual	<i>Evidence of experiences of challenges and constraints to accessing and practising leadership at an individual or personal level</i>	<i>“Initially, in the early stages when I first got into engineering, attending site meetings, it was unusual, probably the only non-white guy, sitting amongst the white guys. I felt a bit uncomfortable, bearing in mind, not having a technical background, purely based on experience and my own knowledge, but eventually I overcame that.” – Rajesh M151</i>
	Organisational	<i>Evidence of experiences of challenges and constraints to accessing and practising leadership at an organisational level</i>	<i>“You will find many women and Black people who are in corporate affairs, HR, marketing and communications. So, the expectation is that, if you’re sitting in a boardroom, that’s what you’re here to talk about and you’re not going to have a hard conversation about finances.” – Lerato, FB43</i>
	Societal	<i>Evidence of experiences of challenges and constraints to accessing and practising leadership at a societal level</i>	<i>“I don’t think we have enough role models at the moment. I don’t think we have enough people who are honest enough. I also think in private sector we don’t have enough role models. I don’t think we have enough leaders like Nelson Mandela etc.” – Jacqueline, FW48</i>

The axial code of ‘Challenges and Constraints’ arranges the data on the experiences and perceptions of challenges and constraints in accessing and practising leadership at an individual-, organisational- and societal level. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Challenges and Constraints’ include perceived challenges experienced by participants, the observation of challenges experienced by others, and related responses such as strategies for dealing with challenges. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.7 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Conceptualisation’.

The axial code of ‘Conceptualisation’ arranges the data based on diverging views of what the concept of leadership entails. Key themes within the broader axial code of ‘Conceptualisation’ include, among others, views on leadership which are collectivistic and individualistic; leadership and power; leadership as a relational process; and leadership and performance. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Conceptualisation’ includes personal views on leadership, perceptions of others’ views on leadership, as well as an understanding of what leadership is not. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.8 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Enablers’.

The axial code of ‘Enablers’ arranges the data on experiences and perceptions of enabling factors in accessing and practising leadership at an individual-, organisational- and societal level. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Enablers’ includes perceived enabling factors experienced by participants, the observation of enabling factors affecting

others, and related responses such as responses to factors intended to be enabling. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.9 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Enactment’.

The axial code of ‘Enactment’ arranges the data on participant perceptions on the enactment of leadership according to various diverging themes. These themes include the influence of gender and race on enactment, personal leadership style preferences, organisational influences and societal influences. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Enactment’ include accounts of participants’ perceptions of how they enact leadership themselves, observations of how others enact leadership, as well as reflections on what factors influence leadership enactment and what does not. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.10 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Leadership Development’.

The axial code of ‘Leadership Development’ arranges the data on experiences and perceptions of leadership development according to various diverging themes. These themes include access to development opportunities, mentoring, leadership development preferences, and gender- and race influences on the development process. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Leadership Development’ include accounts of participants’ personal experience in leadership development, observations of how others experience leadership development, and reflections on what factors influence leadership development, along with several suggestions on what constitutes ‘effective leadership’ development and what does not. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.11 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Legislation and Public Policy’.

The axial code of ‘Legislation and Public Policy’ arranges the data on participant perceptions and experiences of interventionist legislation and equity policy in South Africa, at national policy and organisational implementation levels, according to perceived positive and negative impacts, as well as according to proposed suggestions for policy improvement. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Legislation and Public Policy’ includes accounts of personally experiencing the implementation of interventionist policy, observations of legislation or public policy affecting others, and general opinions of interventionist public policy. The next axial code on my NVivo list, tabulated in Table 5.12 in Appendix 5, is that of ‘Networks’.

The axial code of ‘Networks’ arranges the data on the experiences and perceptions of professional networks according to accounts of networks inside and outside of participants’

organisations, preferences for engaging in informal networks, as well as networks framed within organisational politics. Data coded into any of the themes under ‘Networks’ includes, among others, personal perceptions and experiences, as well as the observation and perceptions of dynamics within professional networks.

Assigning a thematic and axial code to pertinent responses facilitated the analysis of the data. Being able to view the data as coherent ‘chunks’ of meaning made it easier to comment and discuss when compared to the literature and from an emerging theme perspective. This analysis of the data is presented as three distinct yet interdependent chapters in line with the analytical framework discussed in this chapter.

5.4 Reflecting on the research process

Research such as this, which addresses issues of gender and race, requires a certain level of reflexivity in terms of the researcher’s personal values, and their philosophical position and standpoints (Nadin & Cassell 2006; Mavin 2008; Acker 2012; Mavin & Williams 2015). Reflecting on the research process and engagement with the data is of vital importance, because as the literature reveals, the conceptualisation of leadership, gender and race are fraught with stereotypes and biased expectations. This section presents my reflection on my personal values and beliefs, a reflection on my interaction with participants, as well as a reflection on my engagement with the data.

5.4.1 Reflecting on my research interests, personal values and potential biases

The research is situated in South Africa, which is also where I was born and raised. More importantly, the overarching themes of this research are that of race, gender, privilege and disadvantage in organisational leadership, which are all highly contentious concepts in the South African context. This section elaborates on my research interests and personal values as they relate to the research topic.

I grew up in a relatively small town 70km outside of Cape Town, South Africa. As one might expect, cultural practises and social norms in this small town were – and to a certain extent remain – stereotypically conservative. The conservative nature of this town is reflected in enduring racial segregation more than two decades after the fall of Apartheid, the low participation of women in business ownership and management, and the

persistent use of Afrikaans as primary language in local commerce. Now, in 2016, the social structures within this community have remained relatively unchanged since my childhood. Although not legally enforced anymore, White people and people of colour still live in geographically separated neighbourhoods and attend separate schools (Kiewit 2014; Knoetze 2014).

Further anecdotal evidence of persistent social inequality can also be drawn from my mother's experience at a business owners meeting. In recent years, South African businesses were suffering major losses due to erratic stoppages in the supply of electricity (Fin24 2015a; Pitjeng 2015; TMG Digital 2016), and in my home town an emergency meeting among local business owners was called to discuss the matter. My mother, as a prominent local business owner at the time, was invited to attend this meeting and reported that of all the attendees, she was the only woman and all attendees were White. Moreover, business in my home town is conducted primarily in Afrikaans. A testimony to this is the local Chamber of Commerce's website, calendar, marketing and contact details all being presented in Afrikaans. It is also not surprising that the Chamber's management structure is occupied by only White candidates (Sakekamer 2016).

Growing up White and middle-class in South Africa, I was blissfully unaware of my own privilege. Of the segregated neighbourhoods, my family lived in the one with the higher property value and the better service delivery. Of the segregated schools, my brother and I attended the ones with higher fees and a lower student-to-teacher ratio. As a child and teenager, I never questioned any of my many White Afrikaans male privileges because at a social level I was not exposed to anyone other than White Afrikaans people – I was well into my high school career before I realised the majority of South Africans are not White and Afrikaans.

What I did actively resist, however, was being told I was not allowed to be friends with who I wanted to be friends with. An example of this attitude of mine can be seen in the events around my 16th birthday party. I was discouraged from inviting anyone to my party who was not White. Various pseudo-rational arguments were put forward as justification for this decision, none of which I remember caring about. At the time, I felt that it would be more painful for me to look my uninvited Black friends in the eye the Monday morning after the weekend's party, than any societal penalties which were likely

to follow. I also knew that no harm would come to my Black friends if they attended the party as Afrikaans people generally try to maintain appearances as much as possible. I therefore knew that the only repercussion of defying pervading social norms would be to receive some level of public critique regarding my choice of friends – a consequence which I felt content with.

My tendency to resist restrictive social norms is in no small part due to being a gay man and growing up in a conservative community. Within the Afrikaner community, judging, ridiculing and belittling someone for nothing other than being incongruent with one's own world view is commonplace. I remember as a child and teenager, the slightest behaviour or interest in anything that has not been socially delineated as being 'appropriate for boys' would result in me being made aware of my inappropriate behaviour or interests. As a child, I remember to experience these conversations with my parents was highly frustrating, as I did not understand why I was not being allowed to express my identity in the way I saw fit – I was never satisfied with answers like 'that's not what boys do'.

Going to university, I was delighted to be exposed to people from backgrounds different from my own. Arguably, my particular university was not equitably representative of the South African population at the time of being an undergraduate, but it was light years beyond the demographic composition of my childhood neighbourhoods and high school. Here, I made a conscious effort to start distancing myself from a culture I found to be restrictive, prejudiced and downright oppressive. I remember one holiday during my undergraduate studies, my mother remarking that I 'only have English friends these days'. Not only did I make a lot of new friends at university that were not White and Afrikaans, but I was also exposed for the first time to the concept of leadership. I served on various student leadership bodies and even received a leadership bursary for my services to the university as a student leader.

When it became time to decide on a research topic for my Masters dissertation, I had a much stronger sense of my personal identity and professional interests. I had – and still have – a keen interest in how leadership is understood and produced in different social contexts. I also have passionate views on social equality and consider myself an ally to women and people of colour, the same way my heterosexual friends and family are allies to me and the LGBTQIA community. I therefore explored options of combining the

themes of diversity and leadership into a research project and under the supervision of my study leader, we distilled this idea into a project exploring the experiences of participants in a leadership development programme from an intersectional perspective using gender and race (Lewis 2011). Conducting similar research at doctoral level seemed like the natural next step and thus, this research project was born.

5.4.2 Reflecting on my interaction with the participants

In terms of interacting with the research participants, I became immediately aware of the acute sensitivities regarding gender- and racial identity in post-Apartheid South Africa. Participants seemed to have very strong political, social and cultural views underlying their responses. These were not always articulated expressly and I therefore took great care to not cause offense or to force my own views onto the participants. The following is an example of this.

As part of the collection of biographical information about participants, at the beginning of all the interviews I asked participants to respond to social categories of social classifications they identify with such as their age, gender, race and disability – if any. More specifically, the racial categories I used were White, Black, Coloured, Indian or Mixed-race as per the South African national census (Statistics South Africa 2012a). I did not, however, list these categories but rather phrased my questions as ‘...and what race do you identify as?’. Generally, participants responded with one of the census categories but in one instance, one of the Black women was adamant that she is ‘African’ as opposed to ‘Black’. Personally, I view ‘African’ as a reference to where someone is from. In fact, as a White person, I also identify as African, but did not challenge or discuss this further with the participant and accepted it as a valid response to my question.

This example is suitable in describing my approach to managing my relationships with respondents as it highlights an acute conflict between my personal views and that of a research participant. I was born and raised in Africa, all of my family was born and raised in Africa and many of my friends live in Africa. I feel a deep connection to my country and the continent on which I was born and therefore identify as African. I realise, however, that it is no coincidence that I, a White person, was born in Africa. I realise and acknowledge that my ancestors *came* to the African continent by artificial means and brought with them

centuries of fierce oppression under European colonialisation. I realise that challenging the participant's response in the aforementioned example and insisting that 'African' is not an appropriate racial category would have been insensitive and dismissive, and could possibly have been perceived as a disregard to my own White privilege and the White oppression enforced by my ancestors. I therefore took the cue from the participant and during the interview used 'African' where I would have used 'Black' in another interview.

The aforementioned example highlights how I went about trying to determine sensibilities and underlying social or political views when managing the interviews. I used both non-verbal- and verbal cues to guide my approach towards each specific respondent. In most cases, I did not experience difficulty in navigating potentially conflicting values between myself and the participants. In retrospect, I feel this favourable experience during the interviews resulted from my endeavour to remain understanding of participant sensibilities, but also as a direct result of the snowball sampling technique used. The snowball sampling process in my research assured that I had access to research participants who felt comfortable in sharing their experiences with me by virtue of their personal or professional acquaintance who was interviewed before them.

Another important consideration in my interaction with respondents was maintaining a sense of authenticity and doing so by clarifying my motives and intentions for speaking with each respondent. It is true that I presented respondents with a summary of my research outlining the objectives and intended outputs of the study. However, obtaining informed consent in this manner did not clarify who I am as a person. Arguably, reading an executive summary about the research and about how Queen Mary University of London ensures ethical research does not offer sufficient reason for a participant to trust me enough to divulge highly personal and sensitive information. The following interaction with one participant serves as example of this reflection.

Afrikaans – my home language – is colloquially known as 'the language of the oppressor' and 'the language of the Whites'. For this very reason, I make a conscious effort only to speak Afrikaans to someone I know has Afrikaans as their first language – even more so since living abroad. I would normally initiate conversations in English and change to Afrikaans only upon the suggestion or request of the other person. I also followed this approach during interviews.

I became acutely aware of the importance of authenticity during one interview with a 54-year-old White woman. This interview was by far the shortest and noticeably constrained. I did not quite understand why this was during the interview, as I followed the normal protocol and behaved appropriately in a friendly and professional manner, but towards the end her demeanor and lack of openness became a bit clearer. I introduced myself in English and conducted the entire interview in English, even though I could tell from her name and accent that Afrikaans was most certainly her first language. At the end of the interview, as a courtesy, I changed to speaking Afrikaans and thanked her in Afrikaans for participating in my study. Her face lit up and her entire demeanor changed when I spoke to her in Afrikaans. She became animated and much more talkative and explained that, because of my accent when I spoke English, she had assumed I was a foreigner conducting my research in South Africa. As I left I could even hear her speaking to her assistant and telling her with much delight how the ‘young man who just interviewed me is from Cape Town’ and how ‘he received a bursary to study in London’.

I have no doubt that her skepticism, and resulting behaviour, was at least partly due to feelings of mistrust in the absence of knowledge about my background and personal beliefs, or intentions. Of the 60 interviews I conducted, the aforementioned example occurred during the 8th, so I was able to learn from this experience early on in the fieldwork process. After this experience, I made a point of briefly discussing my own personal and professional background, with specific reference to being a South African, at the beginning of each interview. I believe this to have contributed to the rest of the interviews being of a very open and candid nature. In fact, I feel quite fortunate to have been able to collect the rich data I did, with minimal resistance from my research participants.

5.4.3 Reflecting on my interaction with the data

From personal experience, reading the literature on privilege and conducting the interviews, I am of the opinion that the majority of White South Africans are unable or unwilling to recognise their own privilege. Furthermore, from personal experience, reading the literature on disadvantages and from conducting the interviews, I feel that the unique struggles and challenges people of colour in South Africa face and their dehumanising

consequences are not fully understood or appreciated by White South Africans. I am aware that these opinions run the risk of resulting in biased analyses of the data in that White people could potentially become vilified, while people of colour are consistently portrayed as victims with no agency over their own lives and careers. I was aware of these potential biases throughout the research process and guarded against assumptions produced from my personal beliefs on race in South Africa.

Similarly, I consider myself a feminist in that I feel passionate about social equality between the sexes. However, from personal experience, reading the literature on gendering in society and organisations and from conducting these interviews, I am of the opinion that South Africans in general do not fully understand and appreciate the social impact of gendering in organisations and society at large. I am aware that this opinion runs the risk of resulting in biased analyses of the data in that men could potentially become vilified, while women are consistently portrayed as victims with no agency over their own lives and careers. I was aware of these potential biases throughout the research process and guarded against assumptions produced from my personal beliefs on gender in South Africa.

Furthermore, I found the use of racial categories, as explained throughout this thesis, to be somewhat of a challenge. Firstly, because these categories were established as a tool for the oppression of a majority of South Africans and the continued use of these categories risks perpetuating social processes of marginalisation and widespread inequality. Secondly, because the nature of my project involved the grouping of people of colour into one 'non-White' category. Earlier in this chapter, I did argue why I found this to be an acceptable practise, yet at the same time I found this practise to be somewhat of a moral dilemma – both using and not using historical racial categories risks perpetuating social inequalities. In an effort to address this dilemma, I discuss it as a possible area for future research in Chapter 9.

The research philosophy adopted in this study is in line with my personal beliefs that leadership, gender and race are all socially constructed concepts. I believe that socially, these concepts are prescriptive in nature rather than descriptive. I also believe that they compound and affect social experience. A qualitative multi-level approach allowed me to reflect on how historical and legislative contexts are related to how leadership is understood and socially constructed among underrepresented groups, namely women and

people of colour. Furthermore, incorporating gender and race into this study enabled me to challenge limiting, exclusionary and prescriptive notions of leadership which I believe serve to maintain power imbalances in South African society.

5.5 Conclusion

I started out this chapter with an overview of my personal belief system as a means to explain my interest in this particular topic. What followed was a description of the methods used in this case study and a justification of their use by means of an explanation of the philosophical underpinning. I then proceeded to discuss the research design, the fieldwork conducted and the analytical framework.

As explained in this chapter, the methodology utilised in this research was that which suits an exploratory qualitative study. The primary method of data collection was that of in-depth, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, which produced a large amount of rich qualitative data. Based on my review of the leadership literature, I argue that a subjectivist ontology best suits an enquiry into the lived experiences of those groups of people who are systematically underrepresented among top leadership within South African private sector organisations – South African private sector organisations thus also serving as the setting for this case study. I therefore used a ‘layered’ approach in analysing the data, with reference to different levels of society and experience.

As a scholar in the field of organisational leadership, my view is that leadership theory is informed by social structures that perpetuate widespread power imbalances and social inequalities. This is despite the fact that mainstream leadership theory is presented as being gender-, race- and class neutral. With this chapter, I explained my approach to exploring the lived experiences of underrepresented groups in leadership in order to make a contribution to leadership theorising that is non-discriminatory, non-exclusionary and does not maintain social power imbalances. The next chapter is the first of three analysis chapters, which present quotes from the primary data along with relevant analyses.

Chapter 6: Individual challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an answer to the following research question:

What are the individual-level challenges, constraints and enablers women and people of colour experience in accessing and practising strategic leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa?

The literature reveals a wide range of individual-level challenges and enablers to women and people of colour in organisational leadership and even more so in the unique South African context. Findings within the case study at a micro-individual level of analysis are discussed separately for individual challenges and constraints and for individual enablers within this chapter.

6.2 Individual challenges and constraints

During the in-depth interviews, participants were asked specifically what they considered to have been a challenge or constraint in accessing and practising leadership over the entire span of their careers. In these instances, diverging responses were collected and this data has been divided into personal, organisational and societal factors. Personal and individual-level challenges and constraints are discussed in this section, while organisational and societal challenges are discussed in the chapters that follow.

6.2.1 Personal challenges

The data indicate that a dominant theme within perceptions of the role of leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa is that of the leader as an agent of performance. When asked what they saw the role of the leader to be in South African organisations, the majority of participants expressed a concern for the achievement of organisational goals. This view of organisational leadership is not surprising as mainstream leadership literature is dominated by a concern for ‘effective leadership’ (Junker & van Dick 2014) and its relation to organisational outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014). The

following quotes illustrate the central concern for performance and achievement within participants' understanding of the role of organisational leadership:

"The key for a leader is to take the organisation and achieve his as well as the firm's objectives..." – Deepak, MI56

"The first guy that I worked for...as far as a working role model goes, he was just very effective." – Ravinder, MI31

"Traditionally, one would say to drive profits in a business. To lead the organisations in the interest of the sum of its stakeholders; that is one part of leadership. The other part of it is to have a vision and an ability to motivate others to act in these interests." – Lerato, FB43

"For me, a leader is someone that knows where the organisation is going; to take the goals of the organisation and translate it to your subordinates and draw on their strengths in a way that everyone moves towards those goals." – Irene, FW28

Personal challenges arising from this view of the role of the leader are doubts among the women participants regarding their perceived ability to achieve the required performance. Key responses which highlighted this concern are as follows:

"...have you experienced any problems moving beyond a certain organisational level, that metaphor of the glass ceiling?"

No, look I haven't really. If I need to move anywhere it would have to be at head office position and I have not applied for that position, so I am to blame myself." – Abbey, FW41

"I think I have a response when I'm amongst the very senior people that sometimes my brain doesn't function and I'm sort of overwhelmed by trying to say the right thing and it comes out wrong so I need to get past that." – Carmen, FW51

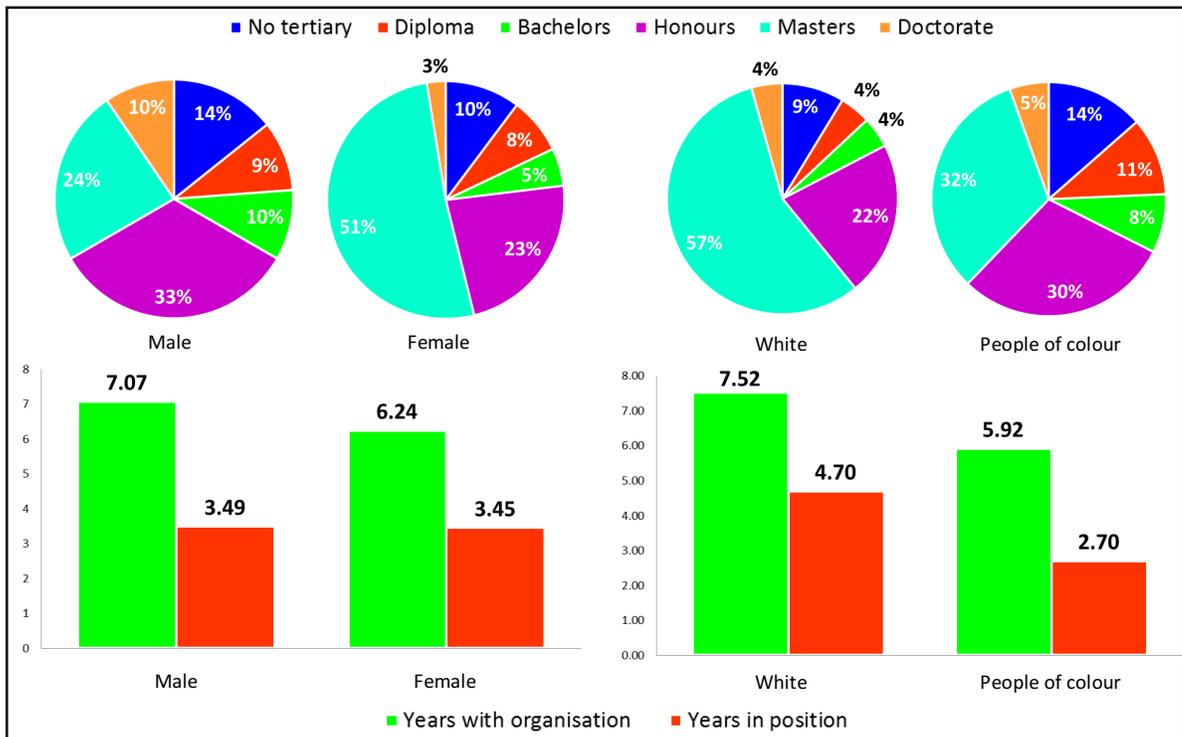
"...I think it was my self-limiting beliefs and self-confidence growing up. Those were huge barriers to my own progression...I think growing up being non-White did limit my own sense of self-worth and I think those limiting beliefs are quite hard to get out of your system." – Priscilla, FI49

The aforementioned quotes highlight two key features characterising the women participants' responses regarding their own perceived ability to act in senior leadership roles: (a) 'performance' strongly informs the participants' conceptualisation of leadership in organisations and (b) women in leadership tend to engage in seemingly systematic thoughts of self-doubt, which appears to be a form of internalisation of structural inequalities. It is well documented that both organisational and societal structures of inequality limit the career advancement opportunities available to women (Acker 2006;

Eagly & Carli 2007a; Golombisky 2015), yet the women participants in this study seem to be of the perception that limitations to their advancement are simply the result of their own professional shortcomings. Interestingly, from both the White women and women of colour there was a recurring theme of perceived inadequacy, but not among the respondents who were men. This finding resonates with gender in management studies which show that women in leadership roles engage in constant self-monitoring while men in similar roles do not (Pini 2005). Arguably, this confirms a perceived incompatibility between leadership- and women's identities (Billing 2011). This pattern among women in leadership to constantly self-monitor, while men do not also calls into question the supposed 'merit' on which leader performance is based. Gendered differences in how participants respond to measures of leader performance also suggest that 'merit' itself, and how it relates to organisational leadership in the South African private sector, is a gendered concept. Evidence of 'merit' as racialised concept was also found and is discussed later in this section.

Descriptive biographical information on education, years of experience and about interviewees suggests that responses like those quoted above are not an accurate reflection of women participants' actual ill-preparedness for their respective leadership roles. Biographical information collected prior to the interviews has been aggregated and is graphically presented in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Comparative education and experience averages for gender and race



Descriptive statistics reveal that there were 4% more of the participants who were men with *no* tertiary qualification and that there were 17% more women who had a post-graduate qualification. Furthermore, years of service only revealed a slight difference in averages between the men and women. Thus, one might argue that the perceived inadequacy among the participants who were women is in fact the result of some form of internalisation of enduring notions of the male leadership prototype (Paris et al. 2009; Junker & van Dick 2014). The male leadership prototype holds that men – for various social and historical reasons – are better suited for leadership roles as they more often than not possess the required skillset to function effectively in leadership roles (Eagly & Karau 2002; Collinson & Hearn 2014). This preoccupation with perceived personal inadequacies represents a significant personal challenge to women in leadership. It points towards the insidious nature of inherently gendered leadership concepts such as ‘merit’ and ‘performance’. The false belief that organisations are meritocracies and that performance is gender neutral becomes apparent when responses regarding this theme are compared between the men and women.

Indeed, the data reveals that the women's view of their own suitability for leadership roles is constrained by an overly critical assumption that progression into leadership roles is solely due to performance – personal or otherwise. However, transformation initiatives and a concern for merit have an inherently tense relationship (Malleon 2006), arguably due to the highly gendered and racialised nature of meritorious ideals. Therefore, organisational and social structures also play a role in leadership career progression, especially for women and people of colour (Acker 2006; Eagly & Carli 2007a; Kulich 2014). Similarly, the notion of current career specialisation as an acceptable reason for future exclusion from consideration for promotion into senior leadership roles – as seen in the response from this woman in the role of Human Resource Executive at the time of the interview – was quite interesting:

“I started my career on the training side and got to the stage where one is so specialised that it was very difficult to broaden that scope. I was, in my opinion, quite limited when I started looking at a new career avenue in terms of the kinds of roles and experience I've had and quite lucky that I landed in this role because I've never had the generalist HR experience.” – Madré, FW40

This is an example of a typical response from women participants regarding their perception of their personal 'performance' and 'merit' for advancement into senior leadership roles. Arguably, self-limiting responses such as these reinforce and rationalise organisational inequalities seen in phenomena such as the 'Glass Ceiling' (Cotter et al. 2001; Smith 2012; Cook & Glass 2014) and the 'Velvet Ghetto' (Ghiloni 1987; Taff 2003; Golombisky 2015). Among both men and women participants there were generalists and specialists across various job functions, yet the men never expressed a concern that career specialisation could limit future promotional opportunities into more generalist senior leadership roles – this was only seen in responses from women. The seemingly persistent manner in which women cite meritocratic reasons for gendered differences in advancement opportunities, rather than structural discrimination, offers support for Simpson and Kumra's (2016) conceptualisation of the 'Teflon Effect'. Were recognition assigned fairly to women as it is to men, in the absence of corresponding advancement, structural discrimination would arguably be more visible. However, given that women respondents consistently cite their own capabilities as the basis for gendered inequalities in advancement, suggest the existence of a 'Teflon Effect'. Furthermore, these findings

suggest that, due to the ‘Teflon Effect’ meritocracies are sites of intersectional identity salience at the intersection of gender- and leader identities (Atewologun 2014). This highly critical view, among the women, of their own abilities is illustrated by the following responses:

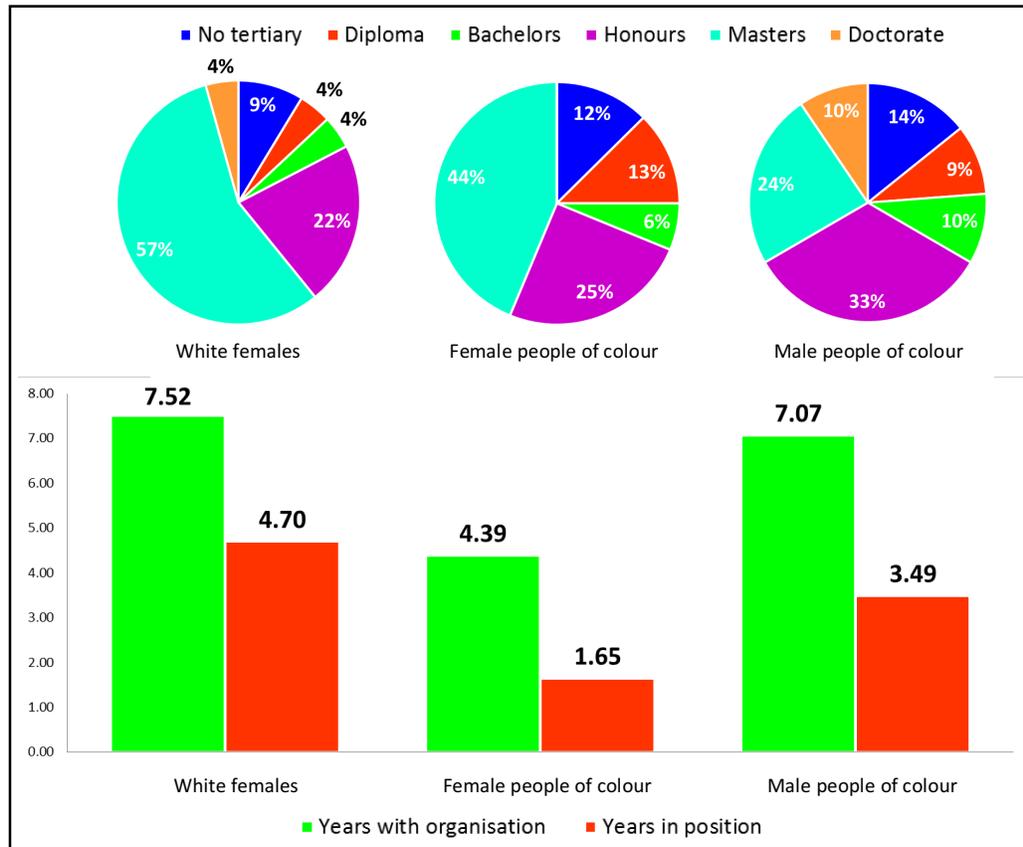
“I definitely think that there's people progressing quicker than me because they want to. I'm sure there's discrimination at times but I very much believe that you are in control of your own destiny. So if you don't like it there - what do you need to do? Go somewhere else. It's a little game and you play it. You're not a victim - it's a game and you make it work.” – Lucy, FW42

“It's something I personally struggle with but it's something I increasingly force myself to do so maybe I'm at a stage in life where I realise my shortcomings and kind of push myself into those.” – Lerato, FB43

Consistent references to ‘not being a victim’, being ‘quite lucky’ to be appointed into a leadership role and ‘realising shortcomings’ among women participants alone highlight how a gendered understanding of what constitutes a suitable leadership incumbent is consistently legitimised and seemingly internalised by women (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016). The data seem to suggest that women not only face organisational- or societal resistance when attempting to access and practise leadership, but that they also engage in thought patterns that are self-limiting and which reinforce the structural inequalities that abound (Mavin et al. 2014).

When descriptive biographical data on education and experience is reorganised and presented intersectionally, as seen in Figure 6.2, along with secondary data on appointment trends, as seen in Figure 6.3, further interesting comparisons between groups can be made. A comparison of education level between race groups reveals that more people of colour hold no tertiary qualification while more White (women) respondents hold post-graduate qualifications. Similarly, the White respondents on average had more work experience within their respective organisations as well as longer tenure in their current leadership positions. This comparison suggests that people of colour are in a weaker position to compete for senior leadership roles compared to their White peers.

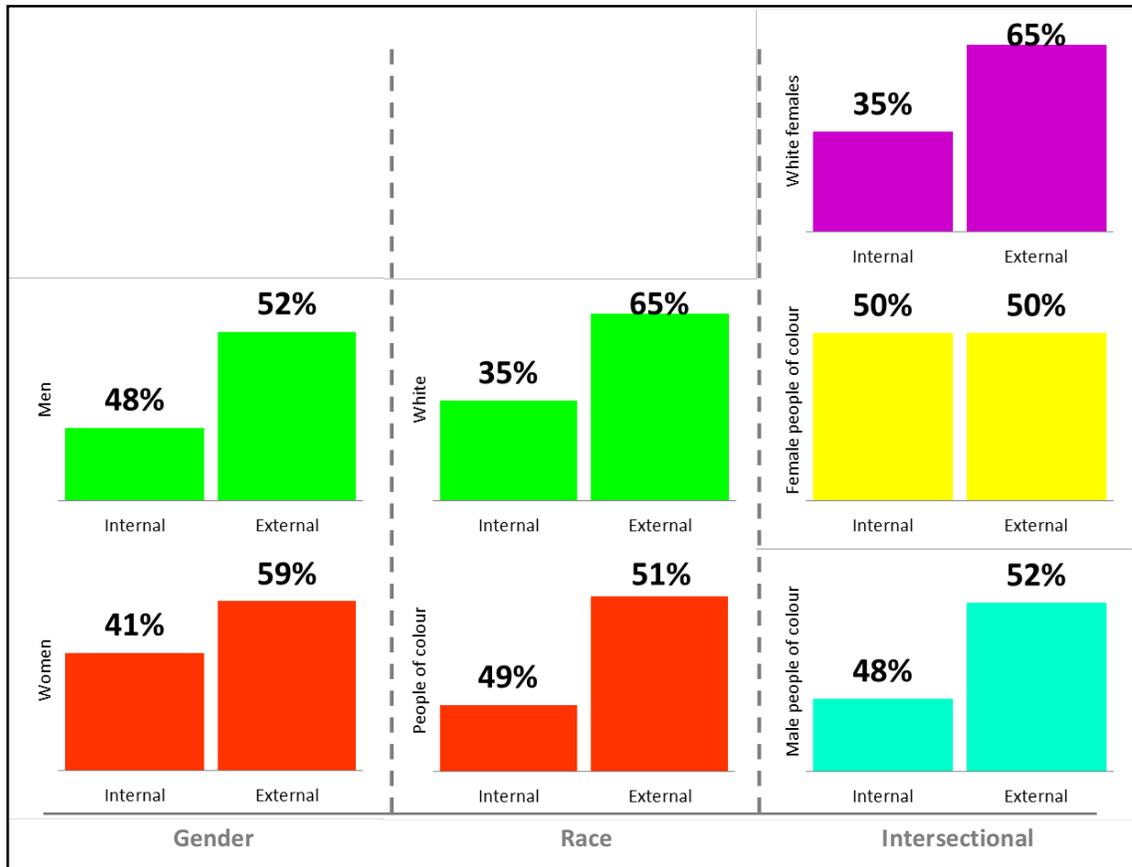
Figure 6.2: Comparative education and experience averages for intersectional groups



The notion of personal excellence, individual performance and other human capital factors being the sole determinants for consideration as suitable for senior leadership roles become visibly problematic when the educational and experiential statistics shown in Figure 6.1 are presented intersectionally. Figure 6.2 indicates that White women and women of colour hold 16% more post-graduate qualifications, on average, than the men. Yet, despite this, the women of colour have far less tenure in their respective organisations as well as their leadership roles. This cross-group difference raises further concern about the credibility of ‘merit’ and ‘performance’ arguments in the leadership literature. If women of colour possess superior qualifications to men of colour, why are they preoccupied with their perceived ‘shortcomings’ as leaders? Why do the tenure profiles for White women and men of colour appear similar but distinctly different from the tenure profiles of the women of colour? These differences and similarities between groups point towards determining factors for accessing and practising leadership that fall outside of those the individual has control over, such as decontextualised and inherently gendered

meritocracies. Indeed, when the significantly lower tenure in both organisation and position among the women of colour are viewed alongside appointment trends, further question marks can be placed next to the assumption that leadership success is primarily the result of ‘merit’ and ‘performance’.

Figure 6.3: Comparison of appointment patterns



Before the interviews started, participants were asked if they were promoted internally into their current leadership roles or if they were appointed externally. In viewing these appointment trends from both gender and race perspectives, it would seem that the majority of appointments into senior leadership roles are made from outside the organisation. Considering the competitive nature of these roles, employment phenomena like ‘job hopping’ among people of colour, South Africa’s history of disadvantaging women and people of colour, as well as legislative mandates for organisations to transform at senior levels, one might argue that these appointment trends are to be expected based on

a high demand and low supply of suitable leadership candidates that are women and people of colour. However, when presented intersectionally, the secondary data on appointment trends reveal that women of colour are promoted just as much internally as they are recruited externally into senior leadership roles.

This anomaly again points towards the problematic nature of an assumption that performance, merit and personal choice alone determine leadership success. If women in general possess superior qualifications than men, why do women of colour have a weaker tenure profile than the White women and men of colour? Furthermore, why do organisations tend to appoint more White women and men of colour externally into senior leadership roles than women of colour? These questions are rhetorical in nature and are posed in an effort to highlight how the possibility of structural barriers to advancement are overlooked by women – especially women of colour – and rationalised by framing the possible effects of these structural barriers within the perceived limitations relative to organisational meritocracies. Perceiving the effects of structural discrimination as deficiencies in human capital and motivation also highlights the self-sufficient nature of merit discourse, disguised as egalitarianism (Augoustinos et al. 2005).

These anomalies in tenure profiles and appointment patterns suggest a need to re-evaluate what is considered appropriate human capital for leadership roles in South African private sector organisations. The leadership literature focusing on personal merit and performance is shown to be highly problematic from both the data and existing literature. Secondary data on education, tenure and appointment trends suggest that human capital, such as education and work experience, is not a determinant for leadership success, but rather a means of legitimising the exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016).

An analysis of responses regarding the role of the leader reveals that participants understand leadership as an element of the leader, as opposed to being the result of a relational process or micro-social process embedded into a broader macro-social process, as differentiated in the literature review. Arguably, this poses a challenge for persons from underrepresented groups in organisational leadership, as this understanding of leadership allows for the legitimisation of the persistent marginalisation of women and people of colour through the use of the merit principle (Acker 2006; Malleson 2006; Eriksson &

Nissen 2016). The insidious nature of this gendering and racialising in organisational leadership is very clearly illustrated by one participant's candid response regarding interventions aimed at achieving equitable representation within the leadership structures in South African organisations:

“Equality should not come at the cost of performance and if it takes a White man at the top to maintain that performance then so be it.” Jonathan MC36

What is of major concern here is that different ways of legitimising structural inequalities in leadership are being used – even by those groups who are negatively affected. Earlier it was discussed that when comparing responses from the women to the responses from the men, it suggested that ‘merit’ itself, and how it relates to organisational leadership in the South African private sector, is a gendered concept. The aforementioned key response from Jonathan, along with the biographical information presented in Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, highlights how ‘merit’ is (a) not only a gendered concept, but also a racialised one and (b) how the socio-historic context informs the construction of ‘merit’. The construction of leadership as an element of the leader therefore offers an opportunity to marginalise women and people of colour under the guise of performance, thus prompting the need for a major shift in how leadership is understood and socially constructed.

6.2.2 Control and the role of the leader in South African organisations

Implicit in the view of leader as an agent of performance is the notion of control; specifically, control over the actions of others. The underpinning nature of the concept of control in an understanding of leadership is problematic as there are distinct differences in how the three intersectional groups perceive and experience control. These differences in how control is perceived and experienced emerged across various separate discussions. By way of delineating views on control across groups, the men had the following to say regarding leadership and control:

“Does the leader's role involve a level of control?”

Yes definitely. Delegating, monitoring and evaluating is a part of control in that you need to act on feedback or assessments that are just not going to plan. So in a sense that does imply control.” – Kwame, MB35

“Does a leader need to exercise control?”

I think you do, to a certain extent, without being all 'bossy' about it. But I would say definitely, yes. There needs to be some level of control to manage things.” – Geoff, MC32

The men communicated the strong view that exercising control is an integral component of the role of a leader. Men expressed the view that control can and should be exercised over both people and non-people resources, with little to no indication that they experience this to be a challenge for them. Arguably, the use of control is the most acute manifestation of the masculine leader stereotype (Sczesny 2003; Pini 2005; Sveningsson & Larsson 2006; Paris et al. 2009; Alimo-Metcalf 2010; Billing 2011). Therefore, the apparent ease with which the men seem to use control in their leadership roles and the seemingly central meaning control gives to their conceptualising of the role of the leader serves as evidence for the notion of the co-construction of occupational- and embodied social identities (Ashcraft 2013; Simpson & Kumra 2016). Furthermore, when considering these responses in socio-historic context, they seem to contradict the knowledge on the White leadership prototype (Rosette et al. 2008; Logan 2011). Given the historical context of racial oppression and subordination, the seemingly unproblematic manner in which the men of colour discuss control was interesting. One might argue, from an intersectional perspective, that for the men of colour their gender identity informs their racial identity and are therefore able to construct masculine leader identities amidst these racial biases (Shields 2008). These views on control are in strong contrast to those observed among the White women. Some White women had the following to say about leaders exercising control over people:

“Control is not the word that I would use. It depends on the context that you’re using it. I do think what’s important in any relationship is about holding people accountable; making sure that people are responsible for what they do and that they deliver what they commit to do.” – Hannelie, FW37

“Do leaders need to exercise control or is that more a management thing?”

Managers exercise control more than leaders.

So, you’re not comfortable with the idea of control?!

I develop the controls that need to be in place but the managers maintain them. I enforce them with my immediate management but they look after the people and make sure that the departments run smoothly.” – Yvonne, FW2

Responses regarding control from the women of colour resonated with the aforementioned responses from the White women. Both White women and women of

colour seemed to be uncomfortable with the idea of exercising control over followers. This apparent discomfort with the idea of control can be seen in the following responses from women of colour:

“I prefer to think of it more as influence. From a control perspective, I don’t think it’s really sustainable. I’d rather like to see those kinds of things become self-generating because you can’t be in every place all of the time. I’d rather get people’s engagement.

How would you do that?

I’ve always found that, when people get an idea of the vision and they are clear of what is ultimately the goal and they know what the metrics are and there is an inclusive approach and there’s a sense of involvement and an appreciation for their different perspectives, in my experience that has always been the way that I’ve influenced people.” – Charlotte, FC33

“I think it is very much organisational culture specific. I think control is the wrong word. Control almost sounds like I don’t have the ability to give a follower autonomy. Or almost like I don’t acknowledge that the follower has free will. Control for me sounds like there is desperation there. So I guess what I’m saying is, I don’t want to control but I would like to give guidance.” – Sizingce, FB30

These cross-group divergent views on control, in relation to what is perceived to be the role of the leader in organisations, creates a paradox for the women in leadership roles. Recurring concepts in discussing the role of the leader are that of goals, achievement, objectives, targets and performance – all of which imply a certain level of control. Leadership is therefore conceptualised among all participants as being instrumental in gaining compliance and controlling activities and outputs. However, further analysis into views on control itself reveals that women resist the notion of control. Therefore, the way in which leadership is understood by participants seems to place women at an inherent disadvantage, as leadership requires them to exercise control, which they resist – to varying degrees.

What seemed to set the two groups of women apart, however, was the level of apparent willingness to use conventional control mechanisms, such as monitoring and hierarchical power. Although, at first glance, both White women and women of colour seem to be averse to the idea of control over others, subtle nuances in the responses of the White women suggest differently. They mention a preference for ‘guidance’ and ‘support’ as opposed to control, but then go on to express their need to enforce accountability and

deadlines on performance outcomes. The perception among the White women therefore seems to be that subtle control mechanisms, which are not enforced in an overtly aggressive manner, do not qualify as control, per se. The White women participants' views on the use of control mechanisms also seem to be contingent on the situation, while the women of colour seem to consistently prefer alternatives to control. The following two responses highlight this difference:

“...if people are not mature in delivering on the task or they're inexperienced and they still need a lot of guidance then it's necessary to provide strict task structuring and keep more control. But if people are more mature and more experienced then there's less control necessary...” – Jacoba, FW54

*“I like to talk about standards rather than control. Obviously you've got to have policies and procedures in place but, from a leadership perspective, it's about influencing people to achieve the standards and work to the standards.”
– Lerato, FB43*

The response from Jacoba, a White woman, illustrates how the White women participants seem to prefer an approach to control that resonates with classic notions of Situational Leadership which advocates for the use of control, but only in certain situations (Hersey & Blanchard 1977; Graeff 1983; Graeff 1997). However, Lerato's response highlights the seemingly consistent aversion to the exercise of control which is in line with the literature on penalties faced by assertive Black women leaders (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012). Here, an intersectional view of the responses from women participants suggests that not only gender influences leadership experiences, but also race – and significantly so. Given the socio-historic context within which this data was collected (Moodie 1975; Rich 1990; Matsinhe 2011) and the White women's situationally contingent acceptance of the use of control, the women of colour's strong aversion to the use of power offers evidence to how social context informs the construction of leadership identity, but also how that process of construction is moderated by race. Similar to the evidence which suggests that, for the men gender identities informs the construction of their 'deracialised' leader identities, so too does race identities seem to inform the White women's 'degendered' leader identities (Sczesny 2003; Rosette et al. 2008; Shields 2008; Alimo-Metcalf 2010; Billing 2011; Logan 2011). The data therefore indicates that perceptions on control are divergent between White women and women of colour, which, given all participants' views on the

role of the leader as an agent of performance, places women of colour at a disadvantage when attempting to access and practise leadership in South African organisations.

Finally, underpinning participant responses regarding control are certain assumptions about power. Arguably, an analysis of these implicit views of power within the context of organisational leadership may offer further insight into personal challenges women and people of colour face in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations. The next section presents such an analysis.

6.2.3 Power, leadership and individual challenges and constraints

A critical review of the mainstream literature on leadership reveals that power is largely ignored and assumed to occur naturally within social systems (Gordon 2011). This is not surprising as the ‘leadership as an element of a leader’ theories dominate the literature on leadership in organisations (Dinh et al. 2014; Junker & van Dick 2014). These approaches are largely underpinned by psychological constructions of leaders and leadership, which have normative- and apolitical views of power. This taken-for-granted nature of leadership’s relation with power is highly problematic in the South African context, as the data reveal that some participants show a strong aversion to the notion of power. Similar to preceding discussions around leadership and control, this aversion to the use of power places some groups at an inherent disadvantage if traditional understandings of the role of power in leadership are not challenged.

When asked about their views on leadership and power, it was primarily discussed from the perspective of legitimate power and coercive power (French & Raven 1959; Raven 2004; Wrong 2009). Participants did not seem to be of the opinion that power can originate from other sources or ‘bases’ other than one’s formally assigned position in the organisation. The women, both White and of colour, indicated an aversion to a sole reliance upon positional power to fulfil their leadership role. These findings are in line with literature on the ‘female leadership advantage’ and in particular critiques against assumed inherent attributes in women leaders (Vecchio 2003; Vecchio 2002; Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2005; Carli & Eagly 2011). Specifically, this finding supports the assertion that observed ‘feminine leadership’ styles are the result of women’s response to penalties for behaving in a gender incongruent manner, rather than inherent differences in how men and

women lead. This finding also supports existing research on severe follower resistance against Black women who behave in an agentic manner in their leadership roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012). In terms of what seemed like an aversion to an overreliance on positional power, the White women expressed critiques such as the following:

“For example my boss and the head of legal, who is a female, for both of them it is very much about the personal power and less so about relationships. ‘Respect my title’ or ‘my office’. And then people do it because it comes from legal. And I have to say the organisation does respond to this.” – Holly, FW48

“Do you think you need power?”

No, I think you need influence. The power leader is dead, finished.

Why do you say that?

Because in the modern world today, with the generations that we work with, power leadership is totally ineffective. I observe it daily. Influential leadership is hugely effective. I see both types of leadership and I especially see how the XY generation respond.” – Penelope, FW39

Although indicative of a strong aversion to the use of positional power, these responses illustrate a seemingly functionalist view of power within the context of organisational leadership among participants who were White women. Similarly, aversive perceptions of power were also observed among the women of colour. The following quotes illustrate these perceptions:

“Power corrupts – power in the wrong hands. There’s nothing wrong with power exercised responsibly... In the exercise of power there must be a very deep principled component as well as a deep ethical component and selflessness in the exercise of power...” – Thembeke, FB55

“Power tends to have a very negative connotation because its power in relation to others. You have power to drive assets in this or that direction. So yes, it does require power. I think we tend to look at power solely in relation to people. I will look at it as power in relation to people and resources and the application thereof.” – Lerato, FB43

Interestingly, although the women in general seem to reject a reliance on positional power, a more intersectional view of the responses reveal that White women and women of colour reject positional power for different reasons. White women seem to base their aversion to leaders using positional power on the expected impact it has on relationships and subsequently organisational outcomes. One might argue that this is a highly functionalist view and that positional power is therefore considered as ineffective,

impractical or at the very least non-ideal in fulfilling leadership roles by the White women. The women of colour, however, seem to express more of an ethical concern for power and its relation to organisational leadership. The women of colour seemed to hold an inherently negative view of power. This is not surprising given South Africa's political history and the gross abuses of power that persisted under the Apartheid regime.

Both White women and women of colour seem to adopt alternative strategies when it came to the use of power in their leadership roles. These strategies are reminiscent of classic notions of 'power through followers' and 'power with followers' versus 'power over followers' (Dunlap & Goldman 1991; Kreisberg 1992). However, one might argue that these apparent alternative strategies to the use of positional power observed in the data are merely 'repackaged' forms of 'power over' (Gordon 2011). For example, Lerato expresses concern for power with regards to people being inherently negative and rather chooses to view power with regards to resources. Arguably, this removes the 'power over' aspect as it separates power and the person. However, when considering the following statement from one of the men, it becomes clear that even power with regard to assets can result in 'power over people':

“The act of leadership is the act of persuasion, as much as anything else. To lead is to pull people along, sometimes even reluctantly, into a new state of being... So I have a few things at my disposal. One is the ability to manage exit... Now the leader, is interesting, leaders take away toys as well. So for example, someone is running a department and they want it in a particular way. For example, say I am taking away this toy. You can't hire anymore, unless I have interviewed as well. So you circumscribe their world and that annoys them. Then they may say your vision of my level of autonomy and sense of my level of autonomy and where I am as a leader (for example the leader of HR) is at odds with mine, so I'm gonna opt out of your scheme. Then I will say okay fine that is exactly what I wanted.” – Donald, MC43

The aforementioned quote not only illustrates the ease with which the men seemed to use positional power in their leadership roles, but it also suggests that the use of power ultimately results in a 'power over' (Dunlap & Goldman 1991; Gordon 2011) situation, regardless of the intent of the power user. Further evidence of highly gendered perceptions of power can be found in the following responses from participants who were men:

“So is a leader someone with power?”

Definitely. Power is delegated from the ultimate owners. So it's a delegation of authority. So it is a delegation of authority within a very fine structure governed by an employment contract. So your power is given to you by the position that you hold within your structure by your superiors.” – Kwame, MB35

“Within a hierarchy power does come into play...so when your role on paper is more important, or you get paid more, you have more ‘say’ and you have more power.” – Warren, MC22

The data suggest that the men perceived power to be inherent to- and necessary for organisational leadership. The men also seemed at ease with the idea of using positional power in order to fulfil their roles as leaders. The men seem to be content with what they perceived to be ‘natural’ hierarchical power relations. Furthermore, statements among the men about the use of power, like that by Donald, reveal that even more coercive applications of power are considered as acceptable and as having utility.

6.2.4 Leadership role models and individual challenges and constraints

In discussing leadership role models, several interesting patterns emerged. The most apparent pattern across the three groups was that of a person-orientation versus that of a characteristic-orientation. Some participants displayed a clear preference for identifying specific individuals who they looked up to and considered to be leadership role models, i.e. ‘person oriented’. Other participants preferred to separate the person from the characteristic and identified desirable attributes in various individuals, rather than idolising one specific person, i.e. ‘characteristic-oriented’. There was a distinct difference in how White women discussed role models with how the people of colour discussed their leadership role models. Both the men- and women of colour seemed to have a person-orientation towards role models and suggested public figures, colleagues and even family members as appropriate leadership role models. Conversely, the White women had a characteristic-orientation and discussed their leadership role models more broadly by referring to specific attributes which they perceived to be appropriate for leaders in organisations. The following examples illustrate the person-orientation among the people of colour:

“Obviously when you consider role models you look at the most successful people...like your Raymond Ackermans⁸...your Allan Grays⁹...Motsepe¹⁰ and Khoza¹¹...” – Neo, MB34

“I think there are a few women in SA that you would not normally consider. For instance Mampela Ramphele¹². I’ve become kind of disillusioned with her since her involvement in politics but before that I really admired her. I admire strong Black women who are leading the way in business. You know, people like Phuti Mahanyele¹³. And for example the COO of Facebook. She has a very forward way of thinking about how women engage the corporate world. So I admire women like that.” – Katlego, FB29

“Do you have any leadership role models?”

I do. My mother. My mother is in a management position in a government department and sometimes I am completely amazed with how she deals with people. When she sometimes relays the stories from work where she’s had a difficult interaction with someone, I can see myself in that same situation blowing my top...for lack of a better term. The way she just deals with people, I learn a lot from just speaking to her. My sister as well, because she is a senior manager and then in my immediate workplace I have one colleague in a senior role and she is an amazing mentor – if I am in a situation where I don’t know how to respond to people, I can come to her and I can just be that blunt person and say ‘listen this is the situation’...” –Tasneem, FI29

From the preceding quotes, it seems as if the people of colour look towards a wide range of individuals for leadership role models. There are mention of all kinds of people from various industries and backgrounds they consider to be appropriate leadership role models. However, a common theme across these seemingly divergent role models is that they are all specifically identified individuals. This perspective of leadership role models stands in strong contrast to the views on role models expressed by the White women. Most of the White women participants seemed to adopt an approach of carefully selecting – and aspiring to – desirable leadership attributes, rather than looking up to- or idolising any one individual. Some illustrative quotes of this difference in perspectives are as follows:

⁸ Raymond Ackerman is the founder of the retail group Pick ‘n Pay Group. The group is based in South Africa, but operates in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Australia (Forbes 2014a).

⁹ Allan Gray found the largest privately owned asset management firm in Southern Africa as a sole proprietorship in 1973 (Allan Gray 2015).

¹⁰ Patrice Motsepe is a mining magnate and South Africa's first black billionaire (Fin24 2015b).

¹¹ Dr. Reuel Khoza is a South African businessman and academic who is known for holding chairman positions with Old Mutual, Nedbank and Eskom (national utility provider) among others, in addition to being a visiting professor at Rhodes University and the University of Stellenbosch (Bloomberg 2015b).

¹² Dr. Mampela Ramphele is one of Africa’s richest women, former Managing Director of the World Bank as well as founder and former chairperson of Agang SA, a South African political party (Forbes 2014b).

¹³ Phuti Mahanyele is a South African businesswoman and currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Shanduka Group (Bloomberg 2015a).

“Some of them, in the way they achieved results... Some of them, in the way they nurtured and mentored me... All of those facets of leadership. I see different people doing things that I can learn from.” – Lucy, FW42

“It’s more a case of looking back over my career and looking at the different leaders that I’ve worked for and making comparisons and taking a little bit from this one and a little bit from that one...” – Penelope, FW39

This racialised difference in participant perspective on leadership role models is quite interesting, specifically because the women of colour seem to identify leadership role models in a similar fashion to the men. Research on gender and professional networks suggests that women would engage less in more homophilous activities around work networks than men (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997). That is to say, women are less likely to establish networks with, and imitate behaviour of, those individuals of the same gender (Ely et al. 2011). Therefore, men identifying the ‘highly successful male’ role models they did is not surprising, but that the women of colour express the same homophilous approach to identifying role models, if not more so, is interesting indeed. Furthermore, not only did the White women focus on ‘characteristics’ rather than the ‘person’ when discussing role models, but some also expressed great dissatisfaction with persons who they perceived to have had the opportunity to serve as a role model but failed. The people of colour did not express the same dissatisfaction as the White women:

“Do you have any female leadership role models?”

No. I find women quite bizarre in business, because a lot of the females that I’ve seen who are successful, they are so hard trying to be like men. Which I find bizarre, one of your traits is a nurturing side as a woman, and I think you should use that to your leadership ability. But they are trying to be like the men, that is off-putting.” – Maxine, FW42

“Do you have any leadership role models?”

Not really. I’ve had lots of role models on how NOT to lead.” – Chloe, FW44

“It’s more a case of looking back over my career and looking at the different leaders that I’ve worked for and making comparison and taking a little bit from this one and a little bit from that one. I’ve certainly seen how NOT to do it.” – Penelope, FW39

This finding is certainly in line with research on the strategies women adopt in establishing professional networks (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010; Ibarra et al. 2014) in the sense that a lack of visible White women leadership role models are scarce. However, the women of colour seem to look outside of their immediate environment to identify Black

women role models, as an alternative strategy to looking towards role models in their immediate environment that do not share their gender and race. The following response from a woman of colour illustrates this finding:

“Do you have any role models?”

Yes, but only recently. We recently appointed a Black male GM for the Africa continent. He is someone that is very inspiring and I’m certainly considering him to be a role model.

Why is he your role model?”

He’s had an outstanding career. For me it’s actually how personable he is. He’s developed his own model for employee engagement and it’s all imbedded in the things around care and entrenching the kinds of family values. He’s the proof for me that you can be an astute business person and you can still bring that softness to the business.” – Charlotte, FC33

Contrasting Charlotte’s response with those quoted from Maxine, Chloe and Penelope, it seems like the White women are stuck in the mindset that they should only access role models similar to themselves and that they do not have access to such persons. Negative criticism about leadership role models in their immediate work networks seem to point towards a major challenge for White women to identify and establish professional networks that aid them in developing as leaders (Ely et al. 2011).

Another interesting pattern which distinguished the responses of the men- from those of the women participants, was the nature of the relationship the participants have with their proposed role models. Where both women groups of participants mentioned leadership role models from their work life, many of the men explained how they considered people from their personal lives to be role models for them. A reluctance among the women in mentioning role models from their personal lives could arguably be an attempt among the women to avoid the stigma associated with person-orientations to leadership – that of weakness, low concern for outcomes and irrationality. The notion of stigma, and the evidence suggesting that participants actively attempt to avoid it, is discussed in more detail in the chapter about the socio-historical and socio-legal context.

“Do you have any role models for leadership?”

Yes, she was a partner at my previous company. For me, she was a strong woman. I really looked up to her and she moved forward in her career. The way she managed herself; the way she looked; the way she presented herself; very neat, very structured, always on time. So, you have that trust in her. Very stable.” – Jodie, FW29

“...Another person who almost epitomised leadership is a former CEO of ours. What I remember most about him was just how composed he was.” – Sarah, FC45

“Do you have any role models in terms of how you lead?”

Yes, one of the regional managers. She’s young and motivated. She’s very inspiring. With her, training is quite different than with someone else because she is interested in helping us, to make us better managers and leaders.” – Anna, FC31

These preceding quotes illustrate the pattern among women participants to suggest role models from within a professional setting. These ‘professional role models’ typically included current- and previous superiors. The following responses, however, illustrate that the men also considered people from their personal lives – such as family members – to be appropriate leadership role models:

“Yes probably my dad, and because of the way he has conducted himself in his working career. Also what he has achieved... and more importantly how these relationships has translated into outcomes for the business.” – Kwame, MB35

“...do you have any role models for this approach to leadership you follow?”

Yes, definitely. My parents.

Why your parents?

Well obviously, they brought me up in that manner to share and to help people in need even if it is a stranger...” – Geoff, MC32

“Do you have any leadership role models? You mentioned earlier that a director at your previous company was a role model to you. Is there anyone else?”

Yes I do. My dad. He grew up during the Apartheid era and he got his Masters degree at 33. I would often see my dad up late with books and he explained to me that one day I will understand that this is necessary...my father-in-law also. He always aspired to be better.” – Jonathan, MC36

What supplies these gendered differences, within responses regarding role models, a further level of complexity is how these role models are described. The women made references to their role models as being ‘very neat’, providing ‘care’, having ‘family values’ and showing ‘softness’. In contrast, the men make numerous references to performance and achievement. Both the men and women groups’ responses are indicative of a conceptualisation of leadership as an element of the leader. When the perceived role of the leader in organisations was discussed, the majority of respondents made reference to performance and achievement. However, when discussing leadership role models, the

women seem to be able to move away from this rigid conceptualisation whereas the men do not. This might be due to an internalisation of societal gender roles and the espousal of the school of thought that men and women have intrinsically different styles of leadership. Literature on ‘masculine’ versus ‘feminine’ leadership styles dictate that men leaders are more task oriented and that women leaders are more relationship oriented (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998). Indeed, there is a large amount of evidence in the data that support the assertion of this rationalisation of gendered notions of leadership. Some examples include the following:

“I’ve seen how conflicting it is to have stress at work and then try and come home and be a nurturing, patient mother. Where women are concerned I have different views. I don’t agree with the understanding that South Africa should have a 50% representation from women at a management level... For women who want to be the leaders – yes, there is no glass ceiling – go be the leader. But I don’t think that naturally we should have 50% of female leadership. My thinking is just a question of who’s going to raise the children? Who’s going to go home and do the homework? Yes, a man could do it. I used to believe a man can be parenting as well as a woman but I don’t believe that anymore. I believe a man is in general more inclined to see the big picture, to carry the more stressful things. While the woman in general is more geared to be nurturing, loving and patient.” – Lucy, FW42

“I think women are just naturally empathetic and I’m a real woman. Initially, in my career, I tried to fit in more with the males because I’m very often the only female. This industry is very male dominated. As you grow older you become more you.” – Magrieta, FW53

In the preceding responses, reference to “parenting as well as a woman”, “nurturing”, “naturally empathetic” and “a real woman” illuminates the underlying beliefs held by participants who were women about their role in society – and by extension, as leaders. The data reveals that most of the women believe that a) women have a particular role to fulfil in society and that b) women have an inherent predisposition to a particular way of leading which is linked to their role in society and thus resulting in a social role incongruence for women (Patterson et al. 2012a).

Since leadership seems to be conceptualised among most participants predominantly as an act of performance in organisations, these gendered views of leadership hold the potential to result in major barriers for women in the accessing and practising of leadership. This is because “care”, “family values” and “softness”, as mentioned by

participants, do not speak directly to the achievement of results. In fact, a relationship orientation- and a task orientation towards leadership often compete for priority.

The notion of leadership role models and how the concept is viewed extends into how participants viewed the leader-follower relationship. The next section discusses participant views and experiences of professional relationships and how they relate to the accessing and practising of leadership in organisations.

6.2.5 Leader-follower relationships and individual challenges and constraints

A consideration of how participants structure and use relationships within their leadership roles offers an opportunity for further insight into the obstacles underrepresented groups experience in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations. Two key findings were made regarding the research participants and their accounts of their professional relationships. The first finding was that of gendered views on the nature and purpose of the leader-follower relationship, in that men had a more task-based view while women seemed to have a more person-based view. The second finding was that the men seem to consider this task-based role of professional relationships as somewhat of a ‘given’ while the women’s responses were indicative of having to navigate organisational politics. The following quotes illustrate the first finding of gendered views of the leader-follower relationship:

“I think if you spend a lot of time with people that you haven't yourself selected to spend time with them, it's much better to have that kind of personal relationship. Having relationships with your followers enables the leader to engage with the employees.” – Kwame, MB35

“You have to involve them from the first step when you do your strategy planning, for instance. Try and involve them and get their views. So when you come to the implementation stage then they feel they're already part of the strategy...” – Wilfred, MB26

“...you've got to add value to them and really build them and get them to follow you. When you add value to people and give them a value proposition that's well planned and well placed, they're with you; they'll go to war for you.” – Penelope, FW39

“It's the earning of respect, building relationships, being fair, being consistent. No favouritism...” – Chloe, FW44

The men, Kwame and Wilfred, clearly view the relationship they have with their followers as a means to an end. This view of the leader-follower relationship is apparent in

their use of phrases like “*relationships enable the leader to*”, “*strategy planning*” and “*when you come to the implementation*”. Therefore, the data suggest that the men view their leader-follower relationships from a seemingly functionalist perspective. In other words, their responses reflect a keen consideration of functional outcomes as the foundation of their professional relationships. In contrast, Penelope and Chloe refer to “*adding value*” and “*the earning of respect*” when discussing the leader-follower relationship. Thus, the women did not frame their perspectives on superior leader-follower relationships as instrumental in achieving functional outcomes, but as more of an ethical obligation towards followers – or at least from a position of legitimate concern for followers rather than merely a means to an end as observed among the men.

At a surface level, the differences in how the men and women discuss the leader-follower relationship seem to indicate an inherent difference in how men and women approach the role of leader. This is in line with notions of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ styles of leadership that are proposed to be generally more task- and person oriented, respectively (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998). However, the other observed dominant theme of women participants having to ‘navigate organisational politics’ seems to indicate that these differences observed between the men and women are the result of environmental influences and not due to inherent gender differences (Billing & Alvesson 2000; Livingston et al. 2012). The following responses from two women illustrate this assertion:

“The organisation is socialised to be attuned to being layered [hierarchical] and I think it does come from the past and the traditional mining days where you really did know your position and you don't overstep your boundaries. At times I actually find this very frustrating... I had to get used to going via the boss and not contacting people directly. I have had to be mindful about it and take a few steps back to go forward again to get that person on board. So I have broken the informal rules and broken them again, but I play by the rules when I have to. There is a fine balance.” – Holly, FW48

“...they would have meetings and people would only address the chairperson. And I asked people ‘what you mean I have to talk to the chairperson?!’ And then they would say ‘no you have to talk to the chair, you have to ask the chair if you can speak’. So I said ‘why the hell should I talk to the chair?!’ I will put up my hand when I need to speak. What if the chair does not want me to speak? It is my right to speak.” – Maxine, FW42

The responses from Holly and Maxine highlight a key consideration when examining participant perspectives of the leader-follower relationships. Their responses suggest that organisational culture, norms and politics play a pivotal role in how persons in leadership roles experience professional relationships. The fact that a concern for organisational politics was not observed among the men resonated with the existing literature (Doldor et al. 2013) in that it exposes organisational politics as highly gendered and thus poses as a significant barrier to women who wish to access and practise leadership in organisations. What is even more disturbing is that even though all women seemed to experience difficulty with navigating organisational politics in establishing and maintaining professional relationships, the White women indicated a willingness to challenge these constraining organisational norms, while the women of colour did not. This finding echoes the research on backlash against agentic Black women in senior decision-making roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012) as well as the so-called ‘double-disadvantage’ of women of colour in leadership roles (Epstein 1973; Dugger 1991; Moncrief et al. 1991). The following quotes illustrate the subtle nuances between responses from the White women and women of colour:

“I am more concerned with developing the person rather than ‘when are you here?’ As long as you tell me where you are. I know it’s a difficult one, and I must say people do have difficulty adapting to that kind of environment, but I work like that because that is the relationship I have with my boss.” – Sharon, FC44

“People need to be influenced to act in a way that they are absolutely convinced of the action. It therefore means leadership is not just a one way thing. In order to arrive at a decision or course of action, it requires quite often the input of various people. People need to feel they have a stake in it.

How would you use a relationship to realise that?

It’s important to have honest dialogue. The relationship has got to be based on honesty where people will not just simply tell you what they think you want to know but give their honest opinions. And that requires a relationship where there’s a sense of safety about truth.” – Lerato, FB43

Evidence from the existing literature shows organisational politics to be a highly gendered social phenomenon (Doldor et al. 2013). The data, however, seem to indicate that organisational politics are also racialised. The aforementioned responses demonstrate how organisational politics influence the leader-follower relationship and how these

relationships are in turn experienced differently by White women and women of colour. The women of colour expressed a higher degree of concern for resistance from followers and therefore the need to adopt alternative approaches to establishing and maintaining positive work relationships. Several women of colour also demonstrated signs of internalising gendered and racialised resistance by framing this resistance as a response to performance targets, rather than gender- and race-based social expectations. Therefore, women of colour seem to prefer adopting alternative strategies to maintaining relationships when facing possible resistance, rather than challenging the resistance as observed among the participants who were White women.

Critical Leadership Studies informed by intersectional thought, however, asserts that it is not only important to consider what research participants are saying but also what they are omitting (Bowleg et al. 2003; Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009). As discussed in section 6.2.1, when asked how participants perceived the role of the leader, there was a notable consensus among all participants that the achievement of individual- and organisational outcomes was central to their understanding of this role. In discussing leader-follower relationships, the task-oriented responses from the men seemed to echo this outcome-focused view of leadership, yet the women did not respond to the question of relationships with a concern for outcomes. Rather, the women spoke of “*adding value*”, “*earning respect*” and having “*honest dialogue*”. One might argue that the women saw this as an inevitable means to achieve the desired outcomes, but what was striking was that they did not address the issue of outcomes directly when discussing leader-follower relationship like the men did. This omission in the women’s responses puts into question certain assumptions about leader-follower relations (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2012). What are the key drivers of these relations? What are the central subject of these relations? How are leader-follower relations informed by institutional, ideological and cultural ideals? One might also ask if this omission on the part of the women is evidence of mutually constituting and reinforcing (Shields 2008) norms associated with gender identities (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009) and socially expected presentations of ‘feminine leadership’ (Sharma 1990; Rudman & Glick 1999; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Mavin & Grandy 2016a). The data suggest that leaders might not be the key drivers of leader-follower relations, that

outcomes are not the central subject of leader-follower relations and that leader-follower relations are more context-contingent than leader-driven.

This intersectional view of how participants experience professional relationships, using gender and race, supports the earlier assertion that the fundamental way in which leadership is constructed among underrepresented groups in South African organisations is highly problematic. The central nature of themes such as performance, control and compliance within the construction of leadership creates challenges to the practise of leadership for women, since the women express difficulty and a discomfort with the use of power and exercise of control.

A final concern regarding the recurring theme of performance, control and compliance is not just self-perceptions or internalisation of inadequacies among women, as discussed earlier. These discussions about relationships, too, highlight how insidious gender and racial discrimination is and how it permeates the way in which we theorise about organisational leadership. As a social construct, leadership is positioned as a concept that is rooted in objectively measurable outcomes, however, social messages about these outcomes are highly gendered and racialised and manifest in how women and people of colour manage work relationships. These messages are also internalised and performed by disadvantaged groups – in this case women leaders – the result of which is poor performance which then in turn reinforces social messages. So the cycle of discrimination and marginalisation continues.

6.3 Individual enablers

Further to discussions regarding challenges and constraints during the semi-structured interviews, participants were also asked specifically what they consider to be enablers in them accessing and practising leadership over the span of their careers. In these instances, diverging responses were collected and data has been divided into personal-, organisational- and societal enabling factors. Personal enablers and opportunities are discussed in this chapter, while organisational- and societal enablers are discussed in the following analysis chapters.

6.3.1 Personal enablers in accessing and practising strategic leadership in a South African context

The data on personal enablers revealed three dominant themes. These were the ability to utilise developmental opportunities, the nature of relationships with mentors and, interestingly, that of adversity. These were, however, only observed among the participants who were people of colour – the White women did not offer similar responses. It was also expected that the participants would mention interventionist developmental opportunities. In this instance, there were several mentions of leadership development opportunities specifically. These types of responses were especially common among the younger participants and participants from the ‘aspiring leaders’ group. A typical example of the ability to utilise developmental opportunities being perceived as an enabler can be seen in one response from an aspiring leader regarding access to leadership training and development opportunities. He spoke of leadership development experiences and opportunities from high school to date, including international exchanges to the United States and Europe, formal part-time leadership development programmes with organisations such as Allan Gray¹⁴, as well as formal and informal leadership development opportunities with his university:

“From what you tell me it sounds like you have not had any significant barriers to accessing development opportunities. Is that an accurate assertion?”

On the contrary actually, I’ve always had opportunities.

Would you say you have developed more from formal training and mentoring or from informal interactions?”

It’s difficult to say because I value stories and interacting with people, but I also have an intense craving to learn more about other stuff [...] I will most likely not end up in a job, but rather start my own firm because I sometimes feel like I am overqualified for the type of stuff that I want to do. If I look at the roles that I have applied for, the expectation of what students can develop in terms of leadership in a short space of time is quite low. Sometimes I think I can’t apply because I feel like I’ve been involved in too many roles and maybe they want someone who is not as developed.” – Warren, MC22

This response highlights not only development opportunities being enablers to accessing and practising leadership in itself, but that the ability to utilise available

¹⁴ Allan Gray is the largest privately owned asset management firm in Southern Africa and was founded in 1973 (Allan Gray 2015).

opportunities are also of key importance. Access to developmental opportunities was mentioned across all three intersectional participant groups. The majority of the participants also seemed to be open to corrective interventions and developmental opportunities especially allocated to underrepresented groups. No significant individual-level gender, racial or intersectional patterns in terms of utilising opportunities were observed. Therefore, developmental opportunities will be discussed in more detail at organisational- and societal levels in subsequent chapters.

The second major enabler mentioned was that of developmental by way of superior relationships with mentors. In terms of mentoring relationships as enablers, some participants had the following to say:

“The fact that I was exposed to progressive, forward thinking leaders played an integral part in how I turned out. And reading and keeping abreast of organisational development and what’s happening in the larger society.” – Tash, MI46

“What would you say have been the enablers in your career progression into leadership?”

My mentor, who is a German colleague also in senior management, partly because I appreciate his leadership and the fact that he has, in his own way, affirmed my take on leadership. It doesn’t need to be a control kind of style but one that is nurturing and aware of the kind of influence and also how do you use that to give back and build capacity and build up others so that there is validation in who they are and how they can be able to contribute.” – Motlalepule, FB35

What the preceding quotes highlight is not necessarily the action of the mentor on the development of the mentee per se, but rather the perceived importance of the relationship between mentor and mentee. This importance is emphasised through the use of phrases like “*forward thinking*” and “*nurturing*”. Positive mentoring relationships as an enabler is in line with the existing knowledge on leadership development (Healy & Lieberwitz 2013).

In addition to mentoring relationships, people of colour also mentioned that the adversity they have faced – and still face – has to a certain extent assisted with their development as leaders. This finding is quite interesting as one would expect adversity to be a social-level *barrier* to advancement, yet here the data seem to indicate it as a personal-level *enabler*. In this instance, the participants seemed to show an awareness of past adversity aiding development and that negative past experiences have enabled them to be

better equipped for their current leadership roles. The following are examples of such responses:

“If I look at my peers, I am a lot more confident than many of them who came through the same and that has got a lot to do with how I grew up and what I was exposed to ...” – Sarah, FC45

“Well, the one thing I have discovered is this idea about adversity and its impact on leadership development. So what happened to me was, so when I was seven my mother died and that led to a series of events, like my dad remarried, and I was taken into a family with a woman who had three children. I do not think that she had the same values around education. So I would say that I had a certain amount of adversity. Moving from the familiar into the unfamiliar, going into a step relationship, which is quite hard. This I think has been a very important part of my development as a leader. So you know, if you survive adversity and you think to yourself I can survive anything. I was a kid and I was vulnerable. This was not a situation of my making, you know. I can survive, I am a survivor...” – Donald, MC43

“I still think that it comes down to having a thick skin. I had to put up with certain things and I told myself that, because I have boxes to tick in terms of my CV, if I have to be in this kind of environment, then that’s what I have to do.” – Charlotte, FC33

This is an interesting finding, as the expectation would be that disadvantage perpetuates further disadvantage. The data, however, seem to indicate that certain factors from participants’ oppressive social backgrounds have actually created an urgency to ‘adapt or perish’. The seeming ability to ‘grow from adversity’ among research participants is also supported by the literature on ‘resilience’ among people of colour (Parker & Ogilvie 1996; Motileng et al. 2006; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Martin & Barnard 2013). This is particularly interesting when compared to some responses from the White participants where *they* indicate a perception of being disadvantaged themselves (Noon 2010):

“...now Black women are very employable. A White woman won't necessarily get employed just because she's a woman. At the end of the day you were still White, so you just never win. You just never win because the Nats¹⁵ did not want the White women in power and nor do the ANC. So it is just down all the way.” – Maxine, FW42

The comparison of responses from White participants of perceived oppression with those from people of colour on adversity as an enabler highlights the invisibility of White

¹⁵ “Nats” is a colloquial reference to the National Party who was South Africa’s ruling political party from 1948 to 1994 and under which the Apartheid regime was instituted (De Klerk 1994).

privilege in South African society (Rothenberg 2015). The White women seem to be unable to recognise their own privilege, citing perceived disadvantage, while both the women and men of colour demonstrate the ability to learn and grow from indisputable adversity, rather than succumbing to it. The risk here, of course, with this perspective on adversity is that it could serve as justification for discriminatory practises. In fact, it could be argued that this positioning of adversity as a positive contributing factor to participants' development as leaders could in fact be some form of legitimising of discrimination (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016). Alternatively, this heightened criticality of self could also possibly serve as competitive advantage. That is to say, where privilege may have made some White people in leadership roles complacent, coming from adversity, regularly facing discrimination and having to prove oneself on a regular basis could result in becoming a more suitable- or more developed candidate for entering an organisational leadership role.

Evidence of this individual-level awareness of personal identity within a complex social context like South African society did not emerge from the responses gathered from White participants. Further to these enablers and opportunities, other dominant themes were also analysed to uncover enablers and opportunities to accessing and practising leadership arising from how underrepresented groups socially construct leadership in a South African context. This analysis starts with how participants discussed their view on leadership role models.

6.3.2 Leadership role models and individual enablers and opportunities

In discussing leadership role models several interesting trends emerged – the majority of which pointed towards barriers to the access and practise of leadership in organisations. One of these barriers discussed was that of professional networks. With women occupying fewer senior leadership roles in the South African private sector than men, and considering that leadership development is a process of observation, imitation and trial and error (Ely et al. 2011), women experience difficulty in identifying with available leadership role models (Ibarra 1993). However, what was interesting to observe was that the women of colour were able to identify perceived appropriate leadership role models outside of their immediate environment, while the White women seemed to be

unable to do this. This observation is in line with earlier findings discussed as ‘adversity as an enabler for leader development’.

One possible explanation for this apparent resilience among people of colour could be because of the historical context in South Africa in which they had to grow up. In general, White people in South Africa did not have to develop resilience because of the extreme White privilege they enjoyed under the Apartheid regime. People of colour, however, had to and this could possibly have enabled the men to look past race and still establish homophilous networks, and enabled the women of colour to look outside of their immediate environments for leadership role models. The following quote from a key informant sketches the historical context that could arguably have facilitated this resiliency among participants who are people of colour:

“Do you think that South African corporate leaders have any role models?”

Well that would depend on what group of people you are talking about. So, if you think of the South African people historically, most White South Africans grew up with families in careers that spanned across the whole range of industries and had many role models to look up to, whether that’s professional or entrepreneurial, whereas people of colour had very traditional roles like doctors, teachers, clerical type of work, mining, etc. So with these young people coming into the organisations they don’t necessarily have role modelling of what is good and what is not good [leadership], while their White counterparts would have observed their mothers and fathers in leadership and in management roles in organisations. People of colour would often not have that frame of reference to refer to.” – Reuben, MB44

The preceding quote from a key informant outlines the socio-political environment the majority of the research participants grew up in, and in doing so illustrates the valuable role social awareness plays in the leadership careers of women and people of colour. The quote provides specific evidence that people of colour simply did not have access to the same leadership role models as their White counterparts – and still don’t – as a result of the oppressive Apartheid regime. The awareness of these social barriers and an ability to look outside immediate homophilous networks to find leadership role models has clearly been an individual-level enabler for many of the participants who are people of colour. In addition to apparent resiliency in identifying role models when they do not seem immediately available, some opportunities regarding participants’ approaches to relationships also emerged.

6.3.3 Leader-follower relationships and individual enablers and opportunities

The data suggest that the men are not able to establish the same quality relationships with followers as compared to participants who were women. Responses from the men indicate that the leader-follower relationships they are involved in are characterised by rule-bound interactions, low quality- or constrained social exchanges, self-interest and limited trust, while those of the women are characterised by mutual trust, respect, a sense of obligation towards each other, dependence on each other, a high degree of reciprocity and relationships that produce positive outcomes for both members and the organisation (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Brower et al. 2000; Anand et al. 2011; Sahin 2012).

“Can you tell me a little bit about the role of relationships in this?”

Obviously that’s the glue. That’s the thing that glues, aligns and energises. How would you go about establishing and maintaining these gluey relationships? In my work it’s about creating opportunities for authenticity which creates trust and glue; creating opportunities for vulnerability which creates trust and glue.” – Jacqueline, FW48

“...I get excited in conversations on an informal manner. I’m not someone who is formal...” – Magda, FW49

“...we have this term that we call ‘release the agenda’. For that time you might not be giving me what I need but I can use this opportunity to build on the relationship. You might not be delivering what I need because you’ve had a bad day...you can then tap into that and still try to maintain the human component. You might not be able to give me what I need today but I’m investing in you to do it tomorrow...” – Zanele, FB29

The women seem to frame their opinions on the leader-follower relationship around reciprocity. This is in line with literature that suggests women adopt a person-centric approach to leadership whereas men adopt a more task-centric approach (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998). This finding therefore suggests that both leaders and aspiring leaders who are men, generally do not engage in- and view the leader-follower relationship in a way that is most effective (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Brower et al. 2000; Anand et al. 2011; Sahin 2012). This finding also echoes the proposition that, because of the approach to followers, women in leadership hold some advantages over men in leadership (Vecchio 2002; Eagly 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly 2007). This, of course, does not suggest that women have an inherent style or approach to leadership, but rather that these behavioural observations are the result of challenges

women face when attempting to exercise traditional task-oriented styles of leadership (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012), which in turn support the previous finding of ‘adversity as an enabler for leader development’.

6.4 Conclusion: Individual challenges, constrains and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector

An analysis of the case study data reveals several challenges for women and people of colour in South Africa who wish to access and practise leadership in private sector organisations. The seeming root cause of the majority of identified challenges is the way in which the concept of leadership is understood. It became very clear that leadership is constructed almost entirely as ‘an element of the leader’ and that classical conceptions of closely associated issues such as power, control and performance are not challenged.

Indeed, analysis of secondary statistical information along with qualitative data points toward the need to re-evaluate what is considered ‘appropriate human capital’ for leadership roles in South African companies. Data on education, experience and appointment patterns seem to indicate that human capital might not be a determinant for leadership success, but rather a means of rationalising the exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups. Furthermore, the way in which leadership is socially constructed seems to place women in a perpetual state of disadvantage as this construction of leadership requires them to control and gain compliance, which they actively resist. In fact, the women appeared to address the need for compliance, inherent to the way they construct leadership, using alternative strategies while the men seemed comfortable using hierarchical power structures to exercise control and attain said compliance. Interestingly, however, although women in general seem to reject a reliance on positional power, an intersectional view reveals that White women and women of colour reject positional power for different reasons. While the men seem to be accepting of hierarchical power relations, the women seem to not only adopt alternatives to positional power, but also actively resist the express use of positional power. Furthermore, the data reveals that even more coercive applications

of assigned power is seen as having utility among participants who were men while the women respondents were observed to actively resist it.

As to understandings of role models, both the men and women of colour look for individuals they can identify with and look up to when considering appropriate leadership role models. In strong contrast to this, the White women adopt an approach of carefully selecting perceived desirable attributes from various individuals, instead of looking towards one person. Negative criticism about leadership role models in their immediate work networks seem to point towards a major challenge for White women to identify and establish professional networks that aid them in developing as leaders.

Another major challenge is the seeming internalisation of gendered notions of leadership. The women exhibited deeply engrained gendered conceptions of leadership. These gendered views of leadership hold the potential to be major barriers for women.

Finally, among underrepresented groups in South African organisational leadership, the theme of performance, control and compliance keeps resurfacing and creates challenges to practising leadership. Nevertheless, the women of colour seem to persevere and show evidence of attempts to adopt alternative strategies of achieving compliance.

The picture painted by the analysed data on power, control, role models and relationships is however not as dire as the identified challenges and constraints seem to suggest. Several enablers and opportunities available to women and people of colour, in accessing and practising leadership, were also identified – the most dominant of which were access to developmental opportunities, supportive mentors and also that of adversity. These were, however, only observed among the participants of colour.

In terms of role models, what was interesting to observe was that the women of colour were able to identify perceived appropriate leadership role models outside of their immediate environment, while the White women seemed to be unable to do this. This seems to place women of colour at an advantage when compared to White women.

Finally, the women also seemed to be able to establish far superior relationships with followers when compared to the data collected from participants who were men. This places women at an advantage when compared to men in leadership roles.

Chapter 7: Organisational challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an answer to the following research question:

What organisational factors contribute to or hinder women and people of colour from accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector?

The literature reveals a wide range of organisational challenges and enablers to women and people of colour in organisational leadership and even more so in the unique South African context. Findings from the case study are presented in this chapter separately for organisational challenges and constraints and for organisational enablers.

7.2 Organisational challenges and constraints

The data suggest that women and people of colour experienced organisation-level challenges and constraints to accessing and practising leadership very differently. Challenges discussed within ‘organisational challenges’ are presented as either explicit or institutionalised. This division in the analysis is intended to focus discussions and to separate phenomena identified in the data, so as to facilitate better linkages with the appropriate literature. Within the discrimination literature, institutionalised discrimination is presented as a distinctly different social phenomenon from explicit discrimination (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Beeghley 2000). Institutionalised discrimination becomes normalised in the everyday practises of organisations and justifies analysis separate from that of the analysis of occurrences of more explicit racism and sexism (Acker 2006). More importantly, due to the normalisation process associated with institutionalised discrimination, it is more difficult to challenge and remove than explicit discrimination is.

7.2.1 The challenge of explicit discrimination

Some discriminatory practises are explicitly discriminatory and some manifest indirectly through policy, practises and social norms. South African employment

legislation (Employment Equity Act No 55 1998; Employment Equity Amendment Act No 47 2013), among others, explicitly forbids discrimination based on gender and race – with an exception being granted to acts of Affirmative Action (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No 53 2003; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013) – yet the data offers evidence of explicit discrimination still being experienced by women and people of colour. These explicitly discriminatory practises are seen in the behaviours of superiors, peers and subordinates alike and manifest as expectations of weakness and incompetence as well as tokenism and resistance to authority. In examining explicit discrimination, an analysis informed by intersectionality proved to be invaluable as the three groups experienced these organisational-level challenges quite differently.

Among the White women, major challenges in terms of explicit discriminatory practises included expectations of weakness and incompetence as well as blatant sexism from peers and superiors who are men. Many participants offered responses indicating that they have difficulty shaking off stereotypes of the ‘irrational, hyper-emotional woman’. The following example illustrates how the language used in day-to-day communication at work reinforces stereotypes and perpetuates explicit discrimination:

“What I can mention though is that the one [male] senior manager said that ‘we tried once bringing a female into our boardroom, but then we gave her feedback and she just cried’. So it’s like they were never going to accept her into the leadership structure anyway, but when she just did something that was considered to be a little bit female, she was quickly shown that she was an exception to the group. So women are brought in in leadership but then quickly ejected. I think in some instances women have adapted their behaviour because they’ve seen what works. They are vicious and strong and the masculine way gets results.” – Holly, FW48

In this instance, the classic stereotype of the ‘irrational, hyper-emotional woman’ is evident from references to “*women crying after receiving feedback*”. Stereotypical assumptions of women behaving in an excessively emotional manner in leadership roles are highly problematic. Firstly, it marginalises women that behave outside of the mainstream masculine conceptualisation of leadership. Any enactment which does not fit into this rather narrow “*vicious and strong and masculine*” conceptualisation of leadership, is dismissed and proponents of such behaviours are marginalised. Secondly, women who do choose to adopt more masculine forms of leadership run the risk of backlash and

resistance for acting outside of their socially accepted gender role (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b), examples of which can be seen in the following responses:

“...one of my colleagues has actually told me that he gets irritated with me because I think like a man.” – Sharon, FC44

“The team expects a female not to be as driven. If we can generalise – women are often more nurturing than men and men are often a lot more strategic but not that nurturing. I think that it's sort of acceptable [for men] to be mean and get what the company wants and for a woman it's often not.” – Lucy, FW42

One could argue that the responses from Holly, Sharon and Lucy offer evidence of all the major problems identified by Powell (2012) in his review of the Gender in Management literature. Holly's manager's comment about “*bringing a female into the boardroom*” points towards a problem in the proportion of men and women in leadership roles. Sharon's candid reference to her colleague who “*gets irritated with me [sic]*” suggest women in leadership roles comply with, reject and monitor embodied gender norms for both themselves and for other women (Mavin & Grandy 2016a), highlighting possible sex differences and also how women in leadership are met with hostility and prejudice. Finally, Lucy's discussion of the expectations placed on women in leadership serves as evidence that gendered leader stereotypes and gendered leader preferences abound. Further to a seeming expectation that women in general will not be able to fulfil the role of leader, White women also experienced several instances of blatant sexism. Arguably, the most severe example of such blatant sexism found in the study, was the incident explained in the following response:

“...the CEO said there is a customer service problem in the stores and we need to do training. I decided that this time I'm going to speak up so I said it was not a training issue, but rather a disciplinary issue. I said everything in this company can't be fixed with training. His reaction made me so angry, because when I said that to him his immediate response was ‘oh don't be so sensitive’. If I was a man, he would never have said that. I mean I've seen them shout and swear at each other, which is also an emotional reaction, but they would never say that. It's like the moment you resist a man in any way you get put down and belittled. Then you almost have to fix 20 other things to gain back your credibility... There are sometimes instances, for example, when I was called into the CEO's office with some other (male) senior personnel, he makes me immediately aware of the fact that I'm a woman. Like the other day, I had to go and explain something to him. When I walked in, he said ‘come and sit on my lap and try to work with this phone’. He was annoyed because his new phone

did not work and he wanted me to see if this phone is difficult to operate or not. It was so degrading. He would never do something like that with one of the male employees. So I don't put that label on myself, but some people force you into that space.” – Magda, FW49

The preceding quote was taken from the transcript of an interview with a woman who is a very senior employee at a large multi-national firm. From this response, it is clear that this woman, regardless of her seniority in the organisation, operates in an environment rife with explicit sexism. It is also apparent that the behaviour of men and women in senior positions is governed by distinctly different sets of social norms. Men seem to be able to exhibit a full range of emotional responses without consequence, while women are labeled as ‘sensitive’ if they do the same. This labeling arguably negatively impacts the respondent’s credibility as a leader – which is reflected in the senior manager at Holly’s firm indicating reluctance to appoint women as board members. Resultantly, power imbalances in the organisation are consistently reproduced. Furthermore, acts of explicit sexism also seemed to be used publicly in an attempt to maintain this imbalance of power. Women seemed to be deliberately and visibly placed in situations where they were temporarily stripped of their authority, credibility and agency as a leader. It is surprising, however, that Magda did not indicate that she took any formal or informal action regarding this incident. Her reluctance to pursue formal disciplinary action is a further indication as to the severity of power imbalances and the institutionalised nature of these imbalances. These examples of explicit discrimination and evidence that women in leadership face various levels or types of discrimination Powell (2012), it is not surprising that some women who have been able to penetrate the higher echelons of organisations construct leader identities which position them as ‘the exception to other women’ (Billing 2011). Responses such as Sharon’s which indicates that she adopted masculine characteristics, or the response from Maxine discussed in section 6.2.4 where she explains her observation of women behaving in a masculine manner, is arguably evidence of how women struggle to construct leader identities (Askehave & Korning Zethsen 2014; Carli & Eagly 2016).

While an expectation of weakness seems to permeate experiences of White women in leadership roles, what distinguished the experiences of the women of colour from the other participants was an apparent expectation of their incompetence. These both racist- and sexist assumptions of women of colour highlight the difficulty that exists in redressing

the injustices of the past. Historically, in South Africa, women of colour were limited to jobs that were low paid, had low levels of authority and required little to no skills on farms and as domestic workers (Cock 1987; Romany 1996; Booysen 1999; Iheduru 2004). This discriminatory division of labour in South African society was maintained through pass laws that restricted the mobility of people of colour, poor provisioning (if any) of educational opportunities and the moratorium on the appointment of people of colour in management roles (Nattrass & Seekings 2001; Matsinhe 2011). Considering the resultant social stigma attached to being a person of colour in the workplace, the human capital disadvantage, in addition to the masculine conceptualisation of leadership in mainstream leadership thought (Collinson 2005; Eagly & Carli 2007a; Collinson & Hearn 2014), it is not surprising that women of colour who wish to enter organisational leadership roles are plagued by expectations of inadequacy. Indeed, the most recent report on the status of women in the South African economy reveals that women's employment is concentrated in a smaller number of industry sectors, of which 84% of South African women work in the services sector (Shabangu 2015). One might therefore argue that the legacy of Apartheid still holds very real consequences for women of colour in contemporary South African organisations and manifests as expectations of women of colour to be unable to act in strategic leadership roles. Several women of colour offered responses that indicated colleagues at various levels expected them to be ill-suited for the role of leader. This expectation is stated very explicitly in the following response from an aspiring leader:

“Then in terms of mentoring, do you have formally assigned mentors for the purpose of this program?”

Yes, I do have a mentor who is formally assigned, as part of the internship. A White female...who talks down to me. I know that she is doing it, like, she's not intending to talk down to me, but I think in her mind she thinks that I'm at a certain level of my thinking. She assumes and she doesn't realise that it's actually offensive. I don't think she does it on purpose.

So you don't think she's intentionally being mean?”

No I don't, I really don't. I think it comes back to that whole thing of her seeing me as an Indian female and I think my age also plays a role. She is quite senior and she has got a lot of experience. In her mind I just have no education and no experience.” – Tasneem, FI29

The expectation or assumption of incompetence for the role of leader discourages and marginalises women of colour. The aforementioned experience noted by the aspiring

woman leader of colour is not surprising when compared to the views of the other White women hold on appointing persons from underrepresented groups:

“My biggest fear is that we may set up some previously disadvantaged guys that we bring in, for failure, that’s really good. But because they’re not getting the necessary support or training, or the culture is not embracing them, they may end up leaving faster than what we want them to.” – Madré, FW40

“In my previous organisation we had some experience of rapid transformation where it was just a case of bums and seats and it’s catastrophic...they lack managerial capacity and that’s a really harmful thing to the bottom line of any company, when you put someone in a role where they have a lot of scope and they can make big calls and they don’t get it right; it’s very dangerous.” – Penelope, FW39

Generally, private sector organisations are built upon a profit motive. Thus, it is to be expected that any activity that potentially threatens this profit motive would be condemned or at the very least approached with caution. However, as discussed in section 2.2.2, the concept of merit is problematic as it is decontextualised, paradoxical and assumed to be objective while it is in fact highly gendered and racialised (Augoustinos et al. 2005; Uhlmann & Cohen 2005; Malleson 2006; Castilla & Benard 2010; Simpson & Kumra 2016). The use of merit in debating policy which addresses racial inequality thus creates a social discourse on leadership which rationalises and justifies the perpetual marginalisation of people of colour (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003).

What is even more distressing, is that this preoccupation with ‘potential non-suitability’, expressed only by the White women, suggests underlying entrenched discriminatory views, in the form of paradoxical paternalistic ideologies (Durrheim et al. 2014), which manifest as covert racism masquerading as a concern for merit (Coates 2011). This type of covert racism and racialised leadership discourse could arguably impede people of colour’s ability to construct leadership identities in a similar way as to how the pervading masculine leadership discourse marginalises women (Kirton & Healy 2012; Askehave & Korning Zethsen 2014). Evidence of this impediment can be seen in the following response:

“I have had resistance, but I often want to distinguish between why I get resistance. For example, I have been told that I am unrealistic about what we have to do. The people who I am working with they sometimes feel I require them to work over weekends or an extra hour on a day. So definitely, this is where I get the most resistance when I’m being unrealistic or just around time. Maybe I overcommit.” – Sizingce, FB30

The institutionalised nature of covert racism is discussed in more detail in the next section. However, while considering more explicit forms of discrimination even more troubling – from the point of view of a diversity climate – an awareness of lowered expectations seems to result in women of colour attempting to overcompensate in delivering results, which has a negative impact on already strained relationships with followers of all races and genders – the impact of which can be seen in Sizingce’s response regarding instances of resistance against her authority.

Much like the experiences of the women of colour, the men of colour also seemed to experience a significant level of lowered expectations from their peers and superiors. Interestingly, however, much of these expectations were framed around equality legislation and the social consequences of implementing this legislation in organisations. While the women of colour indicated that superiors, peers and subordinates had low expectations of them fulfilling leadership roles, the men of colour mostly expressed their perception of these views from others as assumptions of tokenism. Conceptually, assumed tokenism is an interesting finding as it highlights the premium placed on appointing persons of colour into certain roles, while at the same time attempting to diminish their value to the organisation. Tokenism is predicated on the idea that an individual only has value insofar as their social background would satisfy compliance requirements. The notion of tokenism therefore allows one to illuminate how people of colour are reduced to nothing more than their racial classification (Coates 2011). The data reveals that in some instances people of colour feel like their worth to organisations is limited to what ‘score’ their racial identity would yield on the BEE scorecard. Indeed, this speaks to the very core of tokenism which is effectively an attempt to create a false appearance of inclusivity (Kanter 1977). Interestingly, this perception of personal value also seems to be present among some of the White women, but ironically the White women are dissatisfied with the compliance ‘score’ they are able to contribute, while the people of colour seem to prefer not being considered for contribution to the company’s BEE score at all. These starkly contrasting views can be seen in the following responses – the former from a Black man and the latter from a White woman:

“Do you think that there is a perception that, based on BEE, you have taken an opportunity away from a more qualified White candidate?”

Most definitely. And you get reminded of that on a daily basis. When those rules are in place, for example in a recruitment situation, it becomes very difficult to ascertain whether that person was there or not, because the rule is there. So you will never know. Only the ones that get left out that will always question employment decisions. So society at large still hold stereotypes and assume that if a White person did not get the job it must be because of affirmative action.” – Kwame, MB35

“...the White woman is not worth much anymore.

Really? How so?

Because Black women are worth more. So in this company you don't get any points for woman, you only get points for having Black women in senior positions. In another company, I probably would've earned the company a lot more points for being a White woman in a senior role, but not here. Which I find quite bizarre.” – Maxine, FW42

The aforementioned contrasting quotes highlight the potential for severe animosity and tension, resulting from the implementation of national policy, which is aimed at addressing the underrepresentation of women and people of colour, and is experienced the most by the men of colour. As discussed in Chapter 6, this might be because women have adapted to adversity to become more resilient and as a result do not vocalise any experience of such animosity or tension (Parker & Ogilvie 1996; Motileng et al. 2006; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Martin & Barnard 2013). One might also argue that this heightened awareness of racial tensions could be as a result of men's superior access to professional networks. The individual-level analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter highlighted that access to informal networks remains a significant challenge to women in senior leadership roles. Resultantly, one might argue that inferior informal networks would also limit the amount of exposure women have to racially tense relationships. One might go so far as to say that limited and increased exposure to negativity from co-workers represents a 'light-side of limited informal networks' and a 'dark-side of extended social networks' – specifically for people of colour. Apart from the immediate discomfort and stress experienced by men of colour who find themselves in such positions, these assumptions about equity appointments might have a larger, social impact. Arguably, these attitudes towards individuals who could potentially have been equity appointments might result in an outright aversion towards the implementation of national equity policy in organisations. The notion of an aversion towards equity appointments is discussed further in the last section of this chapter entitled 'Equity legislation- and policy implementation'.

7.2.2 Institutionalised discrimination

Unlike explicit discriminatory practises like the aforementioned attitudes, expectations and behaviours towards women and people of colour, over time some discriminatory practises become part of standard organisational practise and as a result, less explicit than overt incidents of racism and sexism (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Levin et al. 2002; Acker 2006). This section presents findings regarding institutionalised discrimination. Findings include confirmation of the existence of significant discriminatory practises experienced not only by the women, but also the men. Furthermore, while it was clear that both institutionalised racism and sexism were a reality for most participants, evidence of a pattern of rationalising discrimination was also noticed among the women.

7.2.2.1 Rationalising institutional discrimination

“Do you feel that there are people that are progressing quicker than you?”

No.

Do you feel there's still room for movement for you?

In this job specifically, one or maybe two jumps more but it won't happen as quickly as this one happened. I'm fine with where I'm now. I also feel that this is a good platform that will help me jump into a higher position, moving into another organisation.

Have you experience the glass ceiling?

No. I don't feel that is an obstacle in our organisation and I don't know of other women who have experienced that.” – Irene, FW28

The aforementioned quote highlights how the White women seem to consistently engage in a process of rationalisation when confronted with institutionalised discrimination. Organisational policies and practises that reward performance and punish underperformance seem to result in a strong culture of meritocracy – so much so that racism and sexism are seemingly institutionalised through masquerading as a concern for performance. This institutionalisation of discrimination is predicated on the flawed assumption that ‘a best candidate’ for a position can be objectively determined and also that a meritocracy is the most objective manner in which this ‘best candidate’ can be selected (Augoustinos et al. 2005; Malleon 2006; Noon 2010).

A meritocratic approach to selecting individuals for specific roles holds that the measurement of achievement against a set of predetermined criteria is inherently fair, accurate and yields the best results for recruitment decisions. This approach, however, disregards the fact that selection criteria are often constructed in ways that advantage certain groups and disadvantage others. In the case of leadership, mainstream leadership concepts are inherently masculine (Collinson & Hearn 2014) and if they are used in the selection or promotion of leaders, however objectively or consistently, they will ultimately disadvantage women. Furthermore, a meritocratic selection approach also inevitably serves to reproduce inequality in dictating that ‘the best candidate’ always be selected as opposed to selecting an ‘adequate candidate’. Given South Africa’s socio-political history and the opportunities for development women and people of colour were denied, White men would arguably still enjoy ‘best candidate’ status in a selection decision, amidst other – possibly women or people of colour – candidates who might also meet the minimum requirements for the position, i.e. the ‘adequate candidate’ (Malleon 2009; Noon 2010). The pseudo-scientific rationalism used to consistently appoint based on expertise beyond the minimum appointable standard is used as a tool to defend institutionalised discrimination as being fair and objective and highlights the inherent tension between merit and transformation (Malleon 2006). In fact, the data reveal that these discriminatory practises become so entrenched in people’s everyday lives that respondents seem to hold the firm belief that an underrepresentation of women as well as men of colour is due to either inadequate performance or the absence of a desire for career advancement. This can be seen in the following responses of one White woman and one Coloured man:

“I don't think women necessarily face different challenges from men. I think it comes down to what decisions you make and the consequences thereof. For example, I chose to be a professional and have a career, not to be a housewife. I still have a husband and children, but the difference is now my challenges are to manage the finances to make sure there is money for an au pair and to deal with limitations at work. I can give you an example from a recent business trip. We were abroad, me and a bunch of other people from different departments. One night we all went out to a bar for some drinks and when we got back to the hotel some of the guys went to have a hot tub. I was invited to join, but I knew that if I joined a hot tub session with a bunch of men, after having been out for drinks, that this would negatively impact on my reputation as a woman and also affect my credibility. At the time the men didn't understand why I didn't want to join, but the next morning the one colleague told me that he understood

my decision and that he had great respect for me. So I guess in a way the glass ceiling might still exist in society, with different standards of conduct being in place of men and women, but I don't think that the glass ceiling is still a structural issue in most organisations.” – Christiana, FW39

“Do you experience a glass ceiling?”

Not with this company. We have regional managers of every colour and race. There is definitely room for growth. It's up to the individual themselves; how far they're willing to go; how far they are willing to push themselves. I know that what I put in is what I'm going to get out. There's definitely no problem with people who go further than others.” – Ashwil, MC36

The responses from these two participants are particularly interesting because they are from the same organisation – an organisation with a board of directors which is 94% men and 83% White. The former respondent is a key informant working in leadership development and the latter is a junior manager enrolled in a leadership development programme. Regardless of the gross underrepresentation of women and people of colour in senior leadership, these two participants are seemingly convinced that the only major determinant in accessing a strategic leadership role in their organisation is that of personal performance. Ironically, these responses are indicative of social structures that act as barriers to the advancement of women and people of colour into leadership roles, yet the respondents do not seem to acknowledge this. This could either be because of the invisible and institutionalised nature of these oppressive social structures (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Beeghley 2000), or a reluctance to critique for fear of being further stigmatised and marginalised for challenging the status quo (Howarth 2006; Loury 2006; Lenhardt 2014).

Furthermore, what is particularly interesting here is participants' seeming tendency to internalise both racist and sexist norms. In the case of Christiana, she spoke of being a “*housewife*” as if that was the expected role in life for her. She also mentions that one of her male colleagues told her that he “*understood her decision*” not to join a hot tub session with other men and that he respected her for that, which in essence was an acknowledgement of the vastly different social norms that apply to men and women in and outside of the workplace. Interestingly, however, instead of challenging these confirmed sexist norms, she appears to feel validated by them.

What should also be noted here is an apparent process of rationalisation that lies at the heart of the exclusion of men from domestic responsibilities. Historically, caring for

children and managing a household was considered to be ‘women’s work’. This assumption, of course, is problematic as it results in societal imbalances of power between men and women. The data reveals that this power imbalance is maintained, partly, through women’s perception of their own domestic responsibilities and the resultant career management strategies. An example of this is Christiana referring to “*her*” challenges in ensuring alternative measures are put in place where she cannot fulfil her domestic responsibilities. Women seem to engage in a continuous process of reinforcing gender roles in discussions regarding domestic responsibilities and by consistently referring to domestic responsibilities as “*my challenge*” or “*challenges I face*”:

“I think I have been fortunate. I haven’t really had challenges in terms of my gender. My big challenge has been to handle this position as well as my home. I’ve got a ‘2year-old husband’ – he is wonderful, but he is 2 years old! That is a challenge to me, to go home and to still make sure there is food on the table on time and that sort of thing.” – Karen, FW63

The deliberate exclusion of men from domestic responsibilities is a key finding in understanding how women in a South African context manage societal expectations of them in order to maintain demanding careers – as is the case with strategic leadership. Historically, paid domestic work in private homes was considered to be part of the informal employment sector in South Africa. This is reflected in domestic workers only being included in formal employment in the second national census since the fall of Apartheid, which was conducted in 2001 (Casale & Posel 2002; Cronje & Budlender 2004). This brought about a conceptual shift in how the role of domestic worker was socially constructed. With inclusion into the formal employment sector and stricter enforcement of statutory conditions of employment (Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 1997), the social ‘status’ of domestic work changed from that of ‘servant’ to that of ‘worker’ (Ally 2009). Consequently, the relational dynamic of the ‘White madam employing the Black maid’ (Cock 1987) also seems to have faded – at least at a surface level. This change in how domestic work is constructed in South Africa could arguably have been the catalyst for women outsourcing ‘women’s work’ to other women, regardless of race. This change in the ‘social status’ of cheaply available unskilled Black labour is therefore a viable option for women of colour to also participate in outsourcing domestic responsibilities, as it is no longer considered an act of oppression but an act of employment. This can also be seen in the way Christiana refers to the person she is outsourcing her domestic responsibilities to –

instead of speaking of a ‘maid’ or a ‘house keeper’, she refers to employing an ‘au pair’. Resultantly, this process enforces perceptions around gender roles in society by situating domestic responsibilities within the role of the woman and excluding men from the conversation entirely. Indeed, the following response highlights how gender and race are inextricably intertwined in producing institutionalised discrimination:

“There are certain perceptions that people hold and a lot has got to do with the culture of the company as well. In a lot of companies it’s still a very male dominated culture and the higher you move up the more it becomes an issue. I’ve done very well but, to a certain extent, there is an element of male domination still in this particular culture that you have to accept that’s still there but I think that it is improving.

Do you feel that male colleagues progress quicker?

Yes, definitely.

Do you think race plays a role in the glass ceiling or in the progression in some way?

In the past, it definitely did but I think we’ve made a lot of progress in that regard and I think currently it plays a role in certain environments. I think in HR, Black females will easily progress but in engineering it will be very male biased.” – Jacoba, FW54

The obvious limits to entering into leadership roles in organisations are apparent from responses regarding structural barriers like the ‘glass ceiling’ and gender roles in broader society (Mavin et al. 2014). Despite the progress that has been seen in women entering formal employment, but more importantly also being successful as leaders, women still view their role in society as primary care givers. Choosing to reject these societal expectations – to various degrees – has a significant impact on how women in leadership perceive their own purpose in life. How women talk about their careers and the strategies women engage in in order to manage their careers perpetuate and reinforce gender roles. Furthermore, organisational practises aimed to offer women a work-life balance seem to inherently exclude men from the conversation around domestic responsibilities, which compounds the effect of gendered structural discrimination.

While the data suggest that women of colour challenge and criticise gendered structures of employment, such as higher concentrations of women within departments and in the organisational hierarchy that are known to be less strategic, they have less decision-making influence and are generally paid less (Acker 1990; Acker 1992; Eagly & Carli

2007a), the White women seem content in their limited career prospects. Typical responses from women of colour in this regard include references to “*working harder*” and “*trying to prove their competence*”. Conversely, White women would typically express their views on the gendered structure of employment in the following manner:

“Do you feel that there are leaders that progress quicker than you?”

The reality is that the company can't be led by someone with a HR background. There was a time that I thought that I am a good leader and that I would do better than the others, but I don't have the technical background. I understood that I can't really go any further.” – Magrieta, FW53

“At my level, the maintenance manager and technical manager are very technically strong so there is a couple of us that are not as technically strong in those fields and then when it comes to issues on the plant then we would be excluded but it's not because of gender but because we don't know the plant.” – Georgina, FW52

One might argue that White women in South Africa enjoy some privilege resulting from the legacy of Apartheid – albeit not to the extent of White male privilege – while women of colour do not. This might therefore serve as some explanation as to White women's apparent reluctance to challenge gendered structures in employment. Gendered structures of employment are intertwined with racialised structures of employment and challenging one inadvertently challenges the other because such challenges disrupt the inherently racialised and gendered discourse on what constitutes suitability for a particular role (Noon 2007; Malleson 2009; Noon 2010).

7.2.2.2 Work-life balance challenges

Responses regarding work-life balance conflicts clearly indicate that women in leadership positions experience a disadvantage when compared to leaders that are men. General attitudes around domestic responsibilities seem to be that women are solely responsible, with little to no concern for their careers:

“What problems did you or do you currently experience in terms of your progression into a leadership role?”

It's not so relevant for me right now but, in my old organisation, when I wanted to fall pregnant, I struggled to have children. I actually resigned because I travelled 2 weeks out of a month. It was at that stage that they made a plan for me to take on another role. I took on another role and then I actually fell pregnant and then had a boss who expected me to work 15 hours a day, while being pregnant. Within that organisation I had taken two steps back just

so that I could manage my pregnancy and manage that part of my life. I've seen it happen with a lot of women where their career goes back or stops at that point of their lives because you need a lot of flexibility, you need a different way of thinking about how you should or shouldn't work, and that kind of stuff.” – Hannelie, FW37

The preceding quote illustrates that even in seemingly more progressive organisations – where special considerations for working parents are offered – the burden of care is still assumed to lie with mothers with little to no mention of the role of fathers. Some of the women mentioned that their organisations are very lenient and considerate of their domestic responsibilities, but very little was said about the involvement of male partners. It almost seems as if *organisations* are expected to be more involved in childcare arrangements than the *father* of the child, as seen in the following response:

“Do you think that you, and maybe other women as well, are kind of forced into having to make a decision, whether to have a career or have children, whereas a man can have both?”

Yes. Then you also have certain organisations and cultures, like the company I'm currently at, who help women to manage that a lot more effectively. You have things like flexible working arrangements; you have structures they can put in place to help you. They help you with the fact that, if you need to do something then you can do it. It makes a huge difference in managing your work life balance and managing the guilt that working moms often have.” – Hannelie, FW37

Implied ‘leniency’ and reference to “*flexibility*” also suggests an underlying disadvantage towards women. Nuclear conceptualisations of ‘the family’ comprise of a mother and a father – both of which have roles to play in the creation of children, a household and the like. Households and domestic responsibilities are a fact of life in modern society, yet organisations allowing *women* to fulfil these domestic responsibilities is somehow perceived as being lenient. One might ask what the role of men is in this process. From the responses, it would seem that men’s responsibility in the home-work dynamic is limited to conceiving a child and – considering the representation statistics of men in senior decision-making roles – making decisions regarding the careers of women employees who choose to have children. Child care as a shared practise was never mentioned. Domestic responsibility as a joint endeavour was never mentioned. The women discussed work-life conflicts as their own personal battle, while the men did not mention work-life conflict as a challenge at all.

“Women still bear the brunt of the children and running home and all that stuff...” – Holly, FW48

This short quote from one of the women is overwhelmingly confirmed by the fact that not one of the 21 male respondents mentioned any concern about conflict between home- and work responsibilities. This finding is particularly interesting since the majority of the men were married and more than half had children of their own. This indicates that despite organisations attempting to lessen the burden of family responsibilities on their female employees, society’s understanding of parenting and child care still places women leaders in a disadvantaged position when compared to men. Within such a social context, women who choose to enter into organisational leadership roles will inevitably be at the mercy of others – often men – to afford them special consideration in terms of working conditions. This situation is very clearly illustrated by the following participant’s response:

“There are so few [business] partners who are women and there is a balancing act between child rearing and domestic responsibilities and moving up the ladder.

Do you think women still face significant challenges in balancing that?

Yes. We’re still a patriarchal society on whose shoulders the bulk of that still sits on the mother, not the father, even if both of you happen to be medical doctors. The mother still has the primary responsibility and as corporates we have not put in sufficient support. At one of my previous companies I was very fortunate to have a CEO who was very supportive. There was a very caring environment. So perhaps there’s accommodation that needs to be factored in but all those things come at a cost.” – Thembeke, FB55

More important than flexible working hours and paid maternity leave at organisational level, a social mind-shift would have to occur if women are to see any alleviation in this very real challenge to entering into leadership roles. The similarity in concerns between White women and women of colour indicates that work-life conflicts are a challenge that affects all women, regardless of race. The prevalence of the concerns over home-work conflicts also indicates that despite this challenge being addressed with organisational interventions, it is in fact a wider societal challenge and not one that is best addressed with policy at organisational level.

7.2.2.3 Challenges within leadership development

Data on the experiences of formal leadership development reveal that women of colour encountered some significant challenges. The women of colour did not discuss their

experiences in formal leadership development interventions, such as workshops and courses, in a way that convinces one that much, if any, of their developmental needs were addressed. This stands in strong contrast with the responses from the White women. The following two responses highlight the less than positive experience of leadership development among women of colour:

“It’s actually quite tough because you have to internalise what the people are saying. I mean, most of the time it’s been quite constructive. I’ve applied it. I mean I’m also the kind of person who don’t actually ask unless I really want your opinion, so it’s not I’m going to pay lip service. If you don’t agree with me that’s fine and then I will listen, because I also think I’m fairly mature so I have a fairly high emotional quotient and I’m able to listen. It is tough listening to people’s feedback that you perceive as negative or not positive feedback.” – Tercia, FC35

“The other challenge is definitely race and gender. It’s like double subjugation for some of us at times. Again, what I must highlight is that I think sometimes there’s also your own personal bias or what you assume in certain situations. It’s not a personal example; it’s a friend and I’ve been helping her through it. She’s at the firm with me and she’s a Black female. Part of developing talent at the firm they invest in whatever you want to do. She’s come to recognise that she actually wants to be a coach; she wants to coach public sector leaders and she found this course which will cost about R3000-odd [£135] she asked for permission to go and do it. It became a big drama and it became a problem. Then there’s a White female who wanted to go and do another course in the US and she got to go. When she mentioned that this other woman got to go they told her no, but she’s comparing apples with pears and that she doesn’t know the situation behind this other woman going. I find that so many decisions are being made behind closed doors that you don’t know the details of what getting put into that decision. So there’s a lack of transparency and it’s a problem.” – Zanele, FB29

Women of colour in the study did not receive the same access to the same level of developmental opportunities as their White peers. These obstacles place the women of colour at a disadvantage as far as formal leadership development is concerned. Data indicating problematic formal leadership development processes in organisations also resonates with research on the glass ceiling, and specifically that which indicates a sharp decline in the representation of women in higher strategic leadership roles – also referred to in the field of talent management as the ‘leaking pipeline’ (Carli & Eagly 2001; Atkin et al. 2002; Van Anders 2004; Blickenstaff 2005; McCarty Kilian et al. 2005). Problematic leadership development initiatives are of particular significance because the ‘leaking pipeline’ body of literature focuses specifically on women in higher education and, even

more specifically, in the natural sciences. These findings indicate that the ‘leaking pipeline’ phenomenon is not limited to educational institutions or women in the natural sciences, but indeed also within corporate organisations.

Some very distinct differences were observed in how formal and informal leadership development opportunities were discussed between groups. With formal leadership development activities, the White women participants were clearly benefitting more from their programmes than the other two groups. Conversely, the White women’s responses regarding informal leadership development interactions were characterised by a sense of resentment and feelings of exclusion. Some examples illustrating these sentiments include the following:

“Do you feel that you might sometimes be assigned different projects because of your gender or race?”

Not in the HR field but perhaps in other areas if for example people believe that a female can't travel that much because they have children at home they may not be assigned a project that requires a lot of travelling.” – Jacoba, FW54

“In terms of your own mentoring that you've received in your career, can you tell me a little bit about that?”

I have not ever received any mentoring from anyone. My current boss is the only guy who has ever said that when he leaves I need to step in to take care of issues.” – Abbey, FW41

“Do you think that you got the same access to mentoring and training as the rest of your peers?”

No, I don't think women do. I think that men work together and performance is managed and evaluated in a particularly male style. At my previous company, the measurement was technical, technical, technical and then, for all the qualities you might bring to the business, there was something called the x-factor. That would basically mean how well you would get on with your boss.” – Jacqueline, FW48

The preceding responses highlight a feeling of exclusion among the White women. This feeling of exclusion from informal leadership development is evident from the use of phrases such as “*people believe that a female can't travel that much because they have children*”, “*I have not ever received any mentoring from anyone*” and “*performance is managed and evaluated in a particularly male style*”. These responses suggest structural barriers to informal leadership development which are consistently rationalised through what Noon (2010) refers to as pseudo-scientific reasoning. This pseudo-scientific

reasoning defends exclusionary practises by seemingly linking them to performance and tangible outcomes, while in fact being inherently discriminatory (Castilla 2008; Castilla & Benard 2010).

Further to the men of colour sharing the challenge of limited leadership role models and mentors they feel they can identify with, is the perceived negative impact of equity legislation implementation. The men of colour mention an abundance of availability of formal leadership development opportunities. However, this availability of formal development opportunities seems to be off-set by the effects of tense informal relationships with peers and superiors. This is evident from the men of colour's responses regarding perceived animosity and racial tension presumed to be the result of equity legislation implementation. Despite these challenges, the data suggest that both men and women of colour found *informal* leadership development activities to be more beneficial than that of *formal* leadership development – the specifics of which are discussed in the section on organisational enablers.

The majority of informal leadership development experiences were framed around interactions with various informal mentors both inside and outside of the participants' respective organisations. However, noteworthy responses were also observed in discussions regarding formalised mentoring relationships. The next section discusses significant findings pertaining to experiences within the participants' mentoring relationships.

7.2.2.4 Challenges within mentoring relationships

It became clear from the responses regarding mentoring and support, that the women of colour favoured personalised mentoring over formal training interventions. Even more so, these responses point towards problematic interactions experienced only by the women of colour and not participants from the other groups. Some responses from the women of colour regarding informal mentoring that highlight underlying tensions are as follows:

“Mentorship...I probably stumbled across by default but very much a part of why I probably succeeded career wise. Certain individuals that mentored me, either by default or I solicited. Having to navigate the political challenges, you need people to guide you, talk to you through it, and engage with you; sometimes when you're young, to give you a bit of reality check, allow you to

separate personal from professional. So, mentorship definitely.” – Keshika, FI34

“Can you tell me between the interactions with the formal mentor and your informal mentoring, which ones you find to be the most beneficial to you?”

The informal.

Why is that?

Because with the informal sessions I can talk to her about the interactions I've had with the formal mentor and she can sort of advise me how to respond in that situation.

Do you perhaps think that because you and your informal mentor are both Coloured females, that plays a role in the nature of the mentoring?

It might be. Sometimes you are not always conscious of that, but it happens unconsciously.” – Tasneem, FI29

These two responses from women of colour are heavily loaded with evidence of challenges, yet the participants seem to shy away from addressing these challenges directly. It would seem that instead of challenging organisational politics or gender-based discrimination themselves, they opt for seeking out the support of more senior or experienced individuals on an informal basis. This stands in contrast with what was said by the White women for whom mentoring relationships seemed to be a positive experience:

“I've also been fortunate that my mentors have been men and they've recognised my ability and the support, mentoring and the development opportunities in my company are fantastic. The reason that I got where I am is my own self-drive but I had guidance and support from men.” – Georgina, FW52

“I enjoy excellent support. My boss does listen and sometimes he is very masculine in his approach because he's always only dealt with men. It took him a while to first recognise me and I had to work quite hard to earn respect but now he listens when I have an opinion and I often hear that opinion reflected in meetings with his leadership team. The GM for franchise has just always been supportive of anything.” – Carmen, FW51

These responses from the White women indicate that once again the women of colour are placed at a disadvantage. While the White women simply learn and develop from interactions with informal mentors, the women of colour must first address obstacles to their development such as organisational politics and problematic formal mentors. This is not surprising as the literature on leadership mentoring suggests that same-race and same-gender mentoring relationships offer more psychosocial support (Thomas 1990; O'Brien et al. 2010). Furthermore, the literature also suggest that cross-gender mentoring

relationships may reinforce and reproduce stereotypical gender relations with men as the powerful knowing and the women as the obedient other (Ehrich 2008).

Statements such as “*I had to work quite hard to earn respect*” supports the literature on women’s leadership development that assert that women experience difficulty in establishing legitimacy and continues to be perceived as high risk appointments (Ibarra, Carter, et al. 2010). The responses from Georgina, Tasneem and Keshika also support the literature which assert that mentoring provides access to leadership opportunities, build confidence and offers guidance to aspiring women leaders (Healy & Lieberwitz 2013). Thus the data suggests that the benefits received from cross-gender and cross-racial mentoring relationships are marginal at best. Additionally, the difficulty with which women seem to establish legitimacy as leaders also serve as evidence of a ‘Teflon Effect’, where recognition for achievement does not adhere to women as a result of the incongruence between their leader and gender identities (Simpson & Kumra 2016).

While discussing organisational challenges, the men of colour made several mentions of experiences of animosity from colleagues they suspect were as a result of a suspicion that they might be equity appointments. The women of colour, in turn, expressed significant aversion to the notion of being considered an equity appointment. This seeming aversion is discussed in more detail in the last section of this chapter. At the same time, many White women felt that they as a demographic group did not benefit significantly from organisational equity policy.

7.3 Organisational enablers

The data revealed that women and people of colour not only experience complex challenges in accessing and practising leadership, but also have several unique organisational enablers and opportunities at their disposal. Rich data discussed within the thematic axis of ‘organisational enablers’ are presented in three sub-themes, namely ‘flexible work arrangements’, ‘specialised training and development’ and ‘professional support’.

7.3.1 Work-life balance as an enabler

The findings presented in the previous section on organisational challenges reveal that home-work conflicts do not pose a significant challenge to the men and their ability to act in a leadership role. Conversely, the women expressed significant concerns about the demands placed on them from both their personal and professional environments. It is therefore not surprising that ‘work-life balance’ was discussed solely among the women when asked about organisational enablers. Some responses include the following:

“I think this whole thing about flexible working arrangements; the ability to work from home. The whole thing about that you are measured on your outcomes; it’s all about what you deliver as opposed to me seeing you at work every day. Also, being given the kind of freedom to manage how you need to manage.” – Hannelie, FW37

“A mom is a mom. That is your most important job. You’re a mom, its not like an ‘equation’. Some families have social support and structures and some don’t.

What kind of structures?

For example, why do we struggle to get Black Africans into senior roles in the Western Cape? It is because they don’t have their extended families here to support. So when we came to live in the Western Cape both my husband and I were working. My parents actually retired and they came to help us because we had all four kids here at that time. Now, a lot of the team may not have that support system. So what are you going to do if your child is in hospital? So I think that sense of compassion is important. I think in modern society the roles have changed. So in some families you would need the husband to go fetch the child, or something like that. Thats why I don’t have a blanket approach to these things. So in my team, if the dad needed to be with his child, he needed to be with his child. If something happens you need to be there – especially in our country where children are not safe. I would never compromise the safety of a person’s child, whether it is a man or a woman. It depends on what they need to do at that point in time.” – Priscilla, FI49

Arguably, with an expectation placed on women to assume the majority of domestic responsibilities as a broader societal obstacle to career advancement, organisations offering flexible work arrangements was indicated as being a significant enabler to working mothers in leadership roles. Even with efforts from organisations to alleviate the burden placed on working mothers, one could ask again why none of the men mentioned flexible working or a need for work-life balance conditions as a major enabler for their careers as leaders. One underlying factor of why even organisational attempts to assist women seem

to be inherently sexist could be the way in which South African legislation is formulated. In the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, women who become pregnant enjoy certain legal protections before, during and after the birth of a child, such as job security and maternity leave entitlement (Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 1997). However, these concessions are formulated in a way which seems like the female employees enjoys no support from a partner. No allowances are made for paternity leave before, during or after the birth of a child. Some organisations in South Africa do offer some form of parental support for the partner, but this is entirely up to the organisation and no incentives (or punitive measures) are supported by South African labour law. In fact, most organisations are quite traditional in the way they address parental support. This can be seen in how the following respondent, who is a senior leader, explains what she went through in an attempt to support one of her followers who is in a same-sex relationship:

“So I've got a Black guy that's gay and him and his husband they got married and they are adopting a baby. So he said to me he needed to go on maternity leave, and I thought 'oh fuck how am I gonna fight this with HR'. Well, so all I did was I said [to HR] what's the policy when you adopt a baby? I said give me the policy. So if you know the child the policy is different from if you don't know the child. Like say for example you are adopting your niece because your sister died or whatever, you have an active relationship she just comes into your home. But if you don't know the child there is a policy where you get 40 working days maternity leave. So I said ok cool I need that for my team member who is adopting the baby. So they said I can't get it for him because he is a man. So I said I know he is a man, but him and another man are adopting a baby. So they said oh well we don't think this applies to him. So I asked why would it not apply to him? He is the mother in this relationship and he is the main caregiver of the child. So he needs his maternity leave. JEEZ, did we go into a fight! So I've had a lot of 'firsts' here in this company. So I've had the first gay Black man who adopted his baby and he went on his 40 days maternity leave.” – Maxine, FW42

Despite this respondent's good intentions and support she is giving her follower, it is clear in the way she speaks of caregiving that her conceptualisation of parenting is heavily gendered. This confirms the assertion that regardless of respondents citing work-life balance conditions as an organisational enabler, these allowances merely perpetuate the gendered conceptualisation of domestic responsibilities held by South African society at large. This point will be revisited in the next chapter on societal structures.

7.3.2 Formal leadership development as an enabler

In so far as discussing their experiences of formal leadership development activities, the White women seem to have had a generally positive experience. The utility White women are able to extract from formalised leadership development initiatives is evident in their use of descriptive terms such as “*successful*” and “*amazing*” – statements which were not observed among the people of colour. The following response is an illustrative example of these positive experiences:

“I had one-on-one mentoring sessions once every 2 months. I had tasks I had to do and feedback that I had to give her. I had to tell her what was happening in my department and how I handled it. She would then measure my progress and report that to the CEO. That I did for about a year.

How did you experience that? Was it helpful?

Yes, it was amazing. It was frustrating at times because she gave us homework in the sense of how we will fix certain things and she wanted implementation dates, etc. So, my stress with my departments as well as hers was frustrating at times but, in terms of my development, it was a milestone for me.” – Yvonne, FW26

The only responses among the people of colour which seemed significantly positive when compared to the experiences of the White women was the mention of the amount of formal developmental opportunities available to the men of colour. Much of these responses from the men of colour regarding formal training were framed around the participants’ BEE profile and the resultant abundance in availability of opportunities. This finding is not surprising considering the highly regulated nature of vocational training and development in South African organisations (South African Qualifications Authority Act No 58 1995; Skills Development Amendment Act 31 2003; Skills Development Levies Act No 9 1999; Skills Development Amendment Act No 26 2011; Higher Education Laws Amendment Act No 26 2010). The extent to which this legislative context manifests in organisations is illustrated by the following candid response from an ‘aspiring leader’:

“Do you feel that you have had access to opportunities for development as a leader?”

Definitely, definitely. I have had the opportunity to do things that anywhere else I do not think I would have had the same opportunity. Being in the position where I am now I can say that the opportunities have always been there, but the onus has always been on me to make use of that opportunity to the best of my ability. That is something that has always stuck with me, to make use of

what is available to you. Even if it doesn't work out, then you go on and try something else...” – Reginald, MC25

The preceding response highlights the availability of opportunities for leadership development. Reginald expresses an appreciation for the sheer volume of opportunities that had been presented to him. The absence of responses about government-mandated development among the White participants is not surprising, given the focus on racial equality in equality legislation.

Further to work-life balance and the availability of developmental opportunities being cited as significant enablers for underrepresented groups in accessing strategic leadership roles was that of specialised leadership development. In this instance, ‘specialised’ leadership development refers to initiatives that tailor leadership development to specific groups who might require development in niche areas of leadership, not necessarily required by other groups of people (Ohlott 2002). Specialised leadership training and development emerging as a dominant theme among organisational enablers is not surprising as the field of vocational training and development is highly regulated and supported by the South African government. Legislation is in place to not only incentivise organisations for offering quality training and development, but also to impose punitive measures for organisations that fail to participate in the development of the South African workforce (South African Qualifications Authority Act No 58 1995; Skills Development Amendment Act 31 2003; Skills Development Levies Act No 9 1999; Skills Development Amendment Act No 26 2011; Higher Education Laws Amendment Act No 26 2010). It therefore makes business sense to customise leadership development initiatives in order to be as effective as possible. What was interesting to note among responses regarding training and development as an enabler, however, was that this topic was mainly discussed as a significant enabler among the White women and the men of colour, but not the women of colour. Here one could look towards the literature on mentoring and ‘single identity development’ for a possible explanation. Firstly, ‘self-preservation’ plays an important role in the development of diverse groups of people in formal learning settings. Underrepresented groups experience formalised training settings as not being a safe space as it involves a certain level of vulnerability (Ohlott 2002). Secondly, it is said that informal mentoring influences career outcomes more than formalised mentoring (Ragins & Cotton 1999). Here, one might argue that in traditional training settings, White women

enjoy White privilege, while men of colour enjoy male privilege, and because formal leadership development training is not perceived as a safe space in addition to informal mentoring offering superior career outcomes, it seems unsurprising that women of colour do not view formal leadership development as a primary enabler.

Furthermore, responses from the White women were quite polarised, with some advocating it and some being against it. These diverging views can be seen in the following two responses from White women:

“Sometimes there is a need for very specific development needs such as female leadership skills, how to feature in a very strong male dominant environment. The focus areas for such a development area would be of very little interest for your typical male audience, therefore targeted development will be effective with an exclusive group of people.” – Madré, FW40

“Do you think things like women’s leadership development workshops are a positive thing?”

No, I think that, if you ‘silo’ anybody out, you diminish their power.

Why?

I think it doesn’t work. That’s why I like the maturity model...I think that, whatever the specific subject is, everyone’s got some difficulties to deal with. A much more effective way to work with this stuff is to look at the maturation process.” – Jaqueline, FW48

Madré and Jaqueline’s responses to the notion of ‘single identity development’ illustrate the polarised view on the matter among the White women. One might argue that women who reject notions such as ‘single identity development’ may have experienced or witnessed social stigma as a result of similar interventions in the past. One could also consider this polarity within the data from a privilege standpoint (Steyn 2001; Rothenberg 2015) and argue that (White) women who reject the need for ‘specialised’ leadership development interventions enjoy a significant level of privilege in society and are therefore unable to recognise the challenges and barriers to advancement faced by others. Alternatively, one might also view these types of responses as support for research which problematises the notion of solidarity and homogeneity among women (Mavin 2006a; Mavin 2006b) – a false assumption stemming from the gendered nature of undertaking leadership in organisations (Holvino 2010).

“...you’ve got to grow your own timber. So you’ve got to go further back into the playing field. So our bursaries are almost exclusively offered to Black graduates. And we also have a bias towards females. So all the bursaries I

allocated this year went to Black candidates. It was actually funny because it amounted to more 'bursary units' on our BEE scorecard because they were all Black but most were also female. So statistically, I am favouring that. My hiring is also biased towards Black and female.” – Donald, MC43

The preceding response quoted above illustrates the sentiments on ‘specialised’ leadership development held by the men of colour. The men also discussed specially tailored leadership development opportunities as an organisational enabler, but like the White women, specialised training was not discussed from a personal perspective. From both the White women and the men of colour, specialised leadership training was discussed from an ‘observer’ perspective and explained as something that is of value to develop ‘others’. This finding supports the assertion that male- and White privilege significantly influences opinions on ‘specialised’ leadership development interventions.

7.3.3 Informal leadership development as an enabler

Interestingly with both the men- and women of colour, the experiences they presented regarding informal leadership development interactions were significantly more positive and engaging compared to their accounts of formal development. Furthermore, the majority of the White women expressed concerns about being excluded from informal networking opportunities and seemed to favour formal development programmes over informal developmental interactions. Positive responses from the men- and women of colour were typically of the following nature:

“...if I look at my career, there have been people who’ve taken deliberate steps to help me out.

In what way?

People who’ve used their positions in leadership to get others to give me a chance, give me a foot in the door, to smooth the way for me, to guide me in which way I think regarding my career. And I think it’s a kind of informal mentorship.” – Lerato, FB43

“What do you find to be the most developmental for you? Formal courses, or informal interactions like you’ve mentioned?

I think the informal development more, but at the same time, the courses that they have now are a mix of both. They only give you the theory, notes or formal documentation at the end. Initially they want you to interact with the people and they want you to talk. So they kind of facilitate that informal discussion. That has been working perfectly for me.” – Mmusi, MB32

For all three groups, the majority of informal leadership development experiences were framed around interactions with various informal mentors both inside and outside of the participants' respective organisations. In discussions around challenges, the mentoring relationship emerged as a dominant theme. During discussions on enablers, mentoring relationships did not emerge as a dominant theme, but rather formal and informal leadership training. Taking cognisance of the complex network of challenges and enablers underrepresented groups in leadership face in South African private sector organisations, the necessity for reconsidering how leadership development is conceptualised is proposed. The next section draws on the analyses of data regarding leadership development and discusses the rethinking of organisational leadership development within a South African context.

7.3.4 Leadership development in context

Taking context into consideration reveals a fault line in conventional thinking about leadership development. Generally speaking, leadership development is assumed to occur, at the very earliest, when an adult person with the desire to ascend the organisational hierarchy enters into some form of organisational leadership development intervention (Yeung & Ready 1995; Day 2000; Conger & Ready 2003; Boaden 2006; Pinnington 2011) – be it formal or informal. This is a highly problematic position on organisational leadership and organisational leadership development, because it is underpinned by the assumption of a 'level playing field'. Therefore, as a result of South Africa's history, women and people of colour are at a significant disadvantage in terms of education and exposure to the developmental experiences White South Africans take for granted. Conceptualising leadership development as a process which starts upon entry into organisations arguably perpetuates this historic disadvantage. From the following responses, the problematic nature of the general assumption about when the leadership development effort should start becomes evident:

“If I can change things I won't necessarily change it at a company level. If I can change something I would increase investment in kids when they are growing up. The stimulation that they are getting; the maths and science education that they are getting. Making sure they are properly educated and well nourished. A Black mother told me about situations in rural areas. Where young girls don't have access to sanitary towels and therefore stay at home

when they are menstruating and can't go to school for 4 or 5 days. This lady and her husband now provide sanitary supplies to girls from age 12 to 18. That still doesn't take into account for missed school time due to other reasons such as having to take care of siblings and other family members. These are the type of things that need to be looked at in order to bring about changes in society.”
– Lucy, FW42

“I would change the government and get them to focus more on education because there are a lot of people out there who are very capable; they just don't have the knowhow; they've never had the chance. The education is appalling and, instead of enforcing BEE, they should enforce a better education and then naturally those people will come through as suitable candidates.

Education on what level?

From Grade R¹⁶! That foundation phase is so important. It's no good trying to fix something here when all behind it is broken. It's got to start at the beginning and then it won't be an issue to employ. You won't have to employ a Black person and then have the dip before they get to a functional and contributing level because you've been teaching them. I do a lot of that but I've been tolerant, from years back, to do that and its always worked if you can see that the person has something there.” – Karen, FW63

As a result of the legacy of Apartheid, which limited the access to basic social services, entire communities in modern day South Africa still face poor provisioning of basic services like schooling, medical care and social welfare. The data reveals that this has had a direct impact on the talent pipeline of organisational leadership in South African private sector organisations. Even recruiting university graduates does not seem to eliminate the effect of this social problem on organisations, as can be seen in the following response from a senior manager at a large engineering firm:

“What I've picked up, from the recruitment side, is that there is a lack of suitably skilled guys that comes in; even a BSc graduate that comes out of university. There seems to be a lack of, at least, minimal working experience. We take him on and we bring him here and he really has to be policed to bring him up to speed and he needs to tag along and it's quite a laborious process to bring him up to a level whereby he can run independently on a project from start to finish. And the size of practise that we are, there isn't always that amount of time available for any particular engineer to take him through it. That's a bit of a challenge that we face.” – Rajesh, MI51

¹⁶ Grade R is a foundational phase of education for children ages 5 to 6. Prior to 2007 Grade R was not included in South Africa's formal education system, however a new structural arrangement saw the inclusion of Grade R into the mainstream schooling system (Motshekga n.d.).

Responses regarding leadership development within a historical context of widespread disadvantage suggest a need to rethink what it means to give underrepresented people access to leadership development opportunities. Arguably, starting with young adults does not address the current disadvantages entire communities still face in terms of personal and professional development. Clearly, recruiting people from underrepresented groups in line with an organisation's BEE strategy will not result in the desired outcome of an equitably representative leadership structure, as the very underrepresented individuals organisations are recruiting have a significant developmental deficit. One might argue that a social problem on this scale falls within the responsibilities of national government. Indeed, it is not a small matter and cannot be remedied by one single organisation; however, if organisations do not engage in a conversation and acknowledge their flawed assumptions regarding leadership development, women and people of colour will likely remain underrepresented in South African private sector organisations for the foreseeable future.

Conversely, one might argue that a preoccupation with the development of 'the younger generation' is a discursive attempt to disregard available leadership talent and to maintain the status quo. The White women's preoccupation with Affirmative Action and BEE implementation possibly resulting in "*setting people up for failure*" and evidence of internalised discrimination, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, certainly makes this a possibility. One might argue that the White women engage in this type of discourse in a subconscious attempt to hoard opportunities, while the people of colour engage and rationalise it as a result of internalised discrimination. Further support for this can be seen in the descriptive statistics from the previous chapter, which indicate that all three groups of participants are generally both highly educated and experienced.

Despite shortcomings in national policy to ensure suitably educated and personally developed young adults enter into the workforce, several strides have been made in ensuring legislative frameworks are put in place to promote equality at work. These frameworks include legislation like the Employment Equity Act, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, as well as provisioning for Affirmative action. These legislative frameworks are, however, only as good as their implementation at

organisational level. The next and final section of this chapter presents findings regarding participant experience of said legislative implementation.

7.4 Equity legislation- and policy implementation

Data on how participants experience the implementation of national equality legislation in organisations is presented under three sub-headings, namely ‘surface-level transformation’, ‘the legacy of Apartheid’ and ‘aversion to interventionist policy’. An analysis of the data revealed that these three themes were the most dominant among responses about the implementation of national equity policy within South African private sector organisations. Firstly, ‘surface-level change’ discusses how organisations engage in practises that undermine equity goals and real change. Secondly, the racialised nature of views pertaining to leadership development is discussed in ‘the legacy of Apartheid’ and lastly the ‘aversion to interventionist policy’ section discusses findings regarding differences in how the groups feel legislation implementation impacts them personally.

7.4.1 Surface-level transformation

The most dominant theme emerging from discussions regarding the implementation of equality legislation in organisations was that of mere ‘surface-level transformation’. Despite sophisticated legislation which is continuously being amended (Higher Education Laws Amendment Act No 26 2010; Skills Development Amendment Act No 26 2011; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013), many organisations find ways to circumvent the intention of this legislation and as a result maintain the status quo of unequal power dynamics (Acker 2006). Non-compliance with equality legislation holds real consequences for large private sector organisations. The data reveals that various underhanded strategies are occasionally implemented in order to stay true to the letter of the law, but without bringing about any real change. The dynamic nature of the BEE scorecard attempts to address empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups at various levels of organisation. These include ownership, management, employment equity, skills development, procurement, business development and socio-economic development (BEE Navigator 2015). It is however still possible to circumvent the intention of the law, resulting in tangible gains for a select few at the

expense of the potential uplift of the many. The following response is an example of how compliance might be obtained in the absence of real transformation resulting from the implementation of equality legislation:

“So the first question there is who you think benefits the most from Black economic empowerment?”

Well, look, I think there are two sides to this. One is about getting contracts. For example, look at ‘Pops Prints’, they have got this company's entire national contract for stationery. I can tell you now, without a shadow of doubt, that I pay more per pen from them on my budget than I can get it at my local stationery supplier. So point number one, is who gains there – the BEE company... In the end this company was bloody useless. They were absolutely useless. So I escalated it to procurement and I said this is not the first occasion that we have been dropped by a BEE company who was unable to deliver. So when we complain to them because they are not delivering they would actually say to us that they don't hold any stock, that they are only the middleman. They would tell us that they don't even have a warehouse. They would source it from other companies and then supply it to us. They don't even have stock. So they don't own anything and they don't make anything, they just source what we want.” – Abbey, FW41

The list of possible concerns for uplift resulting from situations mentioned by this participant is endless. However, within the context of organisational leadership, such practises have very specific consequences for the BEE sub-dimensions of ownership and management. In this instance, one cannot speak to Black ownership of the supplier, as data on this was not provided. Management, however, is arguably a tremendous lost opportunity for uplift. From the response, it is evident that the supplier organisation is small, does not manufacture products or hold large inventories. They seem to essentially only act as intermediary. This eliminates the need for a management structure as there are not many employees to manage. Resultantly, with few to no followers, strategic organisational leadership also becomes unnecessary.

The responsibility for these missed opportunities to create situations where organisational leadership might be required does only rest with organisations, like the supplier mentioned in the preceding quote. Some responsibility should also be accepted by organisations that do business with them. The data seem to indicate that organisations tend to adopt a ‘tick-box-exercise’ approach to managing their BEE compliance. That is to say that if procurement from a majority Black-owned businesses provides the purchasing company with a sufficient score towards their compliance rating, then the equity practises

of the supplying company becomes secondary or even trivial. Clearly, if an organisation is truly committed to transformation and social justice – at least as far as their leadership practises are concerned – then the South African private sector does not allow one to be concerned only with your own leadership, but also the leadership of those you engage in business with. If organisations in the South African private sector do not look beyond their own leadership structures, they run the risk of simply perpetuating the inequalities of the past. Many of the participants realise this need for a more macro-view of BEE that extends beyond the limits of a single organisation. They articulate this awareness by asking themselves – and others – what real social change results from their actions:

“We don’t spend enough time making sure that people understand what is required – we pay lip service to it I think. And that’s where it falls down, because our HR is more about filling in blocks than actually saying ‘what are you doing?’” – Tercia, FC35

“...if a Black male is in a management role and he got it through BBBEE; so now that company has the numbers but he must know that he will not go beyond that even if he performs. And this is the point of contention on the current legislation. Are we really redistributing power, etc? No, not so much because you put people in superficial positions.” – Zanele, FB29

Despite efforts from government to maintain equality legislation which is sophisticated and robust, attempts to maintain the status quo still persist at organisational level. Often, these attempts to perpetuate organisational inequality – especially at leadership levels – are defended and rationalised under the guise of concern for business outcomes. This was mentioned earlier in this chapter and was illustrated with the responses from the White women who felt that meticulous care must be given in appointing people of colour into leadership roles, so as to not do harm to the organisation or to the appointee (Trow 1999; Durrheima et al. 2005).

A more sceptical view of these responses, however, might be to question the motives behind what the participants are saying. Also, what the participants are saying could be both informed by- and constructing a social discourse regarding organisational leadership and equality policy (Bresnen 1995; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003). One might argue that the participants have an inherently negative view of interventionist policy and will thus engage in the constant construction and reconstruction of discourse which discredits it. One could make the argument that those who stand to benefit from interventionist policy view it negatively due to an expectation of accompanying social stigma – which is

discussed in more detail in section 8.3.1. Concurrently, those who do not stand to benefit from interventionist policy could perceive this as a threat to their position of privilege. However, the nature in which an individual's multiple identities intersect will have a material impact on how equality policy in South Africa influences their lived experiences. Equality policy in South Africa is multi-faceted and uses various bases of identity, such as race, gender and disability, to guide intervention implementation. South African private sector organisations could thus be considered sight of intersectional identity salience (Atewologun 2014), in that responses to the implementation of national equality policy offers an opportunity to explore how multiple identities mutually constitute, reinforce and naturalise each other (Shields 2008).

From this it seems that even 20 years after the fall of the Apartheid, its legacy still has a very real impact on modern day private sector organisations in South Africa and manifests itself in pseudo-scientific rationalist beliefs relating to measurable individual, group and organisational outcomes.

7.4.2 The legacy of Apartheid within private sector organisations

Views on how leadership talent should be nurtured and developed are very much racialised. This was observed during general discussions regarding Affirmative Action and BEE, but more specifically the implementation of equality legislation in organisations. This is problematic for more than just inherently discriminatory reasons. This is also problematic because it informs views and approaches to giving access to leadership opportunities. This can be seen in the radically contrasting opinions between responses from White participants and responses from people of colour. Sentiments among the White women were generally of the following tone:

“I think we should rather allow a slower progress but more focused on getting people with the right skills and the right emotional maturity to put into roles because, in the long run, you don't do people any favours by promoting them too quickly; you're setting them up for failure. I think the focus is too much on achieving the target [quota] and the targets [i.e. quotas] are set on short-term goals instead of focusing on sustainability and really building people up and developing them over time.” – Jacoba, WF54

Relative to the public sector, transformation in the South African private sector has been relatively slow (Scott et al. 1998; Pons-Vignon & Anseeuw 2009; Sing 2011;

Statistics South Africa 2012b; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Yet, a social discourse, presented as a concern for organisational outcomes and individual well-being and relies heavily on arguments based on ‘merit’, dominates the conversation on equality in the post-Apartheid workplace (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Augoustinos et al. 2005). Responses such as Jacoba’s, where inherently discriminatory views presented as a concern for the wellbeing of the organisation, were observed frequently among the White women. In discussions pertaining to the experiences of equity legislation implementation in organisations, it became apparent that the beliefs held by White women about people of colour’s suitability for strategic leadership roles are very much entrenched in Apartheid-era conceptualisations of what constitutes an acceptable leader. These inherently discriminatory views of people of colour can be identified by considering the major critiques of Affirmative Action highlighted by Noon (2010).

Firstly, the reference to “*targets*” as the single criterion for achieving equity seems to indicate that there is a pervading belief among the White women that a quota system is the only available mechanism to implement positive discrimination. Of course, quota systems for organisational leadership structures do exist and some governments have opted to enforce these policies for publicly trading companies (Seierstad & Opsahl 2011; Ahern & Dittmar 2012; Sweigart 2012); however, positive discrimination encompasses more than simply enforcing quotas (Noon 2010; Malleson 2013). Nevertheless, when discussing equity legislation implementation this concern for underqualified persons receiving preferential treatment dominates White participant concerns. This is also quite interesting to observe given that the dynamic BEE scoring system does not heavily rely on quotas, but rather holistic and further reaching socio-economic development. In essence, the most extreme form of positive discrimination, i.e. quota systems which are not rigidly enforced in the South African private sector, are used as a basis for critiques. Furthermore, mention of “*getting people with the right skills*” implies that equity appointments occur in a vacuum – removed from considerations for skill or expertise. This is especially interesting as no national-level regulation or policy, in the form of the BBBEE Act or the EE Act, dictates that socio-economic factors like race or gender should be the primary determinant for making employment decisions. The data therefore highlights how these concerns are representative of racist indoctrination, rather than a legitimate concern for organisational

outcomes. It is therefore expected that people of colour did not share this opinion and seem to value transformation among strategic levels of organisational leadership more than what was observed for the White participants:

“You need to start filling positions for potential. I've seen, and we've had lots of discussions with my staffing counterpart on this, many times the best guy for the job may be the White guy. Why – because he's had the exposure and he's got the qualifications and the experience. He's had the opportunity to be in leadership roles. Especially if you are looking at your higher-level leadership positions. So the White male might overall be the strongest candidate. Because he has had better opportunities. He's been in the positions and he's built up that CV. I hate what often does happen – where Black people are appointed just because they are Black and then they mess up. And then the reaction is that everyone expected them to mess up because they weren't the best candidates for the job. I really think we need to do more. We are not doing enough to develop and to grow the skills from the bottom up.” – Sarah, FC45

“The way you do that is by promoting Black people. Even where, in my case, I have done it faster than the candidate genuinely deserves.

OK, and how did that pan out for you?

You know, it's a mixed bag, because their development requirements and needs are being fulfilled, but for me, I promote by recognising the need to develop the individual. So you invest in the long-term development of the individual. And you need to be careful, right, because you don't want to undermine the individual and say ‘look you are not the complete picture but I'm promoting you’. So say ‘look, we will walk this journey together’ in a very gentle way, because I am interested in your long term longevity as a leader.” – Donald, MC43

The preceding responses are heavily loaded with racist assumptions. The most overt is the expectation of incompetence. It is true that South Africa's history resulted in certain privileges enjoyed by White people, but the data seem to suggest dichotomous reasoning in the sense that White people are assumed to be competent while people of colour are not. This resonates with the findings on invisible organisational structures discussed earlier in this chapter. Possible conflict due to these highly racialised views on access to leadership opportunities is even further complicated by the seeming consistent need or perception among participants who are people of colour to ‘justify or prove’ their suitability for leadership roles. On the one hand you have ‘White gatekeepers’ as barriers to accessing organisational leadership roles, but at the same time people of colour also tend to self-limit their career prospects as is evident from the following responses:

“I do think I overcompensate a lot based on my race. That is a fact, I know this. I feel that the glass ceiling is a reality. I felt like this since articles. For me to actually demonstrate that I am at par with a St. Michael's¹⁷ or a St. John's¹⁸ candidate I have to put in extra effort. Where other people can rely on the credibility of their qualifications I do believe, and this is my philosophy, that I have to demonstrate my ability.” – Sizingce, FB30

“Have you ever had any explicit challenge of your expertise because of the fact that you may have been an EE appointment?”

“I’ve got a friend who was a candidate attorney and she worked a year as an associate. There were a bunch of partners from three of this company’s law firms and they decide to open their own Black company together. She’s Black and she’s female and she was offered to go into partnership with them. She’s now a partner of a really good Black law firm. Although this empowered my friend who’s at this law firm, she’s got a glass ceiling. My friend, another Black female, at another company is about to become a partner and, beyond that, there is so much more that she can do, even financially she earns more. I think my friend at this other company made a better decision because BEE is also going to work well for her. She’ll get to become a partner at a very well-known firm as opposed to becoming a partner at some obscure firm. No matter how high she goes in there, she can, at any time, go and open up her own firm. I’m sorry to say but we need those stamps from White people.” – Zanele, FB29

“I’ve been undermined on the basis of my race to say that I’ve come from a poor background and that I’m not here on merit. The fact that I’ve got Stellenbosch University¹⁹ on my CV helped me a lot because, when I first graduated from Fort Hare²⁰, I wasn’t taken as seriously as I was once I had Stellenbosch on my name and then all of a sudden I was viewed in a different light so I must know what I’m doing, coming from Stellenbosch.” – Wilfred, MB26

This highly racialised organisational context is rife with tension, as one would expect. The data reveals that although these tensions are a reality in most of the organisations participants were sampled from, White women experienced the least animosity or racial tension, while both men- and women of colour seemed to experience extreme levels of stereotyping and racial tension as an indirect result of the implementation of equality legislation in organisations. White women mentioned limited resistance against

¹⁷ St Michael’s School for Girls is a 140-year-old independent, historically White, Anglican School in Bloemfontein, South Africa (St Michael’s School for Girls 2015).

¹⁸ St John’s College is a 115-year-old Anglican, historically White, private school for boys in Johannesburg, South Africa (St John’s College 2013).

¹⁹ Historically a White Afrikaans university in South Africa.

²⁰ Historically a Black university in South Africa.

their appointment into leadership roles and also candidly discussed some of the benefits they feel they've received as a result of the implementation of equity legislation:

"Do you feel there is any perception that you could have taken an opportunity away from a more suitable candidate? Specifically maybe from a man or person of colour since you are White..."

No, they might have a few rumblings about it, but no one can do what I do and they know it. They are a bit scared to take this job." – Maxine, FW42

"I think in my life I got positions that I wouldn't have gotten if I was a White male. So definitely in my time there was discriminated against me. Where a position had to be filled by either a woman or someone of colour. Financially I benefitted. At Anglo I got additional share options because I was a woman. So financially they looked after me better." – Lucy, FW42

The men- and women of colour did not however share similar experiences to their White counterparts:

"There are a lot of White men that when a leader is a non-White person you can always see the affirmative action question mark hovering above their heads. There is this perception very often that the person only got the job because they are Black or female and not because they deserved it." – Sarah, FC45

"Does BEE appointments or access based on BEE status impact on relationships?"

Yes there definitely is. For example, KPMG had a problem with the ownership dimension on the BEE scorecard. So in order to address this ownership issue, the company created a trust, which is a majority shareholder in the organisation. This trust then issued shares to all Black employees, which in turn made the company majority Black-owned. Now the problem with this is that with shares one can earn an income so people get dividends and they can also trade shares. Then you get White employees asking but hey you didn't do anything for that dividend why should you benefit from it and I cannot. So there is a lot of resentment and negative talk amongst the White staff. They would say you are getting these benefits based on only the colour of your skin, how is that not discrimination." – Sizingce, FB30

And on the issue of a perception that BEE implementation in organisations results in people of colour being awarded opportunities at the expense of possibly better suited White candidates, the people of colour typically responded as follows:

"I think there would be some people who would feel that they were sidelined.

Is it ever communicated to you in a formal, informal or subtle way?"

Informally, yes. One of my partners did come to me and say he understands why I got the position but that he would have loved to and was very

disappointed that he didn't get the position that I got. It's not something I hear often." – Deepak, MI56

These negative experiences among the people of colour leads one to expect a certain opinion of equality legislation held by these groups of participants. Indeed, strongly held aversions against interventionist policy were observed among the men- and women of colour.

7.4.3 An aversion to and a desire for interventionist policy implementation

Across the board there was mention of the positive impact national policy implementation has had in organisations – either in the participants' own careers or in the careers of peers and followers. Interestingly, however, while mention of positive change was found in all three groups of participants, the White women were the only group who highlighted a concern over the possibility that implementation of equity policies might jeopardise organisational outcomes such as productivity and profitability.

For the majority of men- and women of colour, however, responses regarding receiving any preferential treatment as a result of equality legislation were characterised by an undertone of disdain and contempt. An example of this negative perception can be seen in the following comment from an Indian man:

"I'm not looking for a free ride. My appointments or whatever I achieve must be given on the basis that I can deliver not on my colour." – Tash, MI46

Reference to "*a free ride*" suggests a pervading opinion that interventionist policy implementation results in negative evaluations of those benefitting from such policies. Specifically, these perceptions of interventionist policy implementation suggest an acute concern for stigmatisation. In acknowledging the possibility of resulting social stigma, the data suggest that while interventionist policy aims to alleviate material inequality, it inadvertently contributes to understandings which reinforce stereotypical conceptualisations of gender and race within organisational leadership (Goffman 1968; Lenhardt 2014). Participant perceptions of interventionist policy are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Another interesting finding within the theme of aversion to interventionist policy is the notion that organisations 'use' people of colour when they make equity appointments. This is ironic considering the intent of equity legislation. Legislation like BEE is intended

to uplift and empower previously disadvantaged groups (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013), however the data seem to suggest that people of colour are of the opinion that when equity legislation is implemented in organisations, they are considered as nothing more than a vehicle for gaining compliance (Coates 2011). This aversion demonstrates the paradox created by interventionist equality policy: underrepresented people of colour in leadership roles already experience feelings of inadequacy and the need to ‘prove’ their worth relative to their White peers, and when interventionist policy is then implemented it compounds these perceptions of self-worth by affording pseudo-legitimacy to perceptions of ill suitability for leadership roles. The following two responses highlight this effect and the resulting aversion this effect creates:

“How would you feel about being a BEE appointment?”

I wouldn't be happy. It would feel like I'm not contributing; like I'm being used; like they're using me because they want to mislead other people. I want to know that I deserve to be there.” – Khomotso, FB35

“It's really difficult, in practise, to get that going. The last thing anyone wants is to be a token appointment. As a leader, you have to be considerate when you make appointments. I think I'm very strong in that I make sure that competence is the first thing that I would look at or if there is at least trainability to be competent in the role. Often, we put people on probation. Whilst I do feel it's important to have diverse representation; and when I say diverse representation, it means gender, race and disabilities, simply because there's more richness in diversity, however, in ensuring that, I'm not a huge believer in token appointments.” – Keshika, FI34

In some participants, this aversion runs so deep that they reject the option of being considered into a role that has been allocated, even while indicating an understanding of how vastly underrepresented people of colour are in strategic leadership roles and also while being fully aware that these imbalances are the result of structural discrimination. Responses from people of colour represent a view that is characterised by the fundamental belief that true equality cannot be achieved by addressing discrimination with more discrimination – even if the latter is fairly implemented positive discrimination. This absolute unwillingness to engage in positive discrimination despite its corrective intent can be seen in the response from a young aspiring leader:

“Are you aware of any appointment during your career that may have been the result of needing to address an equity target?”

No, not that I'm aware of.

And how would you feel if you were to be an equity appointment?

I would feel a bit uncomfortable with that actually.

Why?

I wouldn't want to get a position or anything based on anything else than my work. I would feel much more comfortable with that.

So say you and a White candidate perform on the same level, but you get the job because you fall within a designated demographic category, would that be ok?

No, I would still be uncomfortable with that. I would rather prefer that if it is equal, there needs to be some kind of resolve to it and not base the decision on race. I would definitely not like that.” – Geoff, MC32

Data on the apparent aversion towards interventionist policy also suggest an assumption among people of colour that interventionist policy is inherently inequitable itself. Geoff's reference to his preference for appointment decisions to be “*equal*” might also indicate a certain moral objection with practises related to interventionist policy. One could argue here that those who have experienced injustice might be more sensitive to the possibility of injustice and perceive interventionist policies to be unjust towards White people. Possibly informing these perceptions of injustice against White people among people of colour might include White peers' expression of dissatisfaction and perceived unfairness regarding positive discrimination initiatives, as seen in responses such as the following:

“I think sometimes the targets they set are not realistic and then people are elected into positions to meet the targets and not necessarily because they have the required competence or maturity to fulfil that role. The meeting of the targets becomes the primary focus.” – Jacoba, FW54

“...He earns about R10 000 [£500] more than I do and he does a fraction of what I do. It is frustrating because I do the salaries and I see what everyone earns. It's really not about the fact that he is Black. It's about someone just coming in and earning more than I do and then not adding the same value. It's frustrating in that sense but he is not a threat to me.” – Yvonne, FW26

Indeed, Noon (2010) asserts that one major criticism against positive discrimination is the notion that one form of discrimination cannot be corrected by another form of discrimination. This view of inequality in organisations creates a false dichotomy between ‘forms of discrimination’ and petition for the complete abandonment of a consideration for social- or demographic factors in making employment and promotion decisions. However,

the inability to recognise and acknowledge the unique challenges that have led to the severe underrepresentation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership roles inadvertently perpetuates and reproduces inequalities. A key factor in these responses is not only the aversion or acceptance of interventionist equality policy on the part of the disadvantaged, but also the pleas of the advantaged. White people's perceived persecution in the process of implementing positive discrimination seems to have a significant influence on people of colour developing an aversion to the idea of benefitting from interventionist policy. This is illustrated by the following response from a human resource executive at a multi-national technology company:

“I don't think that legislation is the answer because I think it perpetuates that kind of thinking in people that you are there only because you are Black. Besides the fact that someone has actually said it, I think other people always have that. It's silly things. Recently we went through a bit of retrenchments and it was so interesting for me to observe the difference because it was across skills levels. There were some low level, back office, support centre demographic and they were all Black and then there were top IT professionals who were White males, incidentally. And through the consultations you could see the sense of entitlement that the one group had around what they were pushing for and if you just realistically look at what the severance they were getting relative to the others because of the income differentials that are so substantial and their lengths of service they would have transitioned from. They were walking away with truckloads of money and they were still pushing for as much as they could. Often, when they would come and speak to me about other issues, they would raise that thing as a negotiating tool; that they are White males that are going to have to go out into the job market and how challenging it's going to be. If we just took that legislation out of the way then maybe that will make them feel better because they will still have opportunities...” – Charlotte, FC33

It is not surprising that, given the views of some of the privileged on perceive persecution, several White women expressed concern that White women specifically are not being sufficiently included in organisational equality initiatives.

These contrasting views on equality legislation implementation are quite ironic. It would seem that those who perceive to benefit, reject these benefits and those who perceive not to have these benefits, desire them. Furthermore, the data suggest that the implementation of interventionist policies aimed at correcting the injustices of the past in fact have several negative consequences which should not be overlooked. Indeed, these potential negative consequences must be considered in the ongoing debate on how to

adequately address equality issues in South African workspaces. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter on the socio-historical and socio-legal context.

7.5 Conclusion: Organisational challenges, constraints and enablers experienced by women and people of colour in accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector

From the findings in this case study, in terms of organisational challenges, what are of particular concern are the seemingly hyper-gendered views of domestic responsibilities. Even attempts from organisations to alleviate the pressures experienced by working mothers seem to compound and perpetuate these gendered notions. As a result, women who choose to pursue careers in organisational leadership are at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers who are men. In fact, from the data it would seem as if organisations are more involved in managing domestic responsibilities than male partners.

Within the theme of leadership development, several interesting findings were identified. Firstly, current practises in organisational leadership development appear to be highly gendered and racialised. This was seen in the polarised manner in which the three intersectional groups experienced formal- as opposed to informal development opportunities. Furthermore, the three groups also experienced significantly different interactions with leadership mentors. Finally, the data point towards an urgent need to reconsider the way in which leadership development is conceptualised. Macro-contextual, extra-organisational factors seem to have a more significant impact on organisational leadership development than classical theories on leadership development currently address.

Finally, views on the role-, value- and impact of the implementation of equality legislation in organisations were highly divergent. Responses between White respondents and the people of colour read like an account of a tug-of-war match – each group wanting what the other has. South African private sector organisations therefore prove to be a highly complex and pressurised environment for underrepresented individuals in leadership positions. The next chapter engages with the macro-social context through an analysis of participant experiences and perceptions from a historical and legal perspective.

Chapter 8: Perspectives and experiences of the socio-historical and socio-legal context of organisational leadership in South Africa

8.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analysis of the data within a specific societal context in order to answer the following research question:

How do historical- and legislative factors influence the representation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions in private sector organisations in South Africa?

The literature reveals that South Africa offers a unique setting in which to conduct sociological research. The oppressive Apartheid government, which ruled South Africa from 1948 to 1994, institutionalised racial discrimination and segregated every facet of society from residential to public service delivery to employment. This segregation facilitated the maintenance of an extreme imbalance of power among the races which was skewed towards the White minority population. Subsequent legislative structures have been established in an attempt to correct social inequalities and in so doing alleviate the severe impact of Apartheid years after its fall. Findings resulting from an engagement with macro-social structures within the setting of this case study are discussed separately within the socio-historical context and the socio-legal context in this chapter.

8.2 The socio-historical context

In this section, the ‘socio-historical context’ refers to the societal environment during a specific period in South Africa’s history, characterised by widespread social injustice and inequalities, namely Apartheid. In a post-Apartheid South Africa, social change is an ongoing process of reparation, reconciliation and transformation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998). Compounding the effects of institutional racism was an institutionalised patriarchy. Public policy was based on, but also mutually reinforced, stark societal gender roles. Under the Apartheid regime, both gender and race defined one’s predetermined place in society – everything from where you lived, to where you went to school, to where you worked. Chapter 4 discusses the context of this research and presents several national-level statistics. These statistics on employment, living conditions and access to opportunities for advancement, such as education, indicate not only that women

and people of colour experience significant social disadvantage when compared to White men, but also that gender and race has a compounding impact on lived experiences.

More than two decades after the fall of Apartheid, national statistics, the literature on gender, race and leadership, as well as data from this study highlight the enduring legacy of Apartheid. Therefore, in order to appropriately contextualise the study and its findings, an analysis was carried out exploring the concepts of historical disadvantage, racialised and gendered roles in society, as well as the legacy of the history of Apartheid.

8.2.1 Historically disadvantaged societal roles

Although race-based historical disadvantage is the most apparent in contemporary South Africa, the data along with archival and historical material present South Africa as a highly patriarchal society as well. This section discusses the analysis of participant responses from both a racial- and gender disadvantage perspective.

8.2.1.1 The societal role of women in South African society

Through an analysis at an organisational level, it also became apparent that there are highly salient gender roles in South African society. For some women, these gender roles seem to have become internalised in the way they perceive their own inherent skill-sets, values and motivations in life. This internalisation of societal gender roles is evident from typical responses from the women, such as the following:

“Do you think your gender influences the way you lead?”

Yes, but I've got this perception that it influences the way that you're perceived to lead more. If you're a male and you're not as results driven and less people driven that's alright. If you're a female it's almost expected for you not to be like that. The team expects a female not to be as driven. If we can generalise – women are often more nurturing than men and men are often a lot more strategic but not that nurturing. I think that it's sort of acceptable [for men] to be mean and get what the company wants and for a woman it's often not. That's how I see it. I do have children and I work with children on a voluntary basis. So I am nurturing but that's not instinctive when it comes to the work environment and in a leadership position.” – Lucy, FW42

Clearly, this participant is of the opinion that women are inherently more nurturing than men and that this inherent trait should reflect in the way women address their leadership roles. This statement is neither unique nor new and resonates with the body of knowledge on ‘women in leadership’ or what is known as ‘feminine styles of leadership’

(Sharma 1990; Loden 1985; Rosener 1990). However, the mere notion of a unique and inherent ‘feminine style’ of leadership has received much critique (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Vecchio 2002; Eagly 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2007) – in no small part for the underlying assumption that gender identity dictates leader behaviour. It is said that, as opposed to claims made by proponents of ‘feminine leadership’, leadership behaviour that appears to be in line with incumbents’ gender roles is the result of environmental constraints and negotiating leader-follower relationships, rather than the product of inherent traits. However, as illustrated by the response from Lucy, women observe their own behaviours and seem to assume an inherent disposition towards stereotypically ‘feminine’ behaviour, as opposed to attributing ‘feminine’ behaviours to contextual influences. There were only a select few women participants who seemed to acknowledge a certain level of environmental influence on leader behaviour. This acknowledgement is reflected in how these women spoke of their experiences growing up:

“I think women are socialised to be nurturing and part of nurturing is listening. Boys are taught to bark across the sports fields or when they play games in the garden. If you look at gender studies, you will see how mothers raise daughters and how they raise sons, in the context of how much conversation they have, even with preverbal influence, and they find that mothers talk to their girl babies more than they talk to boys.” – Lerato, FB43

This response from Lerato, who is a Black woman, highlights that it is the socialisation of boys and girls which makes us different as men and women, rather than inherent gender differences. Likewise, literature suggests that women in leadership adopt more nurturing styles of leadership, not because of an inherent predisposition towards a more nurturing style, but because of how women are perceived in society. Specifically, women are expected to be less task oriented and more person oriented (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998) and face social penalties like resistance from followers when they behave outside of these gendered norms of behaviour (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b).

“...when a man in a leadership role acts in an assertive way he is just perceived as being a strong assertive leader. But when a woman does the same thing, in the same role, she is perceived as being the B-word. Have you ever experienced that?”

Yes, I do think so. You are right. An example that comes to mind is a lady that came over from the banking industry to us. Now this lady is exactly the same in terms of her leadership style as one of my male colleagues. I promise you everyone was calling her a bitch. It was the talk everywhere. Nobody wanted to hang out with her. Nobody wants to talk to her. People could not stand her. So I think you are right. Absolutely.

But at the end of the day she did exactly the same as her male counterpart?

She did exactly the same, yes! And she has since, left us.” – Abbey, FW41

Clearly, this response from Abbey, who is a White woman in a senior leadership role, indicates how women in leadership face severe penalties for acting outside of their expected gender role. Furthermore, Lerato’s ‘observer-type response’ on the socialisation of boys and girls in South African society is supported by the following more personal account of growing up as a White girl during the Apartheid regime:

“If you think about my upbringing – my mom had a Standard 8²¹ only. She was the eldest of five kids. She desperately wanted to go study further. Her dad said that women need to iron and cook; there are four siblings and your mom is struggling so you need to stop going to school and you need to start cooking and ironing for your siblings. So that is where she came from. That's why she married a CA. So that she had someone to look after her. She admired my dad's intellectual capacity and what he has achieved. I was six when my mom told me that we weren't making a lot of money and you have three siblings that need our help. She told me that unless I was first in my class I wouldn't go study one day. She said I would want to study rather than to have babies and cook. I came with a very strong bias. One, I had to do this thing myself, and two, not my mom or my dad ever said to me ‘You're a woman, focus on being pretty and leave the maths for the boys’. They treated me as if I was a boy, or rather as if I didn't have a sex. They didn't discriminate.” – Lucy, FW42

Accounts from women of their experiences growing up in South Africa highlight that it is not only the socialisation of girls which results in problematic gender roles in their adult lives. Gender roles are co-constructed and the way in which boys *and* girls are socialised in South African society contributes to the barriers women face in accessing and practising leadership (Collinson & Hearn 1996; Mavin & Grandy 2016a; Mavin & Grandy 2016b). The all-encompassing nature of these societal gender roles are crystallised in the following two responses:

²¹ The public schooling system under Apartheid were divided into two components, namely two sub-classes (also referred to as Sub A and Sub B) and 10 ‘Standards’, together making up 12 years of primary and secondary schooling. In order to gain access to tertiary education, learners were required to successfully complete all schooling up to ‘Standard 10’ (Watts 1970).

“Of course I support equality, but I also feel that men and women have different roles. For example, if me and my wife are in bed at night and we hear something outside, who will go and look? Of course it will be me because I am the man.” – Johannes, MB29

“...the senior partner got very ill and we had to board him and I was given the position. The second person there was a male, ex-banking background. We’d walk into a customer, to the head office, etc. and he wouldn’t introduce me by my full title but simply by my first name and he would act ‘the big guy’. I sort of watched that for a while. I made sure I had my card there, I’d talk to them and, if there was a decision to be made, I’d step in. In some ways there was resistance to me being a female...” – Karen, FW63

Johannes did not offer any reflections as to how his view on gender might extend outside the home environment and into a working environment. However, it was clear that his example was intended to lend legitimacy, by way of pseudo-rationalism, to his position on gender roles in society in that this response was offered regarding his opinion on the underrepresentation of women in strategic leadership roles. Furthermore, the uncomfortable and rather demeaning experience explained by Karen suggests an expectation that women are less suitable for senior leadership roles (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998). This opinion, although clearly still popular among men in South Africa, has been shown to be an inappropriate assumption and shown that women in leadership – arguably as a result of this gendered expectation – can be as assertive, task oriented and ruthless as men (Loden 1985; Lai & Yin 1997; Rudman & Glick 1999; Twenge 2001; Sczesny 2003; Carli & Eagly 2007; Ely & Rhode 2010; Livingston et al. 2012). However, in doing so women face potential resistance and hostility (Livingston et al. 2012; Powell 2012; Bell & Sinclair 2016). Furthermore, when considering Karen’s experience with her male colleague in the context of Lucy’s account of how she was raised in a highly gendered environment, along with how Johannes’s perspective on gender reflects strong stereotypical views on gender among young South Africans, it serves as support for Ashcraft’s (2013) conceptualisation of the ‘Glass Slipper’ phenomenon. These findings support the notion that occupations – and in this case occupations which involve senior leadership roles – are organised around embodied social identities such as gender.

Within the context of co-constructed societal gender roles, an effort to establish equitable representation of men and women among the top echelons of organisational leadership seems futile if the reproduction of gender roles is allowed to continue. One

might argue that while young South African men still feel that “*men and women have different roles*”, as indicated by Johannes, research results showing that men and women do not have inherently different traits, styles and preferences to leadership will not change the status quo. Transformation, to the extent to which it is necessary in the South African private sector, requires not only what it means to be a woman in South Africa to change, but what it means to be a man in South Africa will have to change as well. The co-construction of gender in society does not allow for the existence of femininity without masculinity, and therefore change in the one category requires change in the other. If the notion of societal gender roles is not challenged in its entirety, social transformation would arguably remain stagnant at a position where women would always require some form of support system in order to gain access to- and maintain the same organisational leadership roles as their male counterparts. This is illustrated by the following response from a White woman in a senior leadership role with a multi-national organisation:

“Then people can reach success more on their own. I mean men and women are different. You have things that you have to take care of at home. Now I suppose the argument has been for long that men can take up more of the responsibility at home, however, for the next couple of generations that won't necessarily happen. So a woman can only make it to the top if these support systems are in place.” – Magda, FW49

Within the historical context of South Africa and the framework of the body of knowledge on societal gender roles, together with the responses from both male and female participants, in addition to those opinions gauged from third parties not included in the sample, but discussed by participants, it is clear that women in South African society are still perceived as being less task oriented, naturally predisposed to providing care and inevitably dependent on some form of support structure in order to compete professionally with men (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998). Arguably, this creates a highly complex environment, which women who wish to access and practise organisational leadership must navigate.

In general, responses seem to reflect a belief among participants that a lack of access to and ability to practise leadership is primarily a product of one's own efforts, motivation and work ethic. Few participants were able to both identify and appreciate the magnitude and impact of the historical context within which women in South Africa must fulfil their leadership roles in South African organisations. The following two key responses from

women of colour highlight an awareness of the difficulty involved in attempting to reconcile being a woman in South Africa with being a leader in a South African organisation:

“I think there are also social things that come into play. As a mother, for instance, I’m already working excessive hours and I’m having to reconcile with my own need to want to get home before my child gets to bed. I think this is not the same kind of thing that my husband wrestles with. He is in exactly the same kind of position as me but it’s never consideration. If he has to go on a business trip its fine and I just don’t think that I enjoy the same kinds of benefits.” – Charlotte, FC33

“...I’m talking about a boardroom situation. As a woman, I’ve had to adopt certain behaviours, particularly voice. People tend to talk over women. So, in a boardroom situation, to get people to listen, I find having a deep voice helps so I find myself lowering my voice.” – Lerato, FB43

Arguably, without personal inputs, the motivation to succeed and an appropriate work ethic, one might not be able to a leadership role. However, as this response from Lerato indicates, personal factors are not the only determinants of success in a leadership role within the South African context. What is expected socially from men is not the same as what is expected from women. This is because, as Thembeke who was quoted in section 7.2.2 explains, South Africa is “*still a patriarchal society*”, which implies that – generally speaking – men are expected to ‘take charge’ while women are expected to ‘take care’. This inference also implies that if these are the gendered expectations of men and women, societal structures will be built to support these expectations.

Due to the invisible nature of societal structure, such expectations often go unrecognised and unchallenged. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of the participants were unable to identify the patriarchal social structure like the aforementioned participants were able to. To many of the women, gender roles seemed to be a normal and perfectly acceptable part of life as a woman in South Africa. Interestingly, as discussed in section 7.2.2, many of the women also appeared to engage in what seemed to be a process of legitimising (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016) rigid societal gender roles and consequently defended them.

The ripple effects caused by these firmly held beliefs of women’s role in South African society are of course vast.

The data suggest that the most salient of these effects include resistance from followers when women act outside of expected gender roles, women being seen as “*new entrants*” to organisational leadership roles and unsupported assumptions about behavioural drivers of women in leadership roles. Resistance from followers resulting from perceived incongruence between gender role and leadership behaviour has already been discussed in this section and is supported by a large body of knowledge (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b).

Similarly, support for the claims that assumptions may exist regarding women’s motivational drivers can be seen in research on the so-called ‘career cul-de-sac’ (Barrett & Barrett 2011; Kokot 2014) and the ‘velvet ghetto’ (Ghiloni 1987; Taff 2003; Golombisky 2015). This Black woman’s account of her experiences in the boardroom illustrates the real impact these gendered assumptions have on women in leadership roles:

“I’ve come to expect that I will be the only female in a room and maybe one other. One comes to expect to live in a very male dominated world. As a Black person, you are also expected to have certain leanings in terms of the things that you are concerned about. I come from a private sector experience. There is an unspoken expectation that I should be interested in working in the public sector. The stereotype is that women are more interested in HR issues and the same type of stereotype is that Black people are interested in the same type of social issues. In fact, if you look at many of the top companies, you will find very few Black people or women CEOs or CFOs. You will find many women and Black people who are in corporate affairs, HR, marketing and communications. So, the expectation is that, if you’re sitting in a boardroom, that’s what you’re here to talk about and you’re not going to have a hard conversation about finances.” – Lerato, FB43

Career progression that ends in stagnation is observed at a higher frequency among women than it is observed among men (Hultin 2003; Ellwood et al. 2004; Noonan & Corcoran 2004; Smith 2012; Williams 2013). Arguably the most well known and most highly researched is the so-called ‘mommy track’, which examines the notion that women self-select into organisational roles with less responsibility and less demands due to pressures associated with gendered social expectations (Ellwood et al. 2004; Hill et al. 2004; Lommerud et al. 2015). One might also argue here that settings where members of an organisation’s senior leadership congregate, such as the boardroom, are sites of intersectional identity salience for women of colour (Atewologun 2014). Using the example

of Lerato, a Black woman, the bases of the stereotyped expectations of her professional motivations seem to be conflated (Bowleg 2008). Her reference to experiencing certain expectations from peers does not specify whether it is based on her race or on her gender, or both. These types of experiences pose a challenge for policy-makers as it muddies the water of the equality debate by adding a level of complexity.

Clearly, social constructs of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman in South Africa permeate all facets of the leadership experience. It is not simply a case of women having to balance expectations at home and expectations at work. They also experience higher complexity in establishing and maintaining relationships with followers, peers and superiors, as well as having to defend their motivation for filling a specific leadership role. The common denominator across all of these complex challenges is society's construction of dichotomous gender roles.

Compared to research on the glass ceiling phenomenon, research on women in leadership and stagnant careers is relatively limited. This presents a critical gap in the body of knowledge on how societal structure impacts the lives of women who choose to pursue a career geared towards organisational leadership. Deeper understanding of what societal structures steer women into these roles is vital for both national-level policy and organisation policy on employment equity.

A further impact of societal gender roles is that women report that they are perceived by some peers and superiors as being inherently ill-suited for the position. Two key responses illustrate this apparent perspective of women in leadership:

"...I have the negatives around that as well. Everybody can lose their temper but if I lose mine once in 2 years then I'm seen as emotional. You still have that a stereotype..." – Magda, FW49

"With White women having had a broader exposure, there should be a better representation of at least White women in senior positions and you still don't get enough of that even because with Black women, it's a consequence of the perceptions and the fact that we are new entrants in business." – Thembeke, FB55

The experiences of women of all races indicating consistent doubt in their suitability for leadership roles serves as support for the notion that the concept of leadership is fundamentally a masculine construct. Organisational leadership is considered by some to be a concept aligned with masculine social norms (Acker 1990; Collinson & Hearn 1994;

Eagly 2005; Alimo-Metcalf 2010). The concept of leadership is then presented as gender neutral, with organisational prosperity as its central concern (Weiner & Mahoney 1981; Turner & Muller 2005; Wang et al. 2005; Vinger & Cilliers 2006; Somech 2006; Jooste & Fourie 2009; Khan et al. 2012; Carter & Greer 2013). Arguably, the convergence of the gender-neutrally presented masculine concept, leadership, with a representation of a concern for organisational prosperity creates a powerful social mechanism for the exclusion of women in key decision-making processes and the skewing of power in favour of men.

Women discussing at length how they feel the need to adopt a more masculine approach to their own leadership provides additional support for the assertion that leadership is an inherently masculine construct. Several of the women expressed the need or the expectation to actively adjust their leadership style. This trend was not observed among the men:

“Do you think your race or your gender has an influence on how you lead?”

I struggle with that one because in my environment it is extremely male dominated so I don't have any female role models...I can tell you what I don't like in other female leaders, but I can't tell you if I'm behaving in the same way because I think I am far more...I mean one of my colleagues has actually told me that he gets irritated with me because I think like a man. But that's because of the environment in which I operate...” – Sharon, FC44

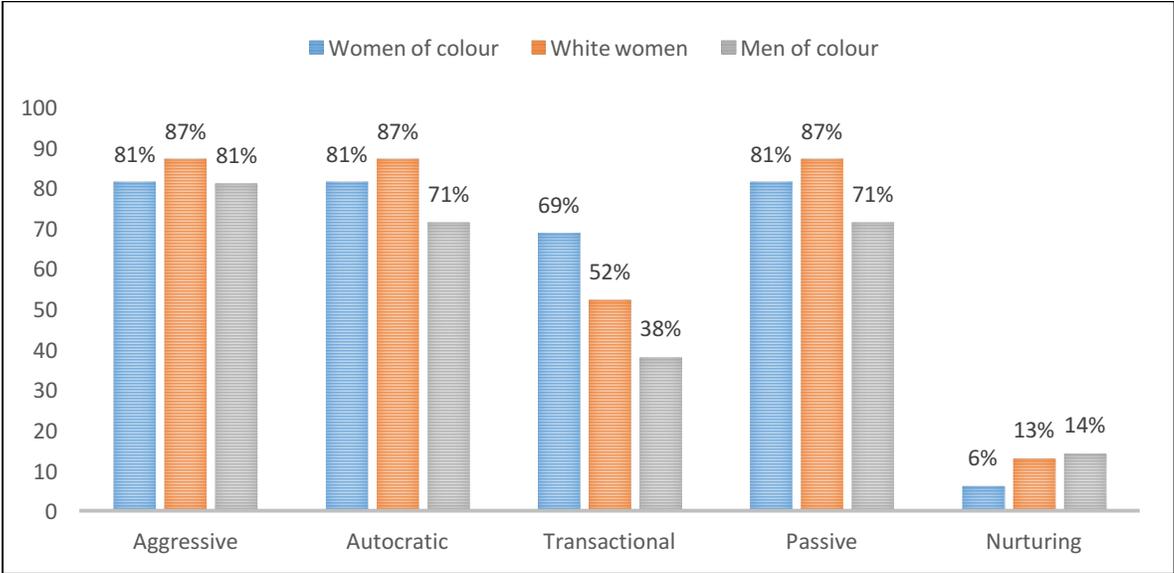
“Do you ever become aware of what it means to be a woman in South Africa?”

Absolutely. Where I am right now, it's a very White, male dominated environment. They do not have any other females except one other employee at my level. You do have to adapt your style, in a certain sense become tougher, more resilient...” – Madré, FW40

Interestingly, the participants did not seem to be able to identify that the pressure they experience to adapt to a more masculine style of leadership originates from how leadership is socially constructed. In all of the cases where responses indicated a need to adapt leadership style, it was done so in reference to a contextual requirement. The women consistently expressed concern that a leadership style that is not sufficiently masculine would not be appropriate to *their* context. The participants' immediate working environments being “*male dominated*” seemed to be perceived as a function of the industry or corporate sector, rather than the masculine ideology on which the concept of leadership is built.

Arguably, if it was truly the nature of the working environment that influenced required leadership styles – be it masculine or otherwise – then there would be a varying degree of the frequency in which these types of responses were received across sampled industries. Respondents were randomly selected in a convenience sample from 36 companies across 16 different industries. No trend in the frequency of women reporting the need to adapt their leadership to a more masculine style was observed across companies or industries. This leads to the deduction that pressure to adapt to a more masculine style of leadership, as experienced by women in leadership roles in South African private sector organisations, is a result of how the concept of leadership is constructed and not due to environmental pressures as cited by the women. In fact, when asked during the interview to respond to a list of gendered concepts often associated with leadership, all three groups including the men rejected the most overtly gendered concepts. The total sample composition according to industry is shown in Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5 and an excerpt of responses to gendered concepts is graphically depicted in Figure 8.1. This preference for a more androgynous style of leadership across all three intersectional groups lends further support to the assertion that pressure experienced by women to adopt masculine leadership styles is not due to their environment, but to how the concept of leadership is constructed.

Figure 8.1: Percentage rejection rate of gendered leadership concepts (excerpt)



Fulfilling a leadership role in a South African private sector organisation is a seemingly different experience for women compared to men. Responses from both men and women reveal that a consideration for the gender roles that abound in South African society produces rich contextual data on societal barriers and challenges underpinning inequitable representation in strategic organisational leadership roles in the private sector. However, what also needs to be considered is that the experiences of White women might not be similar to the experiences of women of colour. Consider the following response as illustration:

“I still find that, specifically Black women, still have it difficult because of cultural things as well. We have, for instance, a Black female engineer. She’s on a site and needs to supervise a pipe team. A lot of them are Black men and they don’t take the command from a Black woman. They’ll take it from a White woman or from a Black male. Culturally there are still that challenges.” – Magrieta, FW53

It is discussed in the existing literature and within the preceding analysis that women face challenges to their leadership not experienced by men in similar roles. Here, it is said that due to pervading gender roles in society, women in leadership experience resistance from followers when behaving in a manner that is perceived as being incongruent with the expected social norm. This means that behaviour, over which women leaders have some control, occasionally results in unfavourable responses from followers. However, from the preceding statements quoted from the interview with Magrieta, it seems that women of colour would face resistance from certain followers regardless of their behaviour. Women of colour in leadership roles thus experience challenges not experienced by White women in leadership, and also experience challenges they are not in a position to remedy through their own action.

Therefore, from a historical context perspective, an analysis of the data that also considers race could arguably illuminate knowledge about the experiences of underrepresented groups in leadership roles not otherwise visible. The following section will discuss findings in relation to the historical context of race in South Africa.

8.2.1.2 The societal role of people of colour in South African society

A review of the literature on South Africa’s history along with contemporary national statistics on employment, living conditions and access to education reveals that people of

colour still face widespread inequality over two decades after the fall of Apartheid. During an examination of the data on how participants experienced life in South Africa as people of colour, three dominant themes emerged from the data. These were: an expectation of inherent inferiority, inherent organisational risk in appointing a person of colour, assumptions about the motives of people of colour and also social adversity as a source of personal development. These themes are discussed in this section, using relevant quotes along with an examination of how these societal trends impact upon the experiences of underrepresented groups in organisational leadership in the South African private sector.

A quite poignant example illustrating how people of colour experience expectations from others in the workplace is the following response from a Black woman, who has held several senior roles in different organisations throughout her career:

“Have you experienced any kind of interaction that shows there might have been a perception that you took an opportunity away from someone else that could have been more qualified or worthy of the position?”

Yes. At one of my previous companies where I was a CEO, a number of the White colleagues had a mind-set that Blacks don't know anything, could have felt that way, including the CEO.” – Thembeke, FB55

This example highlights the constant barrage of doubt people of colour face when attempting to access leadership roles in organisations. This outright expectation of inferiority was not observed in the responses from White participants and therefore resonates with the literature on the historical division of labour in South African industry. Under the Apartheid regime, organisational roles that wielded decision-making power and were higher up the organisational hierarchy were reserved for White employees only (Hazlett 1988; Norval 1996; Clark & Worger 2011). The assumption underpinning this racialised division of labour was that people of colour were ill-equipped for these roles given their knowledge, skills and education levels (Cucuzza 1993). This, of course, was nothing more than propaganda perpetuated by the Apartheid government in an effort to hoard power.

What the data reveals is that racialised beliefs regarding people of colour's supposed inferiority for senior organisational roles have continued into post-Apartheid South Africa. Legal sanctions against the appointment of people of colour into senior organisational roles have since been lifted, however the beliefs which served to support them have remained. Furthermore, poor service delivery and a lack of economic freedom among communities

with a higher concentration of people of colour (Cucuzza 1993; Statistics South Africa 2014b) also feed expectations of inferiority and incompetence. The net result of these expectations is that people of colour are either denied senior strategic leadership roles or experience challenges, which are not experienced by their White counterparts, in establishing themselves in their leadership roles:

“One thing that has characterised my career at this company that I’ve noticed more than once is that every time I have moved to someone that doesn’t know me – especially if that person is White and Afrikaans – there is this initial struggle. I worked with one executive for example where I could see he really struggled with the fact that I was Coloured and the fact that I was a woman. He did not expect anything to come from me. He had almost written me off before we even started working together. But after a few months we got on like a house on fire. I made the conscious decision that I wasn’t going to fight him and that I was going to let my work speak for itself. I just did my job to the best of my ability and I literally saw his respect grow.” – Sarah, FC45

Having to “*prove oneself*” did not emerge as a dominant theme among White participants. The data indicated that for people of colour, and especially women of colour, competence needed to be proven in order to negate the pervading societal expectation of inherent inferiority among people of colour. Two arguments can be made here. First, this finding points toward the decontextualised nature of ‘merit’. Merit discourse proposes that the same performance is required from everyone in the same position, yet people of colour and especially women of colour reported feeling the need to prove their competence (Uhlmann & Cohen 2005; Malleson 2006). Second, one might also argue that these findings say something about how ‘merit’ is recognised at the intersection of gender and race identities. Both the men- and women of colour expressed difficulty in having to prove their ability to fulfil leadership roles. In this instance one could make two inferences: (a) the intersection of gender and race identities have a reinforcing and compounding effect on the how ‘merit’ is recognised for persons in leadership roles (Shields 2008; Ashcraft 2013) and (b) that racial identity could perhaps also result in experiences of the so called “*Teflon Effect*” (Simpson & Kumra 2016).

Closely related to the notion of inherent inferiority of women and people of colour, is that of ‘risk’ associated with appointment decisions that involves a person of colour. There seems to be a pervading assumption that the appointment of a person of colour holds

inherent risk for the organisation, whereas with the appointment of a White candidate that is not necessarily the case:

“I really think that with the other BEE appointments, all of them sit there because they either have potential or on merit [sic]. As they have always taken risks with White males we now sometimes take more risks with people of colour but generally have stepped up and have become very competent in what they do. I think it’s always initially an issue and then not later on.” – Magrieta, FW53

The preceding response challenges this underlying assumption that organisational risk only exists in the appointment of a person of colour but not for White applicants. It clearly highlights how there are inherent risks associated with any new appointment, however, with White candidates this risk seems to be ignored. Magrieta’s response highlights how South African society still to some extent prescribe to ‘Apartheid-esque’ classification and ranking of race groups, even in the absence of the legislative structure to support or reinforce this ranking.

Even more alarming is the evidence of self-limiting thought patterns among the people of colour discussed in section 7.4.2 of Chapter 7, which highlights an insidious aspect of beliefs regarding the inferiority of people of colour. It illustrates how these beliefs are not only adopted by White people, but that it is also internalised and perpetuated by people of colour themselves. The data seem to indicate that in a society where organisational structures still lend preference to White applicants for leadership roles, people of colour need to engage in strategies that confirm and perpetuate stereotypes about race in order to get ahead.

Furthermore, people of colour who are able to navigate the complex network of challenges involved in accessing and practising leadership in organisations also seem to have to defend their motives for entering senior leadership roles:

“...one component of the portfolio that I held was transformation. That did threaten a number of the guys there especially because of a very narrow understanding of what transformation is; transformation being seen as just the demographic side of things; that I was there to get other Blacks to move them out of their positions.” – Thembeke, FB55

Similar to the challenges women face in having to defend their agenda in the boardroom, people of colour who enter senior leadership roles seem to have to defend what their motives are for doing so. The preceding quote by Thembeke illustrates how it was

assumed that because she was a person of colour, her motives would be directly tied to her race and nothing more. Again, this highlights the enduring nature of racialised beliefs in South African society and how it impacts on people of colour who wish to access leadership roles in organisations.

Interestingly, however, some participants who were people of colour indicated that the adversity they faced, either growing up under the Apartheid regime or during their careers, actually had some kind of beneficial impact on their personal and professional development. Key examples include the following:

“I left home at 11 to go to high school and from there straight on to university. I only went home on holidays because there was no Coloured high school in Lady Smith. I had to leave. It was normal to leave when you got to grade 7. I learned early on to take care of myself and to be independent. Sometimes now people feel that it is too much so.” – Sarah, FC45

Many White South African children also needed to leave home to attend boarding school at a young age, however the frequency is seen to be disproportionately higher among people of colour. The primary reason for this was the poor provisioning of social services like schooling. In effect, Apartheid therefore not only institutionalised racism, but also created a discrete class system, within which public service provisioning was concentrated at the very top White minority. Although this poses a major challenge to people of colour, some participants, like Sarah, indicated that this was a significant developmental force in their life. As discussed in section 6.3.1 in Chapter 6, this interesting sentiment regarding the social challenges not faced by the majority of White South Africans was echoed in the responses of many other participants while discussing the history of South Africa and growing up under the Apartheid regime.

The data shows that people of colour are able to recognise adversity and challenges not only for their negative impacts but also for their developmental impact. This suggests that people of colour were, and still are, able to show resilience in the face of enormous social challenges not experienced by their White fellow citizens. It is also clear that symbolically Apartheid did not end in 1994 and the societal structures this regime created still shape the lives of South Africans to this day.

8.2.2 The legacy of Apartheid in South African society

Arguably, one of the most insidious characteristics of the ‘Apartheid Machine’ was not only the resulting imbalance in power, but also the way in which this imbalance was maintained. This oppressive regime essentially created a societal divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’. The Apartheid government needed to ensure the ‘have-nots’ were unable to challenge the status quo by removing opportunities to do so. This included restricting all access to quality education for people of colour and the outright ban on any government opposition (Booyesen 2007b; Cucuzza 1993; Norval 1996).

During Apartheid, and under the Bantu Homelands Act of 1970, Black people were geographically restricted to 13.5% of the total area of South Africa unless they were able to furnish evidence of gainful employment in urban areas (African National Congress 1980; Shear 2013). Even then, the Natives in Urban Areas Bill effectively forced all non-White inhabitants in the area to live in designated slums. During Apartheid there seemed to be no hope for people of colour to ever escape this reality as formal public policy prevented any form of advancement (Davenport 1971; James & Lever 2001; Hutt 2007). Notable examples include the Bantu Education Act which prohibited Black people from receiving an education, which was considered to be “*above their social station*”, as well as the Colour Bar Act, which prevented people of colour from practising skilled trades. It is not surprising, therefore, that the 1970 national census reported that most non-Whites worked as manual labour (Department of Statistics 1970). Contemporary national statistics, as discussed in Chapter 4, indicate some transformation, but not nearly at the rate at which it is needed. Of particular relevance to this research is the fact that there are no longer any formal bans on people of colour occupying senior roles in organisations, yet the 9% of the economically active White people is still over represented at 62.4% of senior leadership roles (Commission for Employment Equity 2014).

The ‘haves’ needed to remain under the illusion that their Apartheid government were protecting them through the creation and maintenance of these societal divides. A key underpinning factor of the Apartheid regime was to limit contact between Whites and ‘non-Whites’, not only to hoard resources for use by Whites, but also to avoid critique arising from contact between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’. The Apartheid government ensured that people of colour remained uneducated, had limited access to medical care, as well as

limited access to sanitation. This reinforced the notion that 'non-Whites' are somehow sub-human and therefore not deserving of certain senior organisational roles. It is therefore a vicious cycle of oppression, which is continuously perpetuated.

Decades after the fall of Apartheid, the new democratic governments have made massive strides in eradicating formal policy that supports societal segregation, as well as addressing the issue of service delivery (Statistics South Africa 2014b; Cronje & Budlender 2004; Statistics South Africa 2012a). Although there is much work to be done, there is no doubt that many more South Africans now have access to basic services than before and there is no institutionalised ban on people of colour occupying senior leadership roles in organisations. However, as the data on the experiences of people of colour in South African society indicates, beliefs regarding race remain largely unchanged. Although rationalised differently now than it was under the Apartheid regime, people of colour are still seen as somehow ill-suited for leadership roles. Here, Acker's (2006) concept of legitimacy offers a possible explanation for the seemingly enduring blatant racial discrimination even in the absence of a legal mandate for it. Acker explains that inequalities are legitimised within their organisational contexts and that this legitimisation is relative to organisational ideologies (Eriksson & Nissen 2016). The enduring nature of racial underrepresentation in senior leadership roles, in the absence of a legislative mandate and in addition to widespread beliefs about this underrepresentation, seems to suggest a process of legitimisation as the root cause of inequalities as opposed to social structures. This means that mandating legislation was the result of legitimisation of inequalities and not the other way around. Under Apartheid, racial oppression was legitimised and therefore legislation to support this legitimisation followed. After the fall of Apartheid, political ideologies – and related legislation – regarding race changed, yet two decades later racial inequalities within organisational leadership structures seem to persist. According to Acker (2006), this is due to the legitimisation of racial inequalities – which implies that despite changes in formal policy, as we have seen in post-Apartheid South Africa, racial inequalities will persist due to their systematic legitimisation. Although the data indicates that the legacy of Apartheid impacts upon the lives of all groups sampled in this study, it is undeniable that the most acute impact is still experienced by people of colour. A lack of transformation, limited

economic freedom and enduring racial stereotyping place people of colour at a general disadvantage when compared to their White peers.

“I think, as Black people, we have serious complexities at times, particularly as Black women. I think we try and size each other up a bit and I think there is a level of pressure that is placed upon us. From a Black psyche point of view, there's this thing where we feel we have to represent. Sometimes we go about that in ways that I don't agree with personally like I sometimes feel you need to be able to prove something. I'm always upset when people who are in Black leadership treat people who are the working staff with disrespect. As a Black person we all know where we come from even if our experiences are different.”

– Motlalepule, FB35

This response from an aspiring Black woman leader illustrates the difficulties involved in attempting to reconcile one's identity as a Black South African with a position of power, which was previously reserved for White people only. It highlights the limited effect of removing institutionalised racism without due consideration for pervading racist beliefs in society at large and again placing emphasis on the concept of legitimisation (Acker 2006). Arguably, the same could be said for gendered discrimination. Formal organisational policy that advocates for the division of labour on the basis of anything else but merit is now strictly prohibited by South African law, yet a higher concentration of women are found in organisational roles which hold less decision-making power (Ghiloni 1987; Taff 2003; Golombisky 2015). One possible explanation for this is because national-level initiatives to address injustices of the past have been largely focused on eliminating large scale institutionalised discrimination, without due consideration for the beliefs which support it. At a societal level, the very construct of leadership in an organisation might be problematic for people of colour because of the historical symbolism associated with the concept.

“How do you think the South African labour force perceive organisational leadership?”

I think there is a perception of organisational leadership being tied to White capital. There has been quite a lot of that – of being enslaved to White capital. Therefore seen as an extension of that and therefore not having their interests being of concern.

Do you think that could be one of the underlying factors that manifest as things like strikes?”

Absolutely! Because I mean if you look at what we spoke about earlier on in terms of the wages that they are paid, their living conditions, you know all

those things. But yet leadership of organisations doesn't need to wait for strikes. They can show leadership by quickly addressing it.” – Neo, MB34

The leadership position as a societal concept clearly extends beyond the organisation. As it is so critically pointed out by Neo in the preceding quote, organisational leadership in South Africa is inextricably linked to White capital. Therefore, for a person of colour in South Africa, the convergence of social identity and the historical significance of the organisational role occupied results in a wide array of complexities as illustrated by the response from Motlalepule.

Clearly, the conceptual tension resulting from enduring older beliefs regarding supposedly inferior people of colour and the new legislative frameworks that is aimed at rectifying the legacy left by injustices of the Apartheid regime thus becomes a cause for concern. This tension inevitably results in fear as indicated by the following response:

“I think society in South Africa does have a perception about the racial groups. There’s a fear in the South African context, particularly the White grouping who were prevailed as leaders in this country. They have a fear that we won’t be able to do the leadership role. In a normal society you should ask yourself who is the best man for the job whereas here [South Africa] there’s that fear so that you want to put a safety net around anything that you do.” – Deepak, MI56

These fears then seem to be addressed through the creation of pseudo-rational, but inherently racist, belief systems which legitimise racial inequalities (Acker 2006). Enduring poor socio-economic conditions, such as access to education, along with poor implementation of interventionist policies, serve as evidence for the support of these fears and the inevitable legitimisation of inequalities. A typical example of this situation is the seemingly consistent fear that people of colour are ‘not ready’ or somehow ill-prepared to fulfil a leadership role:

“Do you feel that, where a White counterpart’s competence is assumed, yours has to be proven?”

Yes. In the early days, definitely, until you’ve built up a track record. It’s, generally speaking, just harder for darker skinned people to be given the opportunity based on interviews, etc. without any qualified record.” – Tash, MI46

This fear-driven racialised belief is insidious as it masquerades as genuine concern for individuals and organisations alike, while it in fact serves to maintain power imbalances. Findings in relation to the legislative aspect of the South African context, and

arguably a key factor in social tension resulting from the convergence of enduring historical beliefs with new institutionalised equality structures, are discussed in the following section.

8.3 The socio-legal context

In this section, the ‘socio-legal’ context refers to the societal environment created by legislative measures created by South Africa’s post-Apartheid democratic government in order to alleviate and eventually eradicate widespread social injustice and inequalities. These legislative measures endeavour to give action to the new South African Constitution enacted in 1996, shortly after the fall of Apartheid, and bring about transformation on a broader scale than merely racial equality (Olivier 1994; Venter 1995; Dugard 1997; Roux 2009). Of particular interest is the concept of positive discrimination as a means of actively addressing the social disadvantage still experienced by women and people of colour in post-Apartheid South Africa.

The main pieces of legislation affecting transformation in the workplace are arguably the Employment Equity (EE) Act and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act, also sometimes referred to as simply the ‘BEE’ Act (Werksmans 2014; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). These two pieces of legislation govern fair employment practises, while at the same time allowing for positive discrimination to occur (Employment Equity Act No 55 1998; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No 53 2003). Since their respective enactment in 1998 and 2003, respectively, these Acts have undergone several amendments in order to address the dynamic nature of the transformation process in South Africa (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013; Employment Equity Amendment Act No 47 2013).

Recent amendments to equality legislation signal that the legacy of Apartheid has not been eradicated from South African society. Therefore, in order to appropriately contextualise the data, an analysis was carried out exploring salient attitudes towards equality legislation, the perceived impact of equality legislation, as well as related societal trends.

8.3.1 Attitudes towards equality legislation

The attitude towards national-level interventionist policy, specific Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment is quite mixed. Interestingly, these mixed sentiments do not manifest as polarised views between participant groups, but rather as ‘layered’ responses within groups. Discussions regarding participants’ attitudes towards equality legislation were characterised by an initial appreciation for the need for societal transformation, which were then followed by caveats to their appreciation. These caveats revealed distinct trends in responses – and thus attitudes – between groups. Typically, among all participants, the discussion on their attitude towards equality legislation would start out with responses like the following:

“I think there mustn’t be a dependency on it, as the sole driver, but it is necessary. I mean if we want to change the demographics and the underlying issues in our country, it is a necessary evil, for want of a better word.” – Anna, FC31

“I don’t know if BBBEE and other interventionist strategies are necessarily the best way of getting more equality but I don’t know if there is any other way to do it because people perpetuate the same thing. So I support it.” – Holly, FW48

These two women, one White and one of colour, indicate an appreciation for the need to institutionalise equality by putting legislative frameworks in place. However, their responses highlight a sense of reluctance and apprehension, which was observed across all three groups. Among the people of colour, the most dominant theme that emerged as a deeper attitudinal ‘layer’ towards equality legislation was that of the societal stigma associated with receiving legally mandated benefits.

“Have you ever benefitted from a BEE or an affirmative action appointment?”

No, I don’t think so. I honestly think any appointment that’s been made where I’m concerned was because of my competence. I would be very disappointed, firstly in myself and then in the person who made the appointment.” – Keshika, FI34

Attitudes regarding the receiving of legally mandated benefits ranged from slightly averse to highly averse. The preceding quote illustrates how some people of colour might feel disappointment in their own capabilities as well as organisational decisions should they be the recipient of any unjustified benefits which might be mandated under equality legislation. However, the data reveals that in some instances, this ‘expected

disappointment' does not result in any action taken on the part of the 'equity candidate'. Some participants therefore expressed an attitude of disinterest in receiving benefits unjustified by merit, but did not indicate any active steps they may have taken to avoid such instances from occurring. Compared to the nature of responses from other people of colour, the attitude expressed by Keshika could arguably be classified as being 'slightly averse' to equality legislation. The manner in which other participants expressed their attitudes towards equality legislation is indicative of a higher level of aversion as that indicated by Keshika:

"Do you personally feel that you've benefitted from any kind of interventionist legislation regulation?"

Absolutely not! And I won't allow myself to. I'll give you an example. I was once being interviewed for a very large retail group, alongside five Afrikaans males. I came through the interview with flying colours. As I was about to start my psychometric tests, I heard two guys say that I'm a very good Black candidate. I carried on with my assessment but what they said stuck in my head. I later phoned the recruitment agency and asked them to take my name off the list because I'd rather be seen as a good candidate than a good Black candidate.

So, you had a very strong aversion to that?

Absolutely. I'm not looking for a free ride. My appointments or whatever I achieve must be given on the basis that I can deliver not on my colour." – Tash, MI46

This man of colour expressed a significantly higher aversion to equality legislation than the preceding woman of colour. Yet, relative to the rest of the data on this theme, his aversion appears to be 'moderate'. Tash explains how he has voluntarily withdrawn from a recruitment process solely on the basis of the possibility of being appointed as an 'equity candidate'. His response highlights a trend in the data where people of colour reject any benefits perceived to be unrelated to personal performance.

The third and final type of 'caveat to an appreciation' of the need for equality legislation is 'extreme aversion'. As highlighted by the quotes sampled from Keshika and Tash, there are people of colour who disapprove and prefer not to be involved in practises that would benefit them in a way that is not in line with their performance. However, the data reveals that there are also those individuals who would do everything in their power to avoid any association with practises related to equality legislation.

“Tell me about some challenges you’ve faced.

One of the biggest challenges as a Black female is the term EE or AA. It absolutely makes me cringe. I find it deeply offensive.

Why?

It totally undermines my capability. It negates an intrinsic capability of a Black woman; like you’re here because of affirmative action. In fact I left a very good job because was told I was an affirmative action appointment. I was the most qualified person out of all my peers for this position and I was told I was the affirmative action appointment. So, my qualifications don’t matter; my race is all that matters and, for me, that negated my capabilities and my qualifications.” – Lerato, FB43

Arguably, the most severe type of aversion to equality legislation can be found in instances where candidates decide to leave an existing position or organisation after receiving – or becoming aware of the receiving of – what they might perceive to be undue benefit. This woman of colour indicates that she has in fact left a previous position because she learnt that she was considered by the organisation to be an ‘equity appointment’. An ‘extreme aversion’ among some people of colour therefore stands in strong contrast to a general appreciation of a need for legislative structures to facilitate equality in employment observed among the majority of participants. This is an interesting finding and arguably indicative of a larger societal phenomenon beyond that of personal preference. Here, an argument for the stigmatisation of people of colour and their resultant resistance can be made.

As discussed in section 7.4.1 these responses indicating an ‘appreciative aversion’ to interventionist equality legislation could be both informed by and inevitably constructing a social discourse (Bresnen 1995; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003), however with varying underpinning motivations. Here it is argued that the level of aversion is indicative of the underpinning motivation for the aversion. Holly, a White woman at the intersection of gender disadvantage and racial privilege (Shields 2008), has seemingly slight aversion to equality legislation. Holly’s attitude in this regard is similar to how Abbey and Jacoba discuss their views on equality legislation in sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 respectively. For Tash, an Indian man at the intersection of racial disadvantage and gender privilege (Shields 2008), there seems to be a moderate aversion to equality legislation. Tash’s view also seemed consistent with the views of the other men, like that of Deepak. Lastly, for Black women like Lerato, at the intersection of both gender- and racial disadvantage (Shields

2008), the pervading aversion to equality legislation seemed extreme when compared to that of the other participants. Thus, the data suggests that the manner in which multiple identities intersect, within a given context, influences how context is perceived.

Lenhardt (2014) defines racial stigmatisation as racial identity framed as rendering a person or group inferior to another. Loury (2006) stresses the importance of distinguishing between racial discrimination and racial stigma in that racial discrimination relates to treatment while racial stigma relates to perceptions. Equality legislation in post-Apartheid South Africa is focused on eliminating discriminatory practises by prohibiting unfair discrimination. This approach, however, does not address the stigmatisation of racialised policy. This is because racial classification in itself is a process of stigmatisation (Goffman 1968). Thus, conceptualising race as inherently stigmatic illuminates how racialised policies dehumanise people by reducing social agents to social objects (Howarth 2006). The aforementioned aversive attitude of Lerato against South African equality legislation serves as evidence that any racialised policy – regardless of positive intent – inevitably results in the stigmatisation of people of colour. The same could be said about gendered policies when considering the following response from a White woman respondent:

“I actually rejected a proposal to implement a women's development programme the other day. It is just degrading. What are these programmes saying? Are you telling me that I need an extra programme to achieve what you as a man would have achieved normally?” – Magda, FW49

Like Lerato's attitude towards racialised equity legislation, Magda perceives special initiatives that are specially designed to benefit her as a woman in South Africa to be “*degrading*” towards women in general. The rhetorical question she poses is so poignant and cuts to the very core of the social impact racialised and gendered policies have. She asks what it is gendered policies are signaling. She feels that gendered policies signal an inherent inferiority – much like people of colour feel racialised policies signal inherent inferiority. Indeed, Lenhardt (2014) argues that racial injury not only occurs in instances of intentional discrimination, but that it also occurs as a result of stigmatisation.

Stigma is rooted in context and is tied to the creation and reproduction of social difference and exclusion (Parker & Aggleton 2003). South Africa is an acute contextual example of both the ideological construction of racial stigma and the inevitable resistance thereof. Historically, there are endless accounts of local uprisings and international

sanctions against the oppressive Apartheid regime (Kaempfer & Moffett 1988; Dugard 1989; Moorsom 1989; Walker 1991; Marx 1992; Culverson 1999; Frankel 2001; Nesbitt 2004). More recently, the data from this study indicates that even developmental and corrective policies that are racialised or gendered are resisted by the intended beneficiaries – arguably as a result of the associated social stigma.

Resistance against racialised and gendered interventionist policies therefore disrupt the equality debate. It points towards a fatal flaw on which concepts such as Employment Equity and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment are based. Although intended to correct the injustices of the past, such policies inadvertently reproduce it through the invariable perpetuation of race- and gender stigmatisation.

The Apartheid government sought to establish a society characterised by material inequalities skewed towards the benefit of the minority White population. This was achieved – in part – through the creation of non-dialogical notions of race that resulted in non-White South Africans being viewed differently from how they view themselves (Goffman 1968; Minow 1997; Bell & Nkomo 2001; Loury 2006; Howarth 2006; Booyen 2007b; Atewologun & Singh 2010; Jenkins 2014). The preceding section which discusses findings within the historical context confirms that, even in the absence of institutional discrimination, much of the Apartheid era non-dialogical notions of race still remain unchallenged. South Africans do not know each other; they lack understanding of each other's life experiences and are left with assumptions. These conditions are highly problematic as it is not conducive for working towards equitable representation for women and people of colour in organisational leadership.

One might argue that the severity of segregation in South African society, which still remains to this day, reinforces social discourses such as that of 'merit'. Supposedly meritorious structures claim to be fair and objective yet the very means of determining merit are constructed in a manner which inevitably benefits certain groups to the detriment of others. If people in positions of privilege have limited contact with people in positions of disadvantage, people in positions of privilege have less exposure to experiences which might disrupt oppressive social discourse. Segregation, as a fundamental mechanism in maintaining the Apartheid regime, still remains in a post-Apartheid South Africa and poses

a significant obstacle in challenging assumptions underlying ‘merit’ discourse which seems to have become conflated with discourse on gender and race.

In addition to the challenges to transformation resulting from a general resistance to equality legislation, responses from many of the White women seem to add a further level of complexity. A consistent theme among responses from the White women was that of perceived exclusion from opportunities.

“I think that there should not be a rule that excludes White people at all. There should not be a rule that states as a White person you may not apply. Or rules that says we will not put you on a shortlist because you are White. That is just ridiculous. I mean, look at how many people have immigrated. I have got friends and family who have left the country and they had left because of that. They know, the talk is out there, they are asking what future do their children have? What do they do? They leave. So it is a very delicate and sensitive subject...” – Abbey, FW41

The response from this White women highlights the underlying fear White people seem to have of equality legislation. Arguably, this fear is the result of two compounding factors. Firstly, the data reveals that White South Africans, like Abbey, have misperceptions of the letter of the law in so far as legislation like the EE Act and the BBBEE Act are concerned. Several White participants mentioned feeling “*excluded*” or “*not valued*” as a result of post-Apartheid legislative frameworks. Although the application of these legislative frameworks in organisations can surely result in the exclusion of White people, this is by no means the intention of any piece of South African legislation. As an example of the ethos of South African equality legislation, the following excerpt from section 1(c) of the BBBEE Amendment Act of 2013 illustrates how the perceived mandated exclusion among White people is ill-founded:

“... ‘broad-based Black economic empowerment’ means the viable economic empowerment of all Black people including, in particular women, workers, youth, people with disabilities and people living in rural areas, through diverse but integrated socio-economic strategies that include, but are not limited to- (a) increasing the number of Black people that manage, own and control enterprises and productive assets; (b) facilitating ownership and management of enterprises and productive assets by communities, workers, co-operatives and other collective enterprises; (c) human resource and skills development; (d) achieving equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce; (e) preferential procurement from enterprises that are owned or managed by Black people; and (f) investment in enterprises that are owned or managed by Black people” (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013).

The BBBEE Act, not in its original nor latest amended form, has ever sanctioned the exclusion of any individual or group from access to opportunities. Instead, it is formulated in a manner which promotes the development and award of preferential treatment to previously disadvantaged groups. The notion of “*preferential* [treatment]” leads to the second compounding factor which results in the fear of exclusion among White participants.

The second factor is a lack of awareness of or an unwillingness to acknowledge privilege. Like in other parts of the world, in South Africa the accumulation of wealth and prosperity over generations places White people at an automatic advantage over people of colour. In South Africa a far larger proportion of White people own businesses and property and are educated at a tertiary level (Tangri & Southall 2008; Statistics South Africa 2012a; Statistics South Africa 2014b; Commission for Employment Equity 2014; Council on Higher Education 2015). White people fail to recognise their privileged position in South African society, yet seem to feel severely threatened by any attempt to alter this position of privilege. The continuation of the response from Abbey illustrates this perceived threat among White participants:

“...So it is a very delicate and sensitive subject. The bottom line is that I'm a White female and I am going to be up against African males and females. What is gonna set me apart from them? Possibly my MBA. Or possibly my PhD if I in a few years decide to do it. So I'm just saying that you have got to be on top of your game and you have got to accept that you have got to do more than the African person.” – Abbey, FW41

Abbey’s response vividly highlights the desperate need for maintaining a position of privilege and the fear associated with losing it. Her attitude towards equality legislation is characterised by a concern for having to “*be at the top of your game*” and “*having to do more*”. One might ask why she feels it is necessary to improve her skills-set or expertise as a White person with an influx of more people of colour at her senior level of the organisation. Arguably, an honest answer to this question would be to retain her position of power and privilege. Another example of an apparent fear among the White respondents is the following from a young White woman:

“I actually think that BEE is going to make it worse for me as a White woman. In my perspective, its Black males and Black females and Indians also in between and then White females and White men. I read an article where White females benefitted a lot in the past few years more than White males but

government is saying that White females should also move down the ranks.” – Jodie, FW29

Using Noon's (2010) response to the four most common criticisms of positive discrimination, one is able to surmise as to the assumptions and beliefs underpinning the aforementioned responses to interventionist policy. Firstly, frequent references to interventionist policy being “*necessary, but not ideal*” or being “*a necessary evil*” imply an understanding that interventionist policy requires that the most suitable candidates are overlooked or disregarded in favour of ‘equity candidates’. Arguably, what informs this type of responses is White fear based on the potential loss of privilege. White advantage and privilege are so engrained in people’s conceptualisation of society, that it becomes invisible. When White participants respond with statements such as “*...what is gonna set me apart from them? Possibly my MBA. Or possibly my PhD...*” they do not seem to realise how profoundly discriminatory their basic beliefs are about race in society and organisations.

Furthermore, the data also suggest the assumption that ‘equity appointments’ are not based on merit. Examples include statements such as: “*I honestly think any appointment that’s been made where I’m concerned was because of my competence*”. With this assumption, there are two problematic issues. Firstly, except in cases where interventionist policy is poorly implemented, this assumption is simply not true. Secondly, this assumption implies that all notions of ‘merit’ are gender and race neutral. A review of the literature on leadership reveals that this is not the case – conceptualisations of leadership in organisations and related measures of merit are both gendered and racialised.

Clearly, instituting new legislative frameworks under a democratic government in an attempt to rectify the persisting inequalities of the past, while allowing for old non-dialogical perceptions of gender and race to continue, creates societal tensions. The data reveals that these societal tensions manifest as feelings of distaste and even loathing among people of colour and feelings of fear among White people, respectively. This highlights the need to reconsider equality legislation in South Africa and how it intersects with enduring beliefs on gender and race. The next section discusses the data in relation to the perceived impact of equality legislation in South Africa.

8.3.2 The perceived impact of equality legislation

8.3.2.1 Positive versus negative impact

Discussions with participants regarding their views of the impact of equality legislation on society varied in nature. Participants offered responses pertaining to perceived positive and negative societal impact. Furthermore, participants also expressed their views on the impact of equality legislation from both an ‘observer’ and ‘personal experience’ perspective.

“What is certainly changing is that we have some strong women coming through thanks to targets and quotas – those kinds of things that are critical for special trace licenses. So those kinds of perceptions [regarding gender] are being questioned, hopefully... In terms of enablers the nature of the work is very enabling. You get the opportunity to implement new things because mining is a bit behind the times. The EE targets are also an enabler.” – Holly, FW48

The aforementioned quote from Holly illustrates a key flaw in how equality legislation and its impact on South African society is understood. Her references to “*targets and quotas*” indicate her understanding of equality legislation is limited to the most severe measures associated with interventionist policy. Noon (2010) explains that the enforcement of quota systems is the most extreme version of positive discrimination and a consideration of key pieces of legislation illustrates how the legislative framework in South Africa is indeed structured around far less extreme measures. In fact, the word ‘quota’ is not used in either pieces of legislation once (Employment Equity Act No 55 1998; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No 53 2003). Rather, the legislative framework for transformation in the workplace is framed as developmental and facilitating access to opportunities. Additionally, the data also reveals a differentiation in how the perceived impact is evaluated for White women as it is for women of colour.

“There is this one female who really struggles though. She can't meet her deadlines but they have kept her in this role because she is very important to the company's EE targets. So they have made allowances there. She struggles in every way. So that is actually the other side, where she has been kept in the role because they need to meet the quotas.” – Holly, FW48

The same participant mentions how “*many strong women*” have moved up the organisational hierarchy as a result of equity legislation in South Africa, yet she felt it necessary to mention the “*one [equity appointment] female*” who she perceives as not being

able to perform in her senior role and being kept on as a practise of organisational ‘window dressing’. Therefore, the legal framework for the promotion of transformation and equality in South African workplaces is presented as inherently problematic as it mandates a consideration of demographic over that of merit. This position, as is indicated by the literature on positive discrimination (Noon 2007; Noon 2010) as well as by the data, is rife with racist and sexist unsubstantiated assumptions. Holly’s comment on the colleague who is kept in the organisational role for purely compliance reasons assumes that (a) the person has been adequately prepared for her role, (b) that an insufficient amount of qualified people of colour are available in order for the organisation to achieve compliance, (c) that ‘the best candidate’ should always be selected when recruiting for a particular role and (d) that the ‘merit’ or ‘performance’ criteria used for appointment decision-making are gender- and race neutral. These assumptions are highly problematic as they reinforce beliefs which discredit equity legislation while perpetuating discrimination and preserving privilege.

Holly’s responses, but specifically the assumptions which underpin such responses, serve as further evidence of the social discourse on equality legislation mentioned earlier in section 7.4.2. The concept of ‘merit’ is used in social discourse which selectively emphasises only the most extreme forms of positive action Noon (2010). The discourse on ‘merit’ is self-sustaining (Augoustinos et al. 2005) and when issues of ‘merit’ and race are conflated it informs a social discourse on leadership (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003) which rationalises inequality in a manner which equality discourse cannot disrupt.

Alarming, these assumptions permeate the majority of responses from White women. People of colour are consistently discussed as generally inferior for senior roles, while equality legislation is presented as facilitating the personal enrichment of undeserving people of colour.

“I think it’s more in the education. It needs to come from down there. What maybe should happen in legislation, and it won’t happen soon, if ever, is that everyone will be equal. Everyone has to have access to the necessary education and the best person should get the job.” – Jodie, FW29

“Often, however, women seem to let us down. I mean look at the communications minister. Oh my god, she messed up so badly, it was so embarrassing.

But I think a lot of the time people are just not prepared.

They are not. I mean imagine putting a person who has never done communications before into a communication role. It is just stupid. And obviously she rode the gravy train.” – Maxine, FW42

However, the statement from Jodie does present the need for further analysis if leadership is to be conceptualised as a skill which is developed over time. It can be argued that South African equality legislation has made highly-skilled people of colour a valuable commodity in the labour market by placing a premium on high representation rates of people of colour in strategic leadership roles. Through incentivising organisations to increase the number of women, people of colour and the youth employed (Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No 53 2003; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013), without an equivalent focus on developing leadership capacity among women and people of colour, equality legislation has arguably created a sub-group of uniquely valuable individuals in the South African labour market:

“What I don’t like is that because there is this framework and because consequently larger firms are incentivised to go after Black African females in particular, it just makes that market extremely competitive and consequently hard to hold on to talent. But that’s just the cards I’ve been dealt.” – Donald, MC43

These professionals are so highly sought after that the lucrative and otherwise attractive employment packages in a competitive free market result in frequent changes in job (Booyesen 2007b). From a purely developmental perspective, this phenomenon could have an adverse impact on the development of women and people of colour as leaders. In the preceding quote, Donald, a CEO and a person of colour, expresses his frustration and concern about the ability to attract and retain suitable Black talent within the current South African labour market. Additionally, Thembeke, a woman of colour, offers a brief account of her career progression, which supports the assertion that equality legislation facilitates the premature promotion of women and people of colour and also makes it challenging to retain such individuals:

“Thanks to my parents I am not an affirmative action person. I could have succeeded anyway. I was a manager before the enforcement of affirmative action, etc. simply because I’m educated and I’ve made myself competent beyond just being educated. Perhaps the speed at which I ascended the ladder could have been facilitated by the change of government in this country. I joined the company as a senior manager. After 2 years I was a general manager. After a year I was a director. Then I became a deputy CEO after a year. After a year I became a CEO. I suspect, in the private sector, one does

not climb the ladder that quickly, especially if you're a woman. The legislation possibly assisted the speed at which I ascended the ladder.” – Thembeke, FB55

The data therefore seem to indicate that perhaps the assumptions among some of the White participants that there is a lack of suitable people of colour for senior roles are not unjustified. Perhaps the perceived lack of suitable women and Black talent is an illusion created by the intersection between the historical and legislative contexts. Perhaps South Africa's history of denying women and people of colour the opportunity to develop as leaders, colliding with new structural post-Apartheid legislative initiatives to alleviate social inequalities, created a sub-group of people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds so highly sought after that this sub-group have now to some extent replaced the predominantly White male 'best candidate' with an equally unsustainable person of colour 'best candidate'.

Finally, the data reveal that previously disadvantaged individuals exhibit varying levels of aversion to receiving preferential treatment in their efforts to access and practise leadership in organisations. In this instance, they insist on being evaluated on their performance and merit alone – alluding to performance and merit being gender and race neutral concepts. Considering the educational-, skill- and expertise requirements placed as gate-keepers to organisational leadership roles, along with statistical information on higher education in South Africa discussed in the chapter on the South African context, it becomes clear that the notion of organisational leadership is deeply entrenched in societal structures that serve to maintain inequalities.

8.3.2.2 Emerging societal trends

An analysis of responses regarding the historical and legislative context within which underrepresented groups attempt to access and practise organisational leadership reveal the emergence of several societal trends. The most salient of these are a change in how employment is conceptualised, an emergence of what is referred to as 'job hopping' among young Black professionals, as well as the perceived growth in what is referred to as 'the Black elite'.

Historically, the career options for people of colour were limited to those positions in society that did not hold much decision-making power. For those who were able to access

tertiary education at one of the segregated ‘Black universities’, educational programmes were predominantly geared towards the development of trades and clerical skills (Meyer 1974; Cooper et al. 1984).

However, after the fall of the oppressive Apartheid regime and the introduction of equality legislation, the active participation of people of colour at all levels of South African industry has increased (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Since 1994, there has been no more institutional ban on racially integrated education, which meant that people of colour could, at least in theory, pursue the same careers as White people. Considering strategic leadership in the private sector as an indicator, great change has already taken place. Under the Apartheid regime, people of colour in management roles were virtually non-existent. Now, people of colour account for over 30% of top management positions in private sector organisations in South Africa (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). With this change in composition of the South African workforce seems to have come a change in how employments are conceptualised – especially among people of colour. The following response from a young man of colour illustrates this change:

“A lot of the people, quite late in life, get promoted into senior roles in their 40s and 50s and then they don’t want to go on courses. They don’t want to go on training.

Why do you think that is?

I think among the Coloured and Black communities that’s how our parents were. Our parents never went on training they were just happy to have a job. I will never forget, when I got my job at Old Mutual my mother was like ‘oh you are set for life my son, you have a job there forever’. She was so happy that I had a job at Old Mutual, but to me it was just a start. Obviously, I was happy to be there and they gave me lots of opportunities, but that was the mentality of our parents. So they think when you get to a certain age you can’t study because studying is for young people. So recently, one of the team leaders got promoted after she has been here for a while. She completed her management diploma at Stellenbosch only after I have been asking her to go study further for the last 10 years and even before I managed her. Then after that she realised that actually she can do anything...” – Irfan, MI39

Changes in how employment is conceptualised highlights changes in social identity (Booyesen 2007b). Indeed, from this response it seems as if the new legislative context in South Africa affords more agency to people of colour in terms of their ability to make decisions about their careers. Irfan’s juxtaposition of his own views on employment with

those of his mother highlights the difference in meaning that employment had for previous generations and what it has for younger South Africans. Irfan's response highlights the older generation of South Africans' need for stability and consistency in an unstable and uncertain socio-political context. The data suggest that for younger South Africans, employment is no longer a source of stability and security, but an opportunity to improve their lives. Where previously securing a clerical role in an organisation was the end of career progression for people of colour, it is now merely the beginning.

However, the inverse effect of this change in how employment is conceptualised should also be considered. In the previous section, the creation of a sub-group within the South African workforce was discussed. The intersection of the legacy of the past, with the new legislative landscape in South Africa, has produced a distinct group of individuals in South African history who are characterised by their mobility within the South African job market. This trend seems to create problems for organisations in so far as building and maintaining leadership capability:

“What you put in is what you're going to get out. We had Black guys who have now resigned. We've helped them along; we've paid for their studies. It's rather sad that we spend that amount of money and after about 3 years the guys get poached...” – Rajesh, MI51

“And I've been told that the problem is that there is such a shortage of skilled Black people. They are demanding ridiculous salaries and we can't afford them. We can't even afford to hire a lot of the young Black people. Or you get individuals who establish themselves as great guys and everyone wants to hire them. Then they hop around from company to company, earning higher salaries as they go until he works himself into a position where he becomes unaffordable.” – Sarah, FC45

The aforementioned quotes from senior organisational leadership describe the problem organisations face in attracting and retaining suitable Black talent. This trend is, however, not a new phenomenon. Research conducted soon after the fall of Apartheid has indicated that, compared to White managers, Black managers report lower job satisfaction and a stronger intent to leave their current organisation (Vallabh & Donald 2001). Studies have been conducted in an attempt to explain the so-called societal trend of 'job hopping' among Black professionals. Notable findings include the impact of White fear, as well as a lack of meaningful engagement (Booyesen 2007a). Other explanations also include distrust

among Black employees towards their organisations and subsequent preference to manage their own career development (Nzukuma & Bussin 2011).

In the section on attitudes towards equality legislation, the notion of White fear was discussed. The data from this study therefore supports the existing literature by demonstrating the existence and extent of White fear, as well as a lack of engagement between organisations and people of colour. It therefore can be argued that the highly sought after sub-group of Black professionals in the South African labour market is the product of the intersection- and compounding effect of South Africa's historical- and legislative contexts, but is perpetuated and reproduced due to a lack of engagement, mistrust and White fear.

A third and final emerging trend observed from the data is that of a concern for a growing 'Black elite' (Iheduru 2004; Southall 2004; Tangri & Southall 2008). Consider the following powerful statement as quoted from Ken Owen in Moodley and Adam (2000, p.65):

“...Business leaders are falling over themselves to dispose chunks of their empires to Black partners, enabling a man like, former ANC General Secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa to acquire fortune of some R35m in less than 35 months, a performance hardly matched since the heyday of robber barons like Rhodes and Beit.”

This statement speaks to one of the most contested aspects of Black economic empowerment initiatives – their potential to enrich a few without affecting real social change (Werksmans 2014). These concerns are not entirely unfounded or a mere product of 'White fear'. Indeed, the slow nature in which BBBEE has been rolled out over the last two decades was in no small part due to government's concern over this particular perception (Tangri & Southall 2008; Werksmans 2014). There were several participants from the two groups of women who expressed severe concern about equality legislation only benefitting a select few, while the majority of Black lives are left untransformed. These concerns regarding what seems to be mere 'surface-level transformation' are discussed in more detail in section 7.4.1.

Key concerns include the fact that BBBEE-accredited companies do not create jobs, nor do they increase the number of Black people in management positions or increase Black business ownership. These companies merely act as 'middle-men' and can therefore circumvent some BBBEE requirements regarding their internal processes. Indeed, this

practise of circumventing the core intent of equality legislation in an effort to benefit without contributing to transformation were mentioned by several other women respondents:

“There’s all this legislation which is great but there’s loop holes around everything. BEE certification was there to actually uplift people from previously disadvantaged groups and saying we, as a company, uplift them. For e.g., when we did the learnership [sic] for the unemployed just to get the points. It’s not done for the right reasons. With the skills development act, the money doesn’t go where it’s supposed to. The employment equity which is supposed to be that you report on how many people of what race and gender you employ is a whole sham because nobody looks at it. I can complete the forms and put in anything but no one will look at it. They always have the threats that the inspectors will come out but no one does. We report on it and then we leave it for the rest of the year. We don’t have time to have a strategy around it and there’s no money. Companies and management gets despondent because of the red tape. There are a lot of people making money from BEE verification and that’s a complete scam. There’s a whole lot of corruption going on with BEE verification agents.” – Morgana, FW27

Morgana is a young HR professional who has worked as both HR consultant and as in-house practitioner. From her response it would seem that not only the implementation of BBBEE initiatives are problematic, but that the entire system is fundamentally flawed. One of the key goals of the BBBEE Act is to promote an increase in women and people of colour in leadership roles, however the way the BEE system is designed and monitored seems to allow for individuals and organisations to circumvent this objective. Further to BBBEE accreditation seemingly holding the potential to enrich the few at the expense of the many, other racialised initiatives by government are also put in question regarding its ability to affect real transformation:

“I’m not a fan of the skills development plan. I think the tax rebate in terms of the SETAs²² are being exploited a little bit. Personally, I think that the government has good intentions to have more people skilled up. My sense is that the excuse that organisations don’t have the skills or the skills don’t exist is a cop out for a lot of people and it becomes quite an easy excuse. So, the government comes in and implements all these things and people click away and get all this money back. Is it really meeting the expectation of skills development? I don’t believe that’s the case. There are lots of training institutions popping up; there’s a lot of training being done; it’s accredited

²² A ‘SETA’ is a Sector Education and Training Authority. These are statutory bodies which regulate vocational training and development across the entire South African industry. One ‘SETA’ exists for each sector within South African industry. They regulate training quality, assessment fairness, reliability and validity, and also the awarding of national qualifications.

training. A few years ago, I attended 'Root Cause Analysis' training and it was the worst training that I've ever been for. If you took me from the training and told me to do 'Root Cause' then I would not have been able to do it. It was not practical; there was no empowerment attached to it; there was no testing of my skills. And who benefitted? The company got a tax rebate and the service provider got a sum of money. So, have we developed skills? No. That's one thing that I would definitely say needs to be relooked at." – Keshika, FI34

Keshika's response is severely worrying in light of evidence that BBBEE initiatives are contributing to the growth of the 'Black elite' as opposed to large-scale social transformation. The preceding response highlights that, like with BBBEE verification and accreditation, the training and development industry is rife with opportunists attempting to circumvent the ethos of structural equality initiatives for personal gain. This is especially concerning in light of the severe disadvantage people of colour face in attaining education parity with White people.

Regardless of if these concerns and perceptions as to the trends resulting from equality legislation have merit in reality, these opinions and concerns raised by participants indicate a problem that must be addressed. If these concerns prove to be unjustified, it means there are severe misperceptions among the public regarding the various interventionist policies instituted by government, which in turn discredit these initiatives and contribute to racial tensions. If these concerns are warranted, it means that the existing policies and interventions are either not sophisticated enough to avoid exploitation or are being implemented incorrectly on a grand scale. In so far as organisation leadership is concerned, there seem to be several loopholes in the equality legislation which in effect result in very little real leadership empowerment occurring within underrepresented groups in strategic organisational positions.

8.4 Conclusion: Perspectives and experiences of the socio-historical and socio-legal context for organisational leadership in South Africa

An analysis of the rich qualitative data of this case study at a societal level suggests that both the historical and legislative context influence an underrepresentation of women and people of colour among strategic leadership in South African private sector organisations. In particular, this influence pertains to both attitudinal and material

consequences, which maintain and perpetuate gender- and racial inequality on a grand scale.

The data further reveal that, despite legislative change to eradicate inequalities and promote transformation, discriminatory historical norms still inform how gender and race is constructed and performed in post-Apartheid South Africa. Participants also seemed to be unaware of how their conceptualisation of leadership and related performance is severely gendered and racialised. Responses from all three groups of participants presented measures of success for strategic leaders as gender- and race neutral.

Arguably, a major contributing factor to the perpetuation of discriminatory gender- and racial norms is Apartheid's legacy of segregation. Historically, social groups have been kept apart in South Africa. At a socio-cognitive level, this segregation seems to still be the status quo in post-Apartheid South Africa. The consequence of this, for organisational leadership, is that various gendered- and racialised assumptions, expectations and stereotypes run rampant without challenge. The non-dialogical understanding of race and gender, created by the Apartheid government to reinforce societal power imbalances, is allowed to continue and influence women and people of colour's ability to access and practise leadership in South African private sector organisations.

The literature reveals several evolutionary changes made to equality legislation since their inception. These nuanced amendments to legislation is a testament to the dynamic nature of the South African social context and government's desire to address the country's ever changing needs for transformation. Despite governmental initiatives to alleviate disadvantage and promote transformation through policy, the data reveal a general resistance against interventionist policy from all participant groups. This widespread resistance against interventionist policies uncovers a fault line in the post-Apartheid government's approach to dealing with inequality. By trying to correct the injustices of the past, gendered- and racialised interventionist policies inadvertently reinforce and perpetuate stigmatising social processes.

Chapter 9: Concluding discussion

9.1 Introduction

This study framed leadership as a social process which occurs through the facilitation of power – availed through organisational practises or societal norms – within a network of purposeful relationships with organisational members to create meaning and influence member activity. This view of leadership, as opposed to the popularised notion of leadership as an element of the leader, has proven to be useful in addressing a knowledge gap in the leadership literature. Specifically, this approach has allowed for the collection and analysis of rich qualitative data which challenge flawed assumptions about leadership and aid the development of leadership theory which is informed by the social context. This study generated unique value from the specific social context within which it was conducted – namely this particular moment in South Africa’s post-Apartheid history. Elements of the context such as the dynamic post-apartheid legislative landscape, societal notions of a ‘Rainbow Nation’ and a seemingly enduring racialised patriarchy offered a valuable opportunity to examine the intertwined nature of gender, race and leadership. Furthermore, the nature of the South African context also offered an effective site for the generation of data, which can be used to build theory which addresses the acontextual and atemporal nature of mainstream leadership theory.

This chapter is presented in three sections, namely key findings, contributions and areas for further research. The first section on findings revisits the original research questions and summarises the resulting emerging themes from the data. Furthermore, through a juxtaposition between existing literature and key findings, this first section also offers an overall conceptual account of how leadership is socially constructed within South African private sector organisations. The second section in this chapter discusses the original contributions of this study. Specifically, it identifies and explains original contributions made to the leadership theory and research methodology, in addition to implications for policy and practise. The chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations of this study, along with suggestions for possible future research.

9.2 Research questions and key findings

This research endeavoured to address a knowledge gap in the leadership literature by examining how leadership is socially constructed among those individuals whose perceptions and experiences have been largely overlooked in leadership theorising. In order to address this knowledge gap, research questions were posed at individual-, organisational- and societal- levels. Findings indicate that leadership is overwhelmingly considered to be ‘an element of the leader’, as opposed to a social process, and is consistently conceptualised invoking White male leadership exemplars. This section of the conclusion revisits the research questions and summarises the key findings for each.

9.2.1 Individual-level challenges and constraints in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations

At an individual level, the following research question was asked:

What are the individual-level challenges, constraints and enablers women and people of colour experience in accessing and practising strategic leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa?

This section summarises, and presents separately, the key findings on individual-level challenges and the key findings on individual-level enablers.

9.2.1.1 Individual-level challenges and constraints

The majority of individual-level challenges and constraints to accessing and practising leadership seemed to be underpinned by two key factors. The first of these factors is the understanding among participants that leadership should be considered as an element of the leader. It became clear from the majority of responses that participants did not consider leadership to be a social process, nor that context played a significant role in how leadership manifests in organisations. Secondly, there seemed to be an unwavering subscription to the ‘merit principle’ in that participants framed their leadership successes and failures within the boundaries of perceived objective performance measures. Arguably, these two factors also overlap conceptually and are interrelated.

Conceptualising leadership as strictly an element of the leader is problematic as it forms the foundation of various flawed assumptions about leadership, which inevitably result in the marginalisation of women and people of colour. A large body of the leadership

literature assumes that power is a given, that the access to power is equal across leaders and that the consequence of using that power is the same for everyone (Dinh et al. 2014; Dionne et al. 2014). The literature on gender, race and leadership highlight, however, that this is not the case and that women and people of colour experience significant difficulty in obtaining access to and in using power (Eagly & Carli 2007a; Vongalis-Macrowa 2016). The data resonates with existing literature in that findings show varying levels of aversion to the use of power and control across participants. However, despite participants' expressions of aversion to the use of power, they maintain conceptualisations of leadership as an element of the leader which fundamentally requires power and control over followers. Responses suggest that the women were unable to reconcile their understanding of leadership with their aversion to concepts such as power and control. Resultantly, in lieu of altering their conceptualisation of leadership, the female respondents seem to alter the manner in which they enact leadership. This was especially the case for the women of colour, who emphasised a preference to nurture followers in their responses. The enactment of leadership in a manner which avoids power and control arguably places women at a disadvantage when compared to men, given the fundamental nature of power and control within their understanding of leadership. Underpinning this gendered disadvantage is the invisible nature of the influence the social context has on the conceptualisation of leadership.

Arguably, a result of the espousal of the inherently gendered and racialised merit principle, which is consistently reproduced by the racialised patriarchy in South Africa society, was a pattern among the women to be highly critical of their own ability to serve in leadership roles. The men expressed no concern for their ability to act as leaders, while the women consistently did. Participants were sampled from a diverse number of occupations and levels of seniority; thus this pattern cannot be explained by asserting that the women possessed a different skillset or worked in less senior roles than the men.

Indeed, the data suggests that the concept of 'merit' is decontextualised and both gendered and racialised. What is more, from an examination of participant views and experiences in leadership roles, it transpired that not only is 'merit' gendered and racialised, but it is also highly informed by the socio-historic context. Essentially, how 'merit' was understood among the research participants was very much informed by South

Africa's history of Apartheid and their own personal position within this context. It emerged that the gender- and race neutrality of the understanding of 'merit' is maintained through a social discourse of egalitarianism which conflates 'merit' with issues of gender and race. This conflation can be seen in how women engaged in consistent self-monitoring in their leadership roles and how the men of colour exhibited possible signs of internalised racial inferiority.

Another major finding at the individual level of analysis for challenges and constraints was that of gendered and racialised patterns in participants' ability to maintain relationships at work. With followers, the men expressed a clear task-orientation to establishing and maintaining relationships. For the women, task-orientations towards relationships with followers seemed to be avoided due to having to navigate organisational politics. These approaches to leader-follower relationships, in addition to participants' views on power and in light of the pervading discourse on 'merit', problematise certain assumptions about leader-follower relations. It suggests that *leaders* are not the key drivers of leader-follower relations, that outcomes are not the central subject of leader-follower relations and that leader-follower relations are more dependent on the context than they are leader-driven.

Similar to how participants approached leader-follower relations, the men framed their perception of appropriate leadership role models around performance and achievement. They mostly referred to men and also mentioned family members in addition to colleagues as perceived role models. The women of colour also mentioned family members in addition to colleagues as perceived leadership role models, however this group also referred to other women as role models – more so than the men of colour or White women. Looking towards family members as role models as a distinguished finding between racial groups could arguably be expected given South Africa's history of exclusion and thus resultant lowered visibility of people of colour in leadership roles. This is an effect which is arguably exacerbated by a desire for homophilous work relationships found among both the men and women. Responses regarding perceived role models among the White women were similar to the women of colour, with the interesting difference of also referring to negative experiences and the absence of what they considered to be appropriate leadership role models.

Additionally, the data offers support for Ashcraft's (2013) 'Glass Slipper' framework in that occupations are organised around social identities. A large amount of evidence suggest that the intersection of participants' gender and race identities influence their ability to construct leader identities. Furthermore, the data also suggests that women experience difficulty in establishing legitimacy as leaders. In light of the findings on occupational segregation and social identity, the data therefore also offers support for Simpson and Kumra's (2016) proposed 'Teflon Effect'. Interestingly, however, the supposed 'Teflon Effect' was seemingly experienced most acutely by the women of colour. It is therefore argued here that the White women's racial identities informed their gender identities in the construction of their leader identities and that the men of colour's gender identities informed their racial identities in constructing their leader identities – in so-doing the White women and men of colour were able to somehow circumvent, to a certain extent, the White male leadership prototype and its related effects on leadership experiences.

Lastly, the data also showed some contradictory findings to the existing literature on gender and professional networks. The existing literature suggest that men are more likely to engage in homophilous professional relationships (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997). Responses from the men of colour confirm this, however the women seemed to diverge from the expectation of how they might engage in professional relationships. The women of colour's mention of mothers, sisters and other Black women outside of their immediate environment as appropriate role models suggests a need to engage in female-gendered homophilous networks as opposed to looking towards senior White men as role models. Frequent mention among the White women of a dissatisfaction with female colleagues and women leaders in their immediate environments might also suggest a desire to engage in homophilous networks, albeit a less constructive response to a similar situation in which the Black women found themselves in.

9.2.1.2 Individual-level enablers

An analysis of perceived enablers for accessing and practising leadership in organisations revealed that the majority of perceived enablers can be categorised as either organisational- or societal enablers. Key findings on organisational and societal enablers

are presented in the subsequent sections, while findings regarding individual-level enablers are summarised here.

At an individual level, three key factors appeared to be the most significant enablers in accessing and practising leadership. These factors were the ability to utilise developmental opportunities, professional relationships and, arguably most interestingly, adversity.

Within the South African socio-legal context, much is being done to ensure social transformation and to address the injustices of the past. This involves many national level initiatives to afford development opportunities to previously disadvantaged individuals. From the data it emerged that putting these initiatives in place at a societal level is not sufficient, but that participants felt that personally taking ownership of one's development and making use of available opportunities are also key.

Furthermore, positive relationships with peers and mentors emerged as a significant enabler for all participants. Interestingly, however, although establishing homophilous relationships seemed to be a challenge for the women, they nevertheless expressed positive sentiments regarding their professional relationships with men and colleagues who were of a different gender than themselves.

Lastly and possibly the most interesting finding regarding individual-level enablers was the emerging theme of adversity as a developmental force. This theme only emerged among the people of colour and involved a certain level of personal introspection on factors which aided personal development. Both the men and women of colour offered perspectives on adversity experienced within South Africa's socio-historic context of Apartheid and how this adversity in effect aided personal growth and development as opposed to hampering it.

A further analysis on the challenges, constraints and enablers to accessing and practising leadership in South Africa was carried out at an organisational level. The following section discusses the findings from this level of analysis.

9.2.2 Organisational challenges and constraints in accessing and practising leadership in South African private sector organisations

At an organisational level, the following research question was asked:

What organisational factors contribute to or hinder women and people of colour from accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector?

South African private sector organisations offered valuable settings for the study of organisational leadership in context. Within these settings, White men dominate top leadership roles while the majority of the country's population are people of colour. Furthermore, the intertwined nature of gender and race in the racialised patriarchy that is South African society also offered an opportunity to consider contextualised organisational leadership from a gendered perspective. This section summarises, and presents separately, the key findings on organisational challenges and on organisational enablers. This section also presents key findings on participants' views on the impact of national equality policy on access to and the practise of leadership at an organisational level.

9.2.2.1 Organisational challenges

Patterns in responses regarding organisational challenges revealed both explicit discrimination and institutional discrimination as significant challenges to the access and practise of leadership. What was interesting about findings regarding explicit discrimination was that it was criticised, however participants did not seem to take active action against it. There was no mention of grievances filed or legal action taken, even though South African labour legislation strictly prohibits unfair discrimination and would thus allow for such steps to be taken.

Explicit discrimination within organisations became apparent in women and people of colour's accounts of their leadership experiences. Responses from White women indicated perceived expectations of stereotypically emotional and irrational behaviour among their superiors and peers. The leadership experience of women of colour seemed to be characterised by similar gendered expectations of irrationality and emotionality, however they also expressed a perception of expected incompetence from peers and superiors. The experiences of men of colour resonated with those of women of colour in

that they perceived there to exist an expectation of incompetence among peers and superiors.

Participant responses did reveal significant critique and condemnation of explicit discrimination from all three groups. This was, however, not the case for more institutionalised forms of discrimination. The data suggested a pattern of rationalisation of institutionalised discrimination. This process of rationalisation was particularly apparent among the White women and men of colour. The women of colour were the only group who expressed an acute awareness of institutionalised discrimination and as a result offered some critique of it. Here one might argue that the seemingly consistent rationalisation of institutionalised discrimination, among the White women and men of colour, could be due to its invisible nature (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Acker 2006), but also because of the potential for stigmatisation resulting from a person of colour vocalising critique (Goffman 1968; Howarth 2006; Loury 2006; Phelan et al. 2008; Lenhardt 2014).

Institutionalised discrimination is less explicit but still serves to maintain and perpetuate organisational inequalities (Romany 1996; Acker 2006). These discriminatory practises in effect become so entrenched in organisational policy and procedures that they are rendered invisible and therefore more difficult to challenge. Arguably one of the most well-known of these institutionalised discriminatory practises is the concept of the 'glass ceiling' faced by women who desire to ascend the organisational leadership hierarchy (Powell & Butterfield 1994; Wrigley 2002; Van Zyl & Roodt 2003; Sanchez et al. 2007). A large body of research exists on these types of 'invisible' institutionalised discriminatory practises that serve as barriers to women and people of colour when attempting to access and practise leadership (Cotter et al. 2001; Hultin 2003; Bruckmüller & Branscombe 2010). Examples of concepts explored in research around these barriers to advancement include the highly popularised 'glass ceiling' and others like the 'glass escalator', the 'glass cliff' and the 'velvet ghetto' (Ghiloni 1987; Eagly & Carli 2007b; Ryan et al. 2011; Buckalew et al. 2012; Cook & Glass 2014; Kulich 2014).

Concurrent with some critique from the women of colour, however, is the seeming internalisation of societal gender roles among the women. Interestingly, this internalisation transcended racial divides and is seen in responses which reflect a heightened level of

criticism of their own ability to act as leaders among women. At an organisational level, this apparent internalisation of gender roles is of particular concern as it seems to enable a justification of the reproduction of organisational structures which manifest as complex challenges to the access and practise of leadership women need to navigate (Eagly & Carli 2007a).

Arguably a major underpinning factor in the seemingly consistent rationalisation of institutional discrimination is the overwhelming commitment to the 'merit principle'. Indeed, the data suggests that the conflating debates on gender and race equality in organisations with that of organisational meritocracies allows for the rationalisation of systematic marginalisation of women and people of colour. This conflated social discourse on merit and equality also seems to pose an obstacle for women and people of colour to construct their own leader identities. Underlying a majority of responses is a belief that leadership success can be determined through measurement along objectively determined criteria. Furthermore, these criteria are assumed to be gender- and race neutral. Both assumptions regarding objectivity and gender- and race neutrality are flawed, and in that lies the root of the rationalisation. The potentially damaging effect of these flawed assumptions and resulting rationalisation of institutional discrimination can be seen in participant responses regarding the organisational implementation of national interventionist policy. Participants expressed varying degrees of aversion towards positive discrimination initiatives. However, what unified these perspectives on positive discrimination was that they stand in direct contradiction to the perceived 'objective' measures of leadership merit.

Considering how participants engaged with institutional discrimination in organisations also highlights the problematic nature of leadership theory which is acontextual (Parry et al. 2014). Contextual factors, such as how gender and race is constructed and used, results in organisational politics which are not only gendered but also highly racialised. Therefore, failure to consider the social context in leadership theorising risks the perpetuation of societal power imbalances at an organisational level. This is because acontextual leadership theorising assumes an equal distribution of power within organisations. The data suggests that this is not the case and that institutionalised

discrimination, such as gendered- and racialised measures of merit, places women and people of colour at a disadvantage and hampers their access to- and ability to use power.

9.2.2.2 Organisational enablers

Key findings within organisational enablers in the access and practise of leadership in South African private sector organisations were related to work-life balance and leadership development. The data suggest that organisational policy aimed at alleviating conflict between professional and domestic responsibilities was perceived to be a significant enabler. However, upon closer analysis it became apparent that in South African organisations these work-life balance policies are heavily gendered. Therefore, although participants report these policies to have been enablers in their leadership careers, the language used to discuss them and the fact that this theme only occurred within the two groups of women suggests that these policies are severely gendered. The paradox here is that this supposed enabler also functions as a constraint in that it perpetuates the notion that (a) women should be primarily accountable for domestic responsibilities (Eagly & Steffen 1984; Witt 1997; Cherney & London 2006) and (b) that women who wish to pursue leadership roles require ‘special considerations’ (Hill et al. 2004; Smithson & Stokoe 2005; Booysen & Nkomo 2010).

Further to gendered organisational policies aimed at supporting women as opposed to further marginalising them, the process of leadership development in organisations also appeared to be highly gendered *and* racialised. Although discussed as a significant enabler, the racialised and gendered nature of leadership development can be seen in significantly divergent perceptions and experiences of the leadership development process. Participants discussed relational tensions, perceived exclusion from informal networks and the fear of stigmatisation as motivation for their diverging preferences to development initiatives. More specifically, the women of colour preferred close personal mentoring relationships, White women expressed a preference for formal training interventions and the men of colour indicated a need for informal and unstructured leadership development. The gendered and racialised nature of leadership development in organisations, coupled with persistent societal inequalities, suggest a need for a reconceptualisation of leadership development as a societal imperative. Considering leadership development as a strictly

organisational initiative overlooks the influence societal inequality has on organisational processes and subsequently risks perpetuating the disadvantage experienced by women and people of colour in their attempt to access leadership roles.

9.2.2.3 Organisational implementation of interventionist policy

Key findings on the implementation of national equality initiatives in South African private sector organisations revealed the constant interplay between societal and organisational structures of inequality. First, the perceptions expressed indicate the unanimous view that despite sophisticated and dynamic national public policy, transformation has been limited to a ‘surface-level’ of social change. Societal gender roles and racial stereotypes persist and these have a significant material impact on the lives of women and people of colour who wish to pursue careers in organisational leadership. For example, this unbreakable link between societal and organisational contexts is seen in participant perceptions of tokenism. Much like how acontextual leadership theory reproduces societal power imbalances at an organisational level, tokenism in organisations functions as a counter-mechanism against societal interventions such as equality legislation, by diminishing the perceived value of equity appointments and in so doing maintains the status quo of gender and racial inequality. This effect is compounded by the fact that participants report deliberate attempts to bypass the ethos of the law, while remaining within the boundaries of compliance.

Within South African private sector organisations, it seems, there are continuous processes resisting the implementation of national level equality policy – either through deliberate action or through the construction and reconstruction of discourse which discredits it. Through the deliberate circumvention of the ethos of equality legislation and the employment mechanisms such as tokenism, South African private sector organisations act as a site for the continuation of Apartheid-esque discrimination. Arguably these microcosms of societal injustice then also use mechanisms such as ‘meritocracies’ to produce stigma, which subsequently become rationalised and internalised and hinder women and people of colour in the construction of their own leader identities. One could thus argue that South African private sector organisations are sites of intersectional identity salience as responses from participants in this contexts offers insight into how the

intersection of gender and race identities mutually constitute, reinforce and naturalise each other. Exclusion from leadership then occurs not only as the result of institutional barriers to access, but also the self-selection out of the process based on perceived stigmatisation and internalised discrimination. The next section discusses in more detail the key findings made during an engagement with the macro-level context.

9.2.3 Perceptions and experiences of the social context of leadership in South African private sector organisations

At a societal level, the following research question was asked:

How do historical- and legislative factors influence the representation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions in private sector organisations in South Africa?

This section summarises, and presents separately, the key findings on the perceptions and experiences of the socio-historical context and the socio-legal context.

9.2.3.1 Perceptions and experiences of the socio-historical context

South Africa has a history of severe racial segregation as well as a strong patriarchy. Based on responses from all participants, it is clear that traditional gender roles are still highly relevant in South African society. This is evident, for example, from assertions that women enact leadership in ways that are different from men. The literature, however, suggests that observations of a ‘feminine style’ of leadership among women is not the result of an inherent predisposition towards a certain style of leadership, nor is it due to the manner in which women are socialised. Rather, it is argued that women leaders face penalties when behaving in a manner which is perceived to be non-congruent with their societal gender role (Rudman & Glick 1999; Eagly 2007; Lyons et al. 2007; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012; Mavin & Grandy 2016b).

Key findings indicate that even given the co-construction of gender categories – with associated delineations of which types of behaviours fall within which category – masculinity seems to include a wider range of permitted behaviour, while femininity seems to be more constrained. The women reported penalties for behaving in stereotypically masculine ways, while their male counterparts are seemingly allowed to behave in both stereotypically masculine *and* feminine manners. What is more, the women also express

disapproval with other women behaving in a masculine manner. Supporting the notion that, comparatively, masculinity is a behaviourally broader concept than femininity is the fact that none of the men reported any resistance or penalties for utilising a full range of behavioural and emotional responses to various leadership situations.

In addition to enduring gender roles, racial inequality also persists despite many national level interventions to affect transformation. This inequality manifests in the field of organisational leadership as expectations of inadequacy, racial tension and barriers to development. This is expected since Klenke (1996) explains that leaders are shaped by the era they live in. Until quite recently, a cultural- and legal structure prevented women and people of colour from advancing into organisational leadership roles in South Africa. Indeed, the accounts of how the participants grew up in South Africa paint a picture of an exceedingly racialised patriarchy. The data suggests that, within this social context, occupations were and are still very much organised around social identities. The socio-historic context means that racial and gendered subordination is highly amplified in occupations that involve strategic leadership roles which has historically been reserved for White men.

Resultantly, the notion of leadership was constructed with the White male as an example. This is to be expected given South Africa's history of oppression, but what is of concern is that even after the increase of women and people of colour in organisational leadership roles, the 'White male exemplar of leadership' remains seemingly unchallenged. One might argue that this is due to an absence of the critical mass required for women and people of colour to significantly influence the leadership literature (Cobbs & Turnock 2003). The data reveal that, proportionately, the people of colour referred more to friends and family members as leadership role models than the White women. The White women referred mostly to work-related people such as colleagues and superiors in discussing leadership role models. This is not surprising since White women are represented far better in the leadership structures of South African private sector organisations than men- and women of colour.

The influence of social discourse regarding organisational leadership also emerged in how participants discussed core concepts such as power and control. As discussed, the data suggest that the men were comfortable with the idea of using power in a leadership role,

whereas the women were not. In addition to these views on power, of the female participants, the women of colour appeared the most averse to the notion of power. Furthermore, the data suggests, arguably because of the amplified nature of gender and racial subordination, that multiple social identities and how they intersect compound and reinforce inequalities resulting from the espousal of meritocracy. Evidence of this can be seen in the discrepancies in how participants are able to achieve ‘meritorious’ outcomes in their respective leadership roles. These key findings again highlight how acontextual leadership theory which assumes an equal distribution of power is flawed and continuously reproduces inequality within organisational leadership. This flawed assumption regarding power is also highlighted by the ‘paradox’ resulting from how participants seem to understand leadership, in that women conceptualise leadership as an act, behaviour or process which requires power and control, but go on to express an aversion towards the use of power and control.

Therefore, the data suggest that South Africa’s patriarchal and racially segregated past still informs modern day South African society. Of these influences, findings suggest that both gender and race inform meritocracies. One might thus argue that meritocracies are used as a mechanism to reproduce societal inequalities at an organisational level. This finding supports the case for a move away from leadership theorising which is acontextual.

9.2.3.2 Perceptions and experiences of the socio-legal context

Experiences and perceptions of the socio-legal context were characterised by resistance, fear and discrepancies. Possibly the most salient of this was a pattern in the data which suggested a poor grasp of the intent and content of interventionist policy in South Africa and how it impacts individuals attempting to access and practise leadership in private sector organisations. From all three groups of respondents there were frequent mentions of “*targets*”, “*quotas*” and “*hand-outs*”. This finding was quite surprising since Black economic empowerment and employment equity is regulated by sophisticated and dynamic pieces of legislation which is in a constant state of improvement (Employment Equity Act No 55 1998; Belshaw & Goldberg 2008; Garcez 2010; Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act No 46 2013; Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Arguably, however, these criticisms of the current legal landscape do hold

some truth to it. Despite the sophisticated nature of policy, more than two decades after the fall of apartheid large-scale social transformation has not yet occurred. An example of this is the current state of gender and racial representation among the leadership structures of South African private sector organisations. White men are still significantly overrepresented in senior leadership roles when compared to women and people of colour (Commission for Employment Equity 2014). Furthermore, instead of transforming the lives of the majority of South Africans who have been previously disadvantaged, evidence exists that current equality legislation has instead resulted in the personal enrichment of a few – the so-called ‘Black elite’ (Thomas 2002; Iheduru 2004; Southall 2004; Boyd 2006; Tangri & Southall 2008; Oosthuizen & Naidoo 2010; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011). The aversion towards positive discrimination expressed among the participants who were people of colour offers a possible explanation for this unwanted by-product of interventionist policy. The data suggest a level of inevitable stigma perceived to be associated with benefitting from interventionist policy. Those who are expected to benefit the most from interventionist policies, however, reject such potential benefits and thus inadvertently allow for the personal enrichment of a small few.

Interestingly, the aversion to interventionist policy seemed to in some way to correspond with intersecting identities of the participants. For the White woman at the intersection of gender disadvantage and racial privilege there seemed to be a slight aversion to equality legislation. For the men of colour, at the intersection of racial disadvantage and gender privilege there seemed to be a moderate aversion to equality legislation. For the women of colour at the intersection of both gender- and racial disadvantage, the pervading aversion to equality legislation seemed extreme relative to the other two groups of participants. It is therefore argued that the manner in which multiple identities intersect, within a given context, influences how context is perceived.

Perceptions and experiences of the socio-legal context also identify possible existing gaps in public policy and possible discrepancies between pieces of equality legislation. For example, the BBBEE Act is relatively progressive in its view of gender and race. This progressive view is evident from the sophisticated manner in which it measures transformation and the suggested remedies to achieve compliance. Concurrently, the BCE Act allows only for ‘maternity leave’ and not for ‘parental’ or ‘paternity leave’, thus

signaling a highly gendered view of domestic responsibilities. The effect of such discrepancies in legislation can be seen in responses such as that offered by Maxine in Chapter 7, where she discussed her resistance to archaic and patriarchal company policy – which are in line with labour legislation – in an effort to support one of her followers.

Further evidence of discrepancies within the socio-legal context can be seen in how women in leadership manage the gendered expectations placed upon them. As a result of South Africa's socio-historical context, outsourcing domestic responsibilities is commonplace. Historically, White women would outsource their gendered domestic responsibilities to women of colour, whose vocational options were limited by law, in order to pursue corporate careers similar to those of their husbands. Findings show that since the increased participation of women of colour in corporate South Africa, this trend has continued with women of colour now also outsourcing domestic responsibilities to other women of colour. Resultantly, domestic responsibilities remain within the social responsibilities ascribed to the female gender role – reinforcing inevitable tensions between home and work for women. Furthermore, this practise of women outsourcing domestic work to women also results in the exclusion of men from the conversation at an organisational level. Organisational policy and practise regarding flexibility and special allowances to women is underpinned by an assumption that domestic responsibilities remain the obligation of women – ultimately resulting in tensions between home and work for women. Additionally, this practise also has a more severe impact on women of colour in the sense that now they are being held in their role of social subservience to others not only by White people, but by other people of colour as well. The legacy of this historical disadvantage is arguably maintained in post-Apartheid South Africa by the enduring widespread social segregation. Enduring segregation then in turn facilitates the reproduction of gendered and racialised discourses such as that of 'merit', which is used to maintain the status quo. These discourses do so by selectively emphasising and problematising the most extreme forms of positive action and conflating equality debates with debates on meritocracy.

Lastly, a key critique of studies on gender, race and leadership is that there is an unbalanced concern for challenges, which positions the gender and race of those who are not White men as an 'obstacle' which must be overcome (Eagly & Carli 2007a). An

exploration of experiences within a social context revealed that *both* gender and race may also serve as a ‘tool’ and a ‘resource’ (Ospina & Su 2009) and that adversity could in fact contribute to preparing aspiring leaders for leadership roles later in life. This can be seen in the analysis of responses regarding challenges and constraints, which suggested a significant level of resilience among the men and women of colour.

9.3 Original contribution of this study and its implications

This study addressed a knowledge gap in the leadership literature. In the process of doing so, it managed to make a significant contribution to not only the leadership literature, but also to the study of equality in organisations as well as gender and racial studies. Furthermore, the findings from this research also offer certain methodological contributions as well as policy contributions.

9.3.1 Theoretical contribution

This research makes various theoretical contributions through situating the leadership experiences of underrepresented people within a socio-historical and socio-legal context. It has been more than two decades since the abolition of the oppressive Apartheid regime in South Africa, however, the belief system supporting its ideology of racial segregation seems to remain. This has offered a unique opportunity to illustrate how the social context within which organisational leadership is situated informs how leadership is conceptualised by corporate leaders and aspiring corporate leaders, but more importantly how these conceptualisations of leadership maintain large-scale inequalities.

First, several theoretical contributions have been made to the body of knowledge on intersectionality. This study has demonstrated that an intersectional approach is an appropriate framework for studying the construction of leadership within social context. This study also demonstrated that intersectionality is an appropriate avenue for the exploration of experiences at the intersection of multiple inequalities *and* privilege. Finally, a contribution has been made to intersectionality by building on Atewologun's (2014) framework of ‘sites of intersectional identity salience’ and demonstrating how leadership roles in South African private sector organisations are sites of identity salience at the intersection of gender and race.

Arguably, the most striking pattern which emerged from an analysis of the data was that leadership remains conceptualised as an element of the leader and primarily as a catalyst for organisational outputs and performance. An investigation of leadership experiences through the consideration of leadership as a social process reveals that contextual influences such as gender and race, and how these factors are understood within a particular historical and legal setting, serve to marginalise women and people of colour who wish to access and practise organisational leadership. This can be observed through the rationalisation of institutional discrimination, which inevitably manifests as phenomena such as the ‘glass ceiling’ and the ‘velvet ghetto’. The data suggest that women and people of colour both rationalise and internalise structural discrimination and view pervading inequalities as resulting from individual-level factors such as education, work ethic and personal goals. This is especially visible among women who are observed to be highly critical of their own performance in leadership roles. Here, this research also makes a contribution by demonstrating that what is considered as ‘merit’ is informed by social context. How women excessively self-monitor and how people of colour discuss leader performance highlights the racialised patriarchy that informs understandings of merit. Furthermore, in conceptualising leadership as primarily a function to produce performance, central themes in performance such as control and compliance further place women at a disadvantage. This is because the data reveals an active resistance against notions of control among women.

A contextualised examination of leadership experience revealed how the social underpinnings of performance constructs are highly gendered and racialised, internalised, rationalised and can be observed in how women and people of colour manage work relationships. Findings suggest that women conceptualise leadership in a manner which results in the exclusion of women, but instead of adapting their understanding of leadership, they use alternative strategies of leadership enactment. The study therefore makes a theoretical contribution to the field of leadership by placing emphasis on the existing critique against the study of leadership as an element of the leader *and* on the conceptualisation of leaders as agents of performance (Barnard 1997; Alvesson 2011; Sorenson et al. 2011; Alvesson & Spicer 2012; Dinh et al. 2014). Exploring leadership experiences at the intersection of gender and race revealed that where ‘merit’, performance

and recognition are concerned, identities compound and inform each other. An argument can be made here that the study has made a contribution to management studies by demonstrating that the so-called 'Teflon Effect' can not only be applied to study gender and management but can also be applied to study race and management. This contribution also suggests a shift away from leadership studies concerned with enactment, styles and behaviours and towards a study of leadership as a contextualised social process.

This study also makes a contribution to the leadership literature by disrupting some key underlying assumptions about leadership as a relational process. This study highlights some key findings about the leader-follower relationship. It would seem that leaders are not the key drivers in leader-follower relations and that outcomes are not central to these relations but that leader-follower relations are instead context-contingent.

Furthermore, this study also makes a contribution to the comparatively smaller body of knowledge regarding the resilience and alternative strategies of women and people of colour adopted in the process of accessing leadership. A major critique of studies focusing on the experiences of women and people of colour is that there is an unbalanced preoccupation with challenges, with gender and race consistently considered as an 'obstacle' which must be overcome (Eagly & Carli 2007a). This data revealed that, within South Africa's unique socio-historic and socio-legal contexts, race may also serve as a 'tool' and a 'resource' (Ospina & Su 2009) and adversity could contribute to preparing aspiring leaders for leadership roles later in life. The contribution to the leadership literature in this instance is made by demonstrating the potential value in exploring alternative avenues in leadership development. This study has shown that what has previously been considered as an obstacle in accessing and practicing leadership could in fact be a resource and that commonly held assumptions about adversity should be challenged.

With regards to the existing body of knowledge on leadership development, this study makes an original contribution by challenging the assumption that leadership development is an organisational imperative. By adopting a context-based approach to studying leadership experiences, this study has shown how conceptualising leadership development as a strictly organisational process ignores factors such as the socio-historical context and thus reproduces societal inequalities within organisational leadership. This

finding therefore necessitates the reimagining of leadership development as a societal imperative and not an organisational one.

Further to the contributions made to leadership and leadership development theory, this study also makes a contribution to research on positive discrimination. This study drew significantly on both the literature and statistics of positive discrimination and the implementation thereof in the South African context. The study makes a contribution to the positive discrimination literature by highlighting the significance of social stigma associated with interventionist policy and thereby challenging the assumption that the intended beneficiaries will accept the benefits of such policies. Findings suggest that the risk of perceived stigmatisation outweighs the potential benefits of positive discrimination initiatives and thus neutralises the intended transformation effect.

The consideration for context in leadership theorising places emphasis on the critical need for reconsidering how we conceptualise organisational leadership. The findings from this study suggest tensions in the meaning of leadership, brought about by the continuation of theorising leadership as an element of the leader, as a catalyst for performance or as either ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. This conceptualisation of leadership will arguably inevitably lead to the exclusion of women and people of colour from the leadership roles and the leadership development process.

9.3.2 Implications for policy and practise

It is the hope of the researcher that this study will have a real-world impact and that the findings presented herein will in some way affect policy in a manner which promotes social equality. Based on the findings of this research, in this section four key recommendations are made to policy makers.

First, an intersectional framework has brought to light that among the leadership structures of private sector organisations in South Africa, multiple inequalities and privilege are conflated with the discourse on ‘merit’. Thus, in drafting public policy, ‘merit’ needs to be deconstructed and recognised for its gendered and racialised underpinnings.

Furthermore, considering the potential neutralizing effect of perceived social stigma on interventionist policy, this research offers an opportunity for a significant contribution

to Affirmative Action policy. In South Africa, Affirmative Action policy is designed to affect social transformation through positive discrimination initiatives, benefitting those who have been previously disadvantaged. The underlying assumption here is that those who the initiatives are aimed to benefit will freely accept such benefits. The data reveal that this is not the case. It is suggested that public policy, which uses positive discrimination as its foundation, should actively consider and acknowledge the social stigma related to positive discrimination.

The finding that adversity could in fact be a resource in preparing individuals for future leadership roles hold key implications for leadership policy and practice. This finding offers a contribution by suggesting that leadership and equality policy should facilitate opportunities for marginalised groups to leverage their past experiences into value as leaders. In this sense, policy should also promote a shift away from decontextualised, gendered and racialised measures of ‘merit’, towards leadership as a social process that is built on experiences at intersecting social identities.

In the recruitment, promotion and development of leadership capacity in organisations, it is recommended that organisational policy makers make a conscious shift from conceptualising leadership as ‘leader as performance agent’ to ‘leadership as a social process’. Furthermore, recruitment policy should also place more emphasis on “*hiring for potential*” and take a shift away from “*hiring for the best candidate*”. Failing to do so may risk the perpetuation of the existing gendered and racialised inequalities. The data reveals that due to social context factors, people of colour, especially women, actively resist notions of control- and power over others, and thus it might be advantageous for policy to promote leaders as meaning-makers as opposed to power-wielding guardians of control.

Findings in this study suggest that positive action policy need to be sensitive to varying developmental needs. As it stands currently, South African equality legislation and implementation policy at organisational level endeavour to recognise privilege and various bases of inequality, for example gender, race and disability. However, public policy does not account for the intersection of identities and how this may impact on a person’s experience of inequality. Women of colour, for example, may not experience the same racialised barriers in accessing and practicing leadership as their experience of these barriers are also informed by their gender identities. Similarly, women of colour may also

not experience gendered barriers to accessing leadership in the same way White women do as their experience of these barriers are informed by their race identities. Policy makers are advised to be sensitive to these nuanced differences in experience.

The language policy-makers utilise is also of the utmost importance. The data has shown that social discourses, in particular how people spoke of concepts such as leadership or merit, holds the potential to either perpetuate inequality or disrupt it. Policy language should make a conscious shift away from discourses which produce and reproduce decontextualised, paradoxical notions of merit. Policy-makers are advised to use language which promotes leadership as a social process which creates meaning.

Finally, the findings in this study emphasise the need for organisational policy makers to work towards actively increasing organisational capacity for suitable role models and mentors for women and people of colour in a way that does not promote existing perceived stigmatisation resulting from interventionist policy.

9.4 Limitations and areas for further study

As with any research project, this study had certain limitations, some of which create an opportunity for future research. In this section, the limitations of this study are made explicit and their associated opportunities for future research are discussed.

Firstly, there were certain dimensions of identity which became highly salient in the interviews but were not directly addressed by the research design. This research used an intersectional approach and included gender and race into the design and analytical framework. Dimensions of identity which were not directly considered but were seemingly influential in the leadership experience were that of age, religion, language and culture. Furthermore, in discussing concepts such as work-life balance, the study used a heteronormative approach. Some responses suggest the existence of nuanced experiences for people in homosexual relationships. To ensure a practical and focused research project, however, it was decided to use the 'natural identity' level, which addresses specifically the social meaning attached to biological or 'natural' differences among groups (Jenkins 2014). A possible area for future research is similar studies, but those which incorporate identity dimensions such as age, religion, language, culture and sexuality.

In terms of the context, this study specifically used the South African socio-historical- and socio-legal contexts to investigate the leadership experiences of women and people of colour. Although these particular contexts offered valuable insight into the lived experiences of those who have been largely excluded from leadership theorising, it is suggested that future research also considers the socio-historical- and socio-legal contexts of other countries – particularly those with histories and legal landscapes different from that of South Africa. Furthermore, it is also suggested that future research use social contexts other than the socio-historical and socio-legal to contextualise leadership experiences.

This study makes a contribution to the leadership literature by offering some interesting contradictions to existing frameworks. Within their professional networks, it has been found that women prefer leadership role models to be a person who they are able to personally identify with, while men take a more clinical approach to role models and tend to select desirable characteristics from various role models (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997; Ibarra, Snook, et al. 2010; Ely et al. 2011). The findings of this study, however, suggest that this framework only holds true for women of colour, but not for White women or for men of colour. Additionally, even though women of colour express the preference for role models they can personally identify with, in line with the existing literature, they do not express the need for homophilous mentoring relationships, while White women do. These findings suggest gender-, race- and leadership development to be a more complex field than is proposed in the existing literature. Therefore, it is suggested that future research explores in greater detail the various mechanisms resulting in diverging preferences and perspectives on what might be considered as desirable leadership development environments.

Relative to the body of knowledge on organisational barriers to advancement such as the ‘glass ceiling’, research on women in leadership and stagnant careers are relatively limited. This presents a critical gap in our understanding of how women’s leadership careers are influenced by social contexts. It is suggested that future research include studies aimed at gaining deeper understanding as to what societal structures steer women towards leadership careers which inevitably become stagnant.

Finally, the organisational level of enquiry used in this study presents potential for future research. The focus of this research was to understand leadership experiences and to do so by situating these experiences within unique societal contexts. Data from this study, however, suggest the need for future research which shifts the level of enquiry from the experience of the leader to the experience of the follower. Several responses suggest a salient cultural element to how followers perceive and experience the leadership process and that this cultural element is closely tied with how gender and race is perceived within particular cultural norms. It is therefore suggested that future research also addresses contextualised follower experiences of the leadership process, with particular consideration given to possibly diverging cultural understandings of gender and race.

9.5 Concluding remarks

In this study, I have attempted to make a contribution to the leadership literature, but also to the field of equality, diversity and inclusion. I have chosen senior leadership in the South African private sector not only because this is a site of significant underrepresentation of women and people of colour, but also because I believe that transformation within key decision-making structures at work might have a ripple effect for social transformation in South Africa at large.

It is my personal view that as scholars, we must not only engage in scholarship in pursuit of purely personal gain, but also in order to make contributions to our communities and to assist where we can to improve the lives of others. I believe this study has done so by demonstrating flaws in conventional thinking about organisational leadership and suggesting alternative avenues for the way forward. Furthermore, in working with communities that are not my own, I have taken the utmost care in presenting the voices of others. I have collected the data according to transparent, well-substantiated scientific methods and based my analyses on existing knowledge and appropriate analytic techniques. Before embarking on this research, during and after the research, I reflected on my own personal biases and motivations for conducting this research in the hope that an awareness of my thought processes would avoid any unfair inferences or other forms of researcher bias. That said, I acknowledge that the work presented in this thesis can never fully and wholly present the entirety of the experiences of the research participants. Thus,

what is presented in this thesis are my scientific interpretations of a sample of people who I wished to give voice to.

During the process of conducting this study I have learnt a great deal, not only about leadership but about gender, race, equality and the history of my own country. I feel this process has not only made me a more informed academic, but also an enriched person. The findings from this study have inspired me to always remain critical of my own assumptions and the assumptions of others, and to soldier ahead in the pursuit of social equality.

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Appendix One: Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE			
GENDER, RACE AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP IN ORGANISATIONS: A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY			
<i>Before the commencement of the formal interview questions, participants should be asked to provide biographical information. This information should include the following:</i>			
Participant age		Participant gender	
Participant race			
Does the participant suffer from any disability?	Y	N	Specify
The organisation's sector of industry			
Position held in organisation			
Tenure in position at organisation			
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, PROBES AND RELATED LITERATURE			
THEMES	RELEVANT LITERATURE	QUESTIONS	PROBES
Participant background		What is your family background?	Parents' education: A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2 D
			Parents' occupation: A B C D E
			Siblings' education: A B C D
			Residence growing up: A B C D
			PARENTS' EDUCATION: A1-Both degrees, A2-One degree, B1-Both post matric, B2-One post matric, C1-Both HS, C2-One HS, D-No formal edu.
			PARENTS' OCCUPATION: A-Director, B-Manager, C-Skilled worker, D-Unskilled worker, E-Unemployed
			SIBLINGS' EDUCATION: A-Degrees, B-Post matric, C-High School, D-No formal education
			RESIDENCE GROWING UP: A-Urban non designated, B-Urban designated, C-Rural non designated, D-Township
		What is your educational background?	Primary school: A B C
			High school: A B C
		University (name):	
		Degree level: D M H B Dip	
		Tertiary studies funding: A B C D	
		PRIMARY SCHOOL: A-Private, B-State non designated, C-State designated	
		HIGH SCHOOL: A-Private, B-State non designated, C-State designated	
		TERTIARY STUDIES FUNDING: A-Parents, B-Self, C-State bursary, D-Private bursary	
Appointment process into leadership position		What did your appointment process entail?	Were there a series of internal promotions?
			Were you an external appointment?
		How were you selected?	Was there an interview/panel interview/several interviews?
			Was there psychometric testing conducted?
		To your knowledge, were you appointed to fill an EE, AA or BBBEE quota?	
			Did one person make a decision?
			Did a panel make a decision?
			Was there an expert (eg. psychologist) recommendation?
			Were you recommended by a friend, family member or colleague?
Conceptualization of Leadership	Alvesson 2011	How do you understand the concept of leadership?	What is the role of a leader?
	Bolden et al. 2011		Does a leader have power?
	DeChurch et al. 2010		Where does this power come from, if any?
	Gabriel 2011		How does a leader use power, if any?
	Grint 2011		Do leaders control followers?
	Guillen 2010		How do leaders control followers?
	Hamilton & Biggart 1988		Do leaders have (professional) relationships with followers?
	Hosking 2011		How do leaders establish relationships with followers, if any?
	House 1999		How do leaders maintain relationships with followers, if any?
			Which of these concepts would you associate with <u>good</u> leadership?
Nye 2010	What makes an ideal leader in South Africa?	Rolemodels? Why these?	
Parker 2005		Does his/her race play a role?	
Podolny et al. 2010		Does his/her gender play a role?	
Sorenson et al. 2011			
Weber 1922			
Zaleznik's 1977			

Enactment of leadership (Ospina & Foldy 2009; Berdahl 1996)	Billing & Alvesson 2000	How do you lead?	How do you think people perceive your leadership?
	Bradley 2007		Do you think you lead differently from other leaders?
	Brewer 1993		Do you think your race influences how you lead?
	Carless 1998		Do you think your gender influences how you lead?
	Collinson & Hearn 1996		Can you provide some examples of critical incidents which demonstrates how you lead?
	Connell 1987	Referring back to the questions on relationships: How does your interactions with your colleagues shape how you lead?	Do you feel the way your race is perceived in society influence the way you lead?
	DeRue & Ashford 2010		Could you provide some examples of critical incidents which might indicate how a leader's race in perceived might influence their leadership decisions and actions?
	Eagly & Carli 2003		Do you feel the way your gender is perceived in society influence the way you lead?
	Eagly & Chin 2010		Could you provide some examples of critical incidents which might indicate how a leader's gender in perceived might influence their leadership decisions and actions?
	Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001	What would you as a leader do to bring about change in representation among organisational leadership?	How would you currently assess representation in South African organisational leadership (gender and race specifically)
	Eagly & Johnson 1990		Is any legislative change required?
	Eagly & Karau 2002		Is organisational policy change required?
	Eagly 2007		Do you think you are able to bring about the change you feel is necessary for gender and race equality in organisational leadership?
	Eagly et al. 2010		
	Fletcher & Ely 2003		
	Glick et al. 1988		
	Jenkins 2012		
	Johnson & Thomas 2012		
	Littrell et al 2005		
	Livingston et al. 2012		
Nkomo 2011			
Noon 2010			
Ospina & Su 2009			
Paris et al. 2009			
Parker & Ogilvie 1996			
Parker 2005			
Rudman & Glick 1999			
Stanford et al. 1995			
Trinidad & Normore 2005			
Weber 1922			

[Interview guide continued]

Mentoring, networking and leadership training	April & Torun (2006)	What is the nature of your relationships with colleagues?	What would you use to assess the quality of these relationships? Communication? Contact? Activities?
	Bush (2005)		Do you have access to informal networks?
	Debebe (2011)		Do you feel you receive the same support as other leaders in the organisation?
	Eagly & Carli (2007)	Would you/do you prefer a mentor of the opposite or same sex/race?	Can you elaborate on past experience? Positive and negative?
	Fauconnier & Mathur-Helm (2008)		Can you tell me more of what you expect from a mentor who is the same/different from your gender/race?
	Heilman (2001)	Would you/do you prefer to network with aspiring leaders/leaders of the same sex/race?	Can you elaborate on past experience? Positive and negative?
	Killian, Hukai & McCarty (2005)		Can you tell me more of what you expect from a networking with leaders/aspiring leaders who is the same/different from your gender/race?
	Locander & Luechauer (2005)	Would you/do you mentor others? Do you seek to mentor others of same sex/race?	Can you elaborate on past experience? Positive and negative?
	Ohlott (2002)		Can you tell me more of what you expect from mentoring leaders/aspiring leaders who is the same/different from your gender/race?
		What would you want from mentoring/networking or what have you gained from mentoring/networking?	Who (mentors/peers) do you expect will/has contributed most to these gains? Why? Examples?
			What (training programme/development opportunities/opportunities for advancement) do you expect will/has contributed most to these gains? Why? Examples?
	What role have informal mentors and networks played in your career so far?	Can you tell me who these informal mentors were?	
		How did these people who were not officially assigned to you come to be an informal mentor?	
Challenges, constraints and enablers			How did informal mentors benefited/hamper your career as a leader?
	Acker 2006	How did you experience the process of entering your leadership position?	Are you/have you experiencing/experienced any problems moving beyond a certain organisational level (glass ceiling)?
	Brescoll et al. 2010		Do you feel other leaders experience quicker career progression than you? Do you believe their gender or race to influence this progression? (glass escalator)
	Collinson & Hearn 1996	How are you experiencing your tenure in your leadership position?	Do you feel you are assigned different projects based on your gender or race? (glass cliff)
	Cotter et al. 2001		Do you feel you receive differential treatment from followers based on your gender or race? (gender-incongruent roles)
	Cross & Bagilhole 2002	How do you deal with challenges when they arise?	Do you face challenges alone? Why?
	Haslam & Ryan 2008		Do you seek support?
	Hultin 2003		From who do you seek support the most?
	Judge 2003		Why do you seek support from this him/her?
	Livingston et al. 2012		
	Livingston et al. 2012		
	Logan 2011		
	Podolny & Baron 1997		
	Rosette et al. 2008		
	Rudman & Glick 1999		
	Ryan & Haslam 2005		
	Ryan & Haslam 2007		
Sanchez et al. 2007			
Wrigley 2002			

[Interview guide continued]

Legislation and policy (Affirmative Action, BBBEE, Employment Equity, Diversity Management)	Amos & Scott (1996)	What does your organisation do to improve representation?	Are you aware of any Diversity Management policies?
	Commission for Employment Equity (2012)		Does your organisation follow a BEE scorecard?
	Gamson & Modigliani (1994)		What groups do you feel actually benefit from interventions such as diversity policies or BEE scorecards?
	Noon 2010	How has structural interventions (like AA) to address inequality in organisations affected your career as a leader?	Has BBBEE legislation contributed to you becoming a leader? How did your gender or race have an influence?
	Vermeulen & Coetzee (2011)	How do you feel others perceive affirmative action appointments into leadership positions?	Has Diversity Management company policy contributed to you becoming a leader? How did your gender or race have an influence?
			Do you feel that there is a perception that you took an opportunity away from a more suitable candidate for the leadership position?
			Do you feel your gender/race identity or your merit played a bigger role in your appointment into a leadership position?
			Do you feel your gender/race identity or your merit played a bigger role in your success as a leader?
			How does BBBEE appointments into leadership positions affect your relationship with peers?
			How does BBBEE appointments into leadership positions affect your relationship with followers?
	How does BBBEE appointments into leadership positions affect your relationship with superiors?		

Appendix Two: Participant biographical information

Table 5.5a: Key for Table 5.5b

GENDER	M - Male	F - Female					
RACE	B - Black	W - White	I - Indian	C - Coloured	A - Asian		
TYPE OF RESPONDENT	C - Current leader	F - Future leader	K - Key informant				
REGION	CPT – Cape Town	JH - Johannesburg	PE – port Elizabeth	PTA - Pretoria			
SECTOR	A - Consulting	B - Construction	E - Energy	FM - Fast Moving Consumer Goods	FS - Financial Services	G - Government	IT - Technology
APPOINTMENT	IN - Promoted	EX - Recruited					
POSITION	A - President	B – Chief Executive	C – Managing Director	D - Executive Board Member	E - Non-Executive Board Member	F - General Manager	G - Not applicable
TERTIARY LEVEL	PhD - Doctorate degree	M - Masters degree	H - Honours degree	B - Bachelors degree	Dip - Tertiary diploma	0 - No tertiary	

Table 5.5b: Participant biographical information

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	RACE	AGE	TYPE	REGION	SECTOR	APPOINTMENT	POSITION	TENURE IN YEARS (ORG)	TENURE IN YEARS (POS)	TIERTIARY LEVEL
Abbey	F	W	41	C	PE	TC	IN	F	23	7	M
Anna	F	C	31	F	JHB	FM	IN	0	2.3	1.3	0
Ashwil	M	C	36	F	JHB	FM	EX	0	0.8	0.8	0
Brandon	M	C	30	F	CPT	FM	EX	0	3	3	M
Busisiwe	F	B	23	F	JHB	FM	EX	0	2	2	Dip
Carmen	F	W	51	C	JHB	FM	EX	E	5	2	0
Charlotte	F	C	33	C	CPT	IT	EX	F	1	1	M
Chloe	F	W	44	C	JHB	MD	IN	E	3	1	H
Christiana	F	W	39	K	CPT	FM	EX	E	10	10	M
Deepak	M	I	56	C	JHB	FS	IN	E	24	16	H
Donald	M	C	43	C	JHB	FS	IN	B	20	2	M
Geoff	M	C	32	F	CPT	FM	EX	F	2	2	0
Georgina	F	W	52	C	CPT	E	IN	D	25	10	H
Gregory	M	C	43	C	CPT	B	IN	D	19	2	Dip
Hannelie	F	W	37	C	JHB	FM	EX	E	1	1	M
Holly	F	W	48	C	JHB	MN	EX	D	2	2	M
Irene	F	W	28	F	JHB	B	EX	0	0.6	0.6	M
Irfan	M	I	39	F	CPT	IT	IN	0	11	5.5	H
Jacoba	F	W	54	C	PTA	TC	IN	D	25	4	PhD
Jacqueline	F	W	48	C	CPT	A	EX	C	5	5	M
Jennifer	F	W	49	K	CPT	G	EX	F	8.5	8.5	M
Jodie	F	W	29	F	JHB	TC	EX	0	2.5	2.5	H
Johannes	M	B	29	C	JHB	SR	EX	E	4	4	B
Jonathan	M	C	36	F	CPT	IT	IN	0	11	0.8	H
Karen	F	W	63	C	JHB	MD	IN	C	12	8	Dip
Katlego	F	B	29	F	CPT	IT	EX	0	1	1	M
Keshika	F	I	34	F	CPT	E	EX	0	0.5	0.5	M
Khomotso	F	B	35	F	JHB	FM	IN	0	5	0.5	0
Kwame	M	B	35	C	JHB	FS	EX	D	3	3	H
Lerato	F	B	43	C	JHB	A	EX	D	1	1	M
Lucas	M	C	56	K	CPT	ED	IN	E	0.25	9	PhD
Lucy	F	W	42	C	PTA	TC	EX	E	1.5	1.5	M
Mable	F	W	36	C	JHB	FS	EX	C	2	2	M
Madré	F	W	40	C	JHB	NG	EX	D	3.5	3.5	M
Magda	F	W	49	C	CPT	FM	EX	E	5	5	M
Magrieta	F	W	53	C	CPT	B	IN	D	15	13	M
Maxine	F	W	42	C	PTA	TC	EX	C	2	1.5	0
Mmusi	M	B	32	F	CPT	IT	EX	0	2	2	H
Morgana	F	W	27	C	CPT	FM	IN	F	4	3	H
Motlalepule	F	B	35	F	JHB	E	IN	F	5	0.1	B
Neo	M	B	34	K	CPT	ED	EX	0	2	2	PhD
Penelope	F	W	39	C	CPT	FM	EX	F	10	10	B
Priscilla	F	I	49	C	CPT	FM	EX	E	2.5	2.5	M
Rajesh	M	I	51	C	JHB	B	IN	D	25	14	0
Ravinder	M	I	31	F	JHB	E	IN	E	5.5	0.1	M
Reginald	M	C	25	F	CPT	CR	EX	F	0.25	0.25	H
Reuben	M	B	44	K	JHB	FM	EX	D	3.5	3.5	M
Russell	M	C	40	F	CPT	IT	IN	0	10	1	Dip
Sarah	F	C	45	C	PTA	TC	IN	F	16	4	M
Sharon	F	C	44	C	PTA	E	IN	E	8	3	H
Sizingee	F	B	30	C	JHB	A	IN	F	10	2	H
Tash	M	I	46	C	JHB	NG	EX	D	1	1	H
Tasneem	F	I	29	F	CPT	IT	IN	0	8	0.5	H
Tercia	F	C	35	K	CPT	FM	IN	0	4	3	Dip
Thembeke	F	B	55	C	JHB	MN	EX	D	2	2	M
Tossie	F	W	43	K	CPT	FM	EX	0	4	4	M
Warren	M	C	22	F	CPT	ED	IN	0	0.25	0.25	B
Wilfred	M	B	26	F	PTA	LE	EX	0	1	1	M
Yvonne	F	W	26	F	PTA	AU	IN	F	3.3	3	H
Zanele	F	B	29	F	JHB	A	EX	0	2	2	H

Appendix Three: Ethical approval



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Professor Gill Kirton
F.B. 4,25G
Department of Business Management.
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End
London E1 4NS

16th January 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: QMREC2013/84 – Gender, race and social construction of leadership in organisations: A South African case study.

The above study was conditionally approved by The Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (Panel E) on the 8th January 2014; full approval was ratified by The Chair on the 15th January 2014.

This approval is valid for a period of two years, (if the study is not started before this date then the applicant will have to reapply to the Committee).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Hall", written over a horizontal line.

Ms Elizabeth Hall – QMREC Chair.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen
Incorporated by Royal Charter as Queen Mary
and Westfield College, University of London

Appendix Four: Informed consent



Information sheet for participants

Gender, race and the social construction of leadership in organisations: A South African case study

We would like to invite you to be part of this research project, if you would like to. You should only agree to take part if you want to it is entirely up to you. If you choose not to take part there won't be any disadvantages for you and you will hear no more about it.

Please read the following information carefully before you decide to take part; this will tell you why the research is being done and what you will be asked to do if you take part. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This research is aimed at investigating the systematic underrepresentation of women and people of colour in organisational leadership positions. Various statistics show that despite policy and legislation which are in place to promote fair representation of the South African population at all levels of work organisation, white men still occupy the majority of strategic leadership roles in organisations in the South African private sector. This study will consider the experiences of leaders and leaders in training in order to gain knowledge of how leadership is understood and practiced in South African organisations and hopefully understand better why underrepresentation of women and people of colour in leadership persists.

If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign the attached form to say that you agree. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Should you choose to participate in this study, not your or the identity of your organisation will be disclosed in any final publication resulting from study. All names and official titles will be removed when reporting on this work. Notes made during the interview will only be used by the researcher to ensure that interviews and companies are not mixed up.

Should you wish to participate, it would only be required of you to take part in a face to face interview with the researcher from Queen Mary University of London who is conducting this project. The interview is expected to be between an hour and 2 hours in duration. During this time you will be free to take smoke or body breaks should you choose to. If during the interview you change your mind about your participation, you will be free to terminate the interview without any negative implications for yourself or your organisation. To the best of our knowledge, this process does not hold any possible physical, mental, financial or other risk for yourself or any others who might participate in this project. You might be contacted for a follow-up interview via Skype if any clarification on the discussion is required; however, this follow-up will be very brief and will not take up as much of your time as the original interview. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

Consent form

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research. You may also want to consider the "Abstract" of the research project (given to you by the researcher) before you sign this consent form.

Title of Study: Gender, race and the social construction of leadership in organisations: A South African case study

- Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.
- If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.
- You are under no obligation to remain in the interview if you feel uncomfortable or change your mind about participation. You will be allowed to exit the interview at any stage.
- You might be contacted for a brief follow-up interview via Skype to clarify some points from this initial interview.
- If any criminal or professional misconduct come to light during the interview, the researcher might have to report this to an appropriate third party. If this is the case, you will be informed of these intentions before such communication occurs.
- The date from these interviews will be published in thesis as well as academic article format. However, no personal information will accompany these publications.
- By signing this form, you consent to the processing of your personal information for the purposes of this research study. You acknowledge your understanding that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (of the United Kingdom).

Participant's Statement:

I _____ agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed:

Date:

Investigator's Statement:

I _____ confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed:

Date:

Researcher name: Clifford Lewis
Researcher telephone number: +27 (0) 71 268 6121 OR +44 (0) 790 156 4130
Researcher email address: c.p.lewis@qmul.ac.uk

Appendix Five: Analytical frameworks

Table 5.1: Debates, theories and sources in the micro-level analysis

Research question	What are the individual-level challenges, constraints and enablers women and people of colour experience in accessing and practising strategic leadership in private sector organisations in South Africa?		
	Debates and theories	Data sources	Discussion section
	Effective leadership (Junker & van Dick 2014; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014) Leadership and performance (Eagly & Karau 2002; Junker & van Dick 2014) Leadership as an element of the leader (Stogdill 1997; DeChurch et al. 2010; Yukl 2010; Bolden et al. 2011; Grint 2011) Inequality Regimes (Acker 2006) The Leadership Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli 2007a) Male leadership prototype (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Collinson & Hearn 1996; Paris et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014) Institutionalised gender discrimination (Cotter et al. 2001; Eagly & Carli 2007a; Williams 2013; Cook & Glass 2014; Kulich 2014) Velvet Ghetto (Golombisky 2015)	Biographical: Education Biographical: Position tenure Biographical: Organisational tenure Biographical: Appointment trends Axial code: Conceptualisation Axial code: Challenges and constraints	6.2.2
	Leadership and power (Raven 2004; Nye 2010; Gordon 2011) Inequality Regimes (Acker 2006) Leadership and gender roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012) Feminine leadership (Billing & Alvesson 2000; Eagly & Karau 2002) Female leadership advantage (Vecchio 2003; Vecchio 2002; Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2005; Carli & Eagly 2011) Situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard 1977; Graeff 1983; Graeff 1997)	Axial code: Conceptualisation	6.2.3 6.2.4
	Leadership development (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997; Ely et al. 2011) Leadership networks (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010; Ibarra et al. 2014) Feminine- and masculine leadership (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Livingston et al. 2012) Leadership and gender roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012)	Axial code: Conceptualisation Axial code: Networks	6.2.5 6.2.6
	Positive discrimination (Noon 2010) Discrimination legitimacy (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016)	Axial code: Enablers Code: Leadership development	6.3.2
	Leadership development (Ibarra 1992; Ibarra 1993; Ibarra 1997; Ely et al. 2011) Leadership and relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995; Brower et al. 2000; Anand et al. 2011; Sahin 2012)	Axial code: Conceptualisation Axial code: Leadership development	6.3.3 6.3.4

Table 5.2: Debates, theories and sources in the meso-level analysis

Research question	What organisational factors contribute to or hinder women and people of colour from accessing and practising strategic leadership in the South African private sector?	
Debates and theories	Data sources	Discussion section
<p>Leadership and gender roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012)</p> <p>Gender and employment (Cock 1987; Romany 1996; Booysen 1999; Iheduru 2004)</p> <p>Race and employment in South Africa (Nattrass & Seekings 2001; Matsinhe 2011)</p> <p>Male leadership prototype (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Collinson & Hearn 1996; Paris et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014)</p> <p>Tokenism (Kanter 1977; Coates 2011)</p> <p>Resilience (Parker & Ogilvie 1996; Motileng et al. 2006; Jean-Marie et al. 2009; Martin & Barnard 2013)</p>	<p>Legislation: Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Legislation: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act</p> <p>Axial code: Enactment</p> <p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p>	7.2.2
<p>Institutionalised sexism (Ghiloni 1987; Acker 1990; Acker 1992; Powell & Butterfield 1994; Romany 1996; Cotter et al. 2001; Wrigley 2002; Hultin 2003; Van Zyl & Roodt 2003; Eagly & Carli 2007a; Bruckmüller & Branscombe 2010)</p> <p>Institutionalised racism (Feagin 1977; Feagin & Feagin 1978; Beeghley 2000; Noon 2010)</p> <p>Male leadership prototype (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Collinson & Hearn 1996; Paris et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014)</p> <p>Stigma theory (Howarth 2006; Loury 2006; Lenhardt 2014)</p> <p>Women and employment in South Africa (Cock 1987; Ally 2009)</p> <p>Leadership development (Ragins & Cotton 1991; Ibarra 1992; Ragins 1997; Carli & Eagly 2001; Atkin et al. 2002; Van Anders 2004; Blickenstaff 2005; McCarty Kilian et al. 2005)</p>	<p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Axial code: Networks</p> <p>Axial code: Leadership development</p>	7.2.3
<p>Leadership development (Ragins & Cotton 1991; Yeung & Ready 1995; Ragins & Cotton 1999; Day 2000; Ohlott 2002; Conger & Ready 2003; Boaden 2006; Pinnington 2011)</p> <p>Stigma theory (Goffman 1968; Phelan et al. 2008)</p> <p>White privilege (Steyn 2001; Rothenberg 2015)</p>	<p>Legislation: Basic Conditions of Employment Act</p> <p>Legislation: South African Qualifications Authority Act</p> <p>Legislation: Skills Development Act</p> <p>Legislation: Skills Development Levies Act</p> <p>Legislation: Higher Education Laws Amendment</p> <p>Legislation: Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Legislation: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act</p> <p>Axial code: Enablers</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p>	7.3.2 7.3.3
<p>Inequality regimes (Acker 2006)</p> <p>Covert racism (Trow 1999; Durrheima et al. 2005; Coates 2011)</p> <p>Positive discrimination (Noon 2010)</p> <p>Stigma theory (Goffman 1968; Lenhardt 2014)</p>	<p>Legislation: Skills Development Act</p> <p>Legislation: Higher Education Laws Amendment</p> <p>Legislation: Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Legislation: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p> <p>Axial code: Conceptualisation</p>	7.4.2

Table 5.3: Debates, theories and sources for an engagement with macro-social structures

Research question	How do historical and legislative factors influence the representation of women and people of colour in strategic leadership positions in private sector organisations in South Africa?		
	Debates and theories	Data sources	Discussion section
	<p>Feminine leadership (Loden 1985; Rosener 1990; Sharma 1990; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Vecchio 2002; Eagly 2003; Vecchio 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Eagly 2007)</p> <p>Leadership and gender roles (Rudman & Glick 1999; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Okimoto & Brescoll 2010; Livingston et al. 2012)</p> <p>Male leadership prototype (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Collinson & Hearn 1996; Paris et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2011; Collinson & Hearn 2014)</p> <p>Feminine- and masculine leadership (Chapman 1975; Park 1996; Osland et al. 1998; Billing & Alvesson 2000; Livingston et al. 2012)</p> <p>Discrimination legitimacy (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016)</p> <p>Women and employment (Hultin 2003; Ellwood et al. 2004; Noonan & Corcoran 2004; Smith 2012; Williams 2013)</p>	<p>Axial code: Enactment</p> <p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Responses to gendered conceptualisations of leadership</p>	8.2.2.1
	<p>History of employment in South Africa (Hazlett 1988; Norval 1996; Clark & Worger 2011)</p> <p>History of education in South Africa (Cucuzza 1993)</p>	<p>National statistics: 2014 General Household Survey</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p> <p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Axial code: Conceptualisation</p>	8.2.2.2
	<p>History of inequality in South Africa (Cucuzza 1993; Norval 1996; Booyesen 2007b; Hutt 2007; Shear 2013)</p> <p>Discrimination legitimacy (Acker 2006; Eriksson & Nissen 2016)</p> <p>Institutionalised sexism (Ghiloni 1987; Taff 2003; Golombisky 2015)</p>	<p>National statistics: 1970 South African General Census</p> <p>National statistics: 2013 Higher Education</p> <p>National statistics: 2014 Employment Equity Report</p> <p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Axial code: Enactment</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p>	8.2.3
	<p>Positive discrimination (Noon 2010)</p> <p>Stigma theory (Goffman 1968; Loury 2006; Lenhardt 2014)</p> <p>Responses to Apartheid (Kaempfer & Moffett 1988; Dugard 1989; Moorsom 1989; Walker 1991; Marx 1992; Culverson 1999; Frankel 2001; Nesbitt 2004)</p> <p>Social identity (Minow 1997; Bell & Nkomo 2001; Howarth 2006; Booyesen 2007b; Atewologun & Singh 2010; Jenkins 2014)</p>	<p>Legislation: Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Legislation: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act</p> <p>National statistics: 2013 Higher Education</p> <p>Axial code: Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p>	8.3.2
	<p>Positive discrimination (Southall 2004; Booyesen 2007a; Noon 2007; Tangri & Southall 2008; Noon 2010)</p> <p>History of education in South Africa (Meyer 1974; Cooper et al. 1984)</p> <p>Social identity (Booyesen 2007b; Jenkins 2014)</p> <p>Employment trends in South Africa (Booyesen 2007a; Nzukuma & Bussin 2011)</p>	<p>Legislation: Employment Equity Act</p> <p>Legislation: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act</p> <p>National statistics: 2014 Employment Equity Report</p> <p>Axial code: Legislation and public policy</p>	8.3.3

Table 5.7: ‘Conceptualisation’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Conceptualisation	Collectivistic	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a socially collectivistic perspective.	<i>“You can never think that your own opinion is better than the communal vision. There’s just not one person in the world that knows everything on his own. One has to be flexible in that control. You need to put your guidelines there but there are times that you need to move your guidelines.” – Lucy, FW42</i>
	Control	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a control perspective.	<i>“You need to control the team that reports to you. You do it in various ways. There are different kinds of leadership but in my view...” – Deepak, MI56</i>
	False dichotomy	Evidence of an understanding of the concept of leadership being framed within a false dichotomy.	<i>“As a woman, you grow up more people focused and more sensitive to people’s needs and so on. So I do think that it does play a role. It gives you a natural advantage from a people’s perspective...” – Jacoba, FW54</i>
	Heroic leadership	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a socially collectivistic perspective.	<i>“I’m not a big fan of the hero culture. I don’t think you ever achieve anything on your own; you always achieve it with other people. I’m not in favour of idolising people.” – Magrieta, FW53</i>
	Individualistic	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a heroic leadership perspective.	<i>“So I think that I am different, you know. Especially the way my boss put it. He said: ‘It’s either in your DNA or it’s not’. So there are four Regional Exec positions available and he told our MD straight that of the four I am the only one that can step into this role.” – Abbey, FW41</i>
	Performance	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a performance perspective.	<i>“This business has been around for years and years, but nobody has been able to put a set of scorecards in place. First year I was here I put in scorecards. So now scorecards lead to consequences.” – Donald, MC43</i>
	Power	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a social power perspective.	<i>“Power means different things to people. For some it’s a means to control. For others it a means to gain access to what they otherwise could never have access to.” – Thembeke, FB55</i>
	Relationships	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a relational perspective.	<i>“I am more concerned with developing the person rather than ‘when are you here?’. As long as you tell me where you are.” – Sharon, FC44</i>
	Role models	Evidence that an understanding of the concept of leadership is framed around personal leadership role models.	<i>“...my dad, and because of the way he has conducted himself in his working career. Also what he has achieved... and more importantly how these relationships has translated into outcomes for the business.” – Kwame, MB35</i>
	Social process	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a social process perspective.	<i>“I probably have a different perception of what leadership is. For me it’s about what kind of legacy you want to leave. Legacies live through people. It’s about the kind of relationships that you build with people. You will be able to carry my memory forward by whatever you tell of me and your experiences of me.” – Motlalepule, FB35</i>
Values	Evidence of the concept of leadership being discussed from a value perspective.	<i>“What I see in a leader, is not necessarily what the company looks for in a leader and I say this purely from a values perspective. I cannot associate myself with unfairness, nepotism, dishonesty etc. I really can’t stand it.” – Magda, FW49</i>	

Table 5.8: ‘Enablers’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Enablers	Individual	Evidence of experiences of enablers for accessing and practising leadership at an individual- or personal level.	<i>“My qualifications, background and training has definitely helped.” – Sarah, FC45</i>
	Organisational	Evidence of experiences of enablers for accessing and practising leadership at an organisational level.	<i>“...they identified that potential leadership quality in people and they sent them on this management development training.” – Maxine, FW42</i>
	Societal	Evidence of experiences of enablers for accessing and practising leadership at a societal level.	<i>“I guess in South Africa, as a black woman, one cannot but ignore the fact that there is affirmative action and EE. It’s a fact of life. Had I lived in a pre-1994 South Africa my career trajectory would have been completely different. An enabling environment is absolutely important.” – Lerato, FB43</i>

Table 5.9: ‘Enactment’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Enactment	Follower perceptions	Evidence that follower perceptions of them might influence how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“I can speak very abstractly so some people can’t hear me so I always have to find translators. Some people can’t identify with the abstraction and that’s something I’m learning to work with and I use emotional connection to try and ground ideas and connect with people.” – Jacqueline, FW48</i>
	Gender influence on enactment	Evidence of a perception that gender identity influences how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“Women that have made it here are those who absolutely epitomise the masculine kind of leader. They totally assume that role. So they are domineering, they are masculine they are forceful...” – Holly, FW48</i>
	Organisationally influenced	Evidence that organisational factors might influence how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“In my previous organisation we had some experience of rapid transformation where it was just a case of bums and seats and it’s catastrophic....they lack managerial capacity and that’s a really harmful thing to the bottom line of any company, when you put someone in a role where they have a lot of scope and they can make big calls and they don’t get it right; it’s very dangerous.” – Penelope, FW39</i>
	Personal style	Evidence of perceptions that personal leadership styles and/or preferences primarily influence how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“...my style of leadership is 80% light and 20% some dark arts. And I don't mean, you know bad stuff, if you have an understanding of somebody and what buttons to push, for example if someone likes money, you curb their salary and decrease their bonus.” – Donald, MC43</i>
	Race influence on enactment	Evidence of a perception that racial identity influences how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“I have had resistance, but I often want to distinguish between why I get resistance. For example I have been told that I am unrealistic about what we have to do. The people who I am working with them sometimes feel I require them to work over weekends or an extra hour on a day. So definitely this is where I get the most resistance when I'm being unrealistic or just around time. Maybe I overcommit.” – Sizingce, FB30</i>
	Socially influenced	Evidence that social factors might influence how respondents enact leadership.	<i>“I think it comes back to that whole thing of her seeing me as an Indian female and I think my age also plays a role. She is quite senior and she has got a lot of experience. In her mind I just have no education and no experience.” – Tasneem, FI29</i>

Table 5.10: ‘Leadership development’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Leadership development	Access to leadership development opportunities	Evidence of respondent experiences regarding access to leadership development opportunities.	<i>“...if you think of the South African people historically, most White South African grew up with families in careers that spanned across the whole range of industries and had many role models to look up to, whether that’s professional or entrepreneurial, whereas people of colour had very traditional roles like doctors, teachers, clerical type of work, mining, etc. So with these young people coming into the organisations they don’t necessarily have role modelling of what is good and what is not good [leadership], while their White counterparts would have observed their mothers and fathers in leadership and in management roles in organisations. People of colour would often not have that frame of reference to refer to.” – Reuben, MB44</i>
	Gender influences development	Evidence of leadership development discussed from a gendered perspective.	<i>“At my level, the maintenance manager and technical manager are very technically strong so there is a couple of us that are not as technically strong in those fields and then when it comes to issues on the plant then we would be excluded but it’s not because of gender but because we don’t know the plant.” – Georgina, FW52</i>
	Mentoring	Evidence of experiences regarding both receiving leadership mentoring and acting as a leadership mentor.	<i>“My mentor, who is a German colleague also in senior management, partly because I appreciate his leadership and the fact that he has, in his own way, affirmed my take on leadership. It doesn’t need to be a control kind of style but one that is nurturing...” – Motlalepule, FB35</i>
	Preference for formal or structured development	Evidence of respondents preferring formalized or structured leadership development initiatives.	<i>“I had one-on-one mentoring sessions once every 2 months. I had tasks I had to do and feedback that I had to give her... <u>How did you experience that? Was it helpful?</u> Yes, it was amazing. It was frustrating at times because she gave us homework in the sense of how we will fix certain things and she wanted implementation dates etc. So, my stress with my departments as well as hers was frustrating at times but, in terms of my development, it was a milestone for me.” – Yvonne, FW26</i>
	Preference for informal or ad hoc development	Evidence of respondents preferring informal or unstructured leadership development interactions.	<i>“...I get excited in conversations on an informal manner. I’m not someone who is formal...” – Magda, FW49</i>
	Race influences development	Evidence of leadership development discussed from a racialised perspective.	<i>“I still think that it comes down to having a thick skin. I had to put up with certain things and I told myself that, because I have boxes to tick in terms of my CV, if I have to be in this kind of environment, then that’s what I have to do.” – Charlotte, FC33</i>

Table 5.11: ‘Legislation and public policy’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Legislation and public policy	Negative impact	Evidence of a perceived negative impact of interventionist legislation or public policy.	<i>“I think that there should not be a rule that excludes White people at all. There should not be a rule that states as a White person you may not apply. Or rules that says we will not put you on a shortlist because you are White. That is just ridiculous. I mean, look at how many people have immigrated. I have got friends and family who have left the country and they had left because of that. They know, the talk is out there, they are asking what future do their children have? What do they do? They leave. So it is a very delicate and sensitive subject...” – Abbey, FW41</i>
	Organisational	Evidence of interventionist legislation or public policy discussed at an organisational- or implementation level.	<i>“Do you experience a glass ceiling? Not with this company. We have regional managers of every colour and race. There is definitely room for growth. It’s up to the individual themselves; how far they’re willing to go; how far they are willing to push themselves. I know that what I put in is what I’m going to get out. There’s definitely no problem with people who go further than others.” – Ashwil, MC36</i>
	Positive impact	Evidence of a perceived positive impact of interventionist legislation or public policy.	<i>“...you cannot deny that legislation has had an impact. At the very least, it gives a great platform for Black people. Employment equity and affirmative action has definitely been an enabler.” – Kwame, MB35</i>
	Proposed changes	Evidence of a perceived need for change to interventionist legislation or public policy.	<i>“I actually rejected a proposal to implement a women's development programme the other day. It is just degrading. What are these programmes saying? Are you telling me that I need an extra programme to achieve what you as a man would have achieved normally?” – Magda, FW49</i>
	Societal	Evidence of interventionist legislation discussed at a policy- or societal level.	<i>“We’re still a patriarchal society on whose shoulders the bulk of that still sits on the mother, not the father, even if both of you happen to be medical doctors. The mother still has the primary responsibility and as corporates we have not put in sufficient support. At one of my previous companies I was very fortunate to have a CEO who was very supportive. There was a very caring environment. So perhaps there’s accommodation that needs to be factored in but all those things come at a cost.” – Thembeke, FB55</i>

Table 5.12: ‘Networks’ axial code breakdown, descriptions and examples from the data

Axial code	Thematic code	Description	Example quote
Networks	Extra-organisational	Evidence of discussions about professional networks outside of respondents’ organisations.	<i>“I have had the opportunity to do things that anywhere else I do not think I would have had the same opportunity. Being in the position where I am now I can say that the opportunities have always been there, but the onus has always been on me to make use of that opportunity to the best of my ability. That is something that has always stuck with me, to make use of what is available to you. Even if it doesn’t work out, then you go on and try something else...” – Reginald, MC25</i>
	Informal	Evidence of professional networks discussed as an informal process.	<i>“...we have this term that we call ‘release the agenda’. For that time you might not be giving me what I need but I can use this opportunity to build on the relationship. You might not be delivering what I need because you’ve had a bad day...you can then tap into that and still try not maintain the human component. You might not be able to give me what I need today but I’m investing in you to do it tomorrow...” – Zanele, FB29</i>
	Intra-organisational	Evidence of discussions about professional networks inside of respondents’ organisations.	<i>“If you don’t agree with me that’s fine and then I will listen, because I also think I’m fairly mature so I have a fairly high emotional quotient and I’m able to listen. It is tough listening to people’s feedback that you perceive as negative or not positive feedback.” – Tercia, FC35</i>
	Organisational politics	Evidence of professional networks discussed from an organisational politics perspective.	<i>“...that is one of the challenges my organisation faces, especially in the central office. It has historically been very dominant Afrikaans, White, male kind of, and if you look at our diversity it is quite shocking, but they are making a real effort to try and shift that...but we are open to listening and learning, and trying to ensure that we have a more inclusive culture. So a lot of times conversations happen in Afrikaans. Now I am from Durban and for me that is a foreign language...” – Priscilla, FI49</i>